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Cover art by Darby Creegan and Elizabeth Culp

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Meet the Editors

Editor-in-Chief **Emily Lathers '25 (they/she)** is a junior history and dance double major from New Haven, Connecticut. At Swarthmore, Emily is involved in the MakerSpace, Taiko Ensemble, and research on the anthropology of law.

Editor-in-Chief **Zack Kreines '25 (he/him)** is a junior from Claremont, California studying sociology/anthropology and history. He is interested in community archives and public history, as shown by his work uploading photos and creating timelines for the CAAAV archive. He also works for the PEPL lab and enjoys film photography in his free time.

Nathanael Brown '25 (he/him) is a junior from Blanchard Twp., Maine. He is an honors history major and honors German studies minor. Nathanael is currently researching how dictionaries shaped national identities in the 18th and 19th centuries. He also enjoys fencing with Swarthmore's club team, competing on the mock trial team, and working in LPAC.

Darby Creegan '26 (she/her) is a sophomore from South Lake Tahoe, California studying history, English literature, and classics. She is involved with the Swarthmore College Chorus, Swing Dance Club, and Student Government Organization. In her spare hours she enjoys sewing (or perusing) vintage fashion, spending time around Philly with friends, and rereading Margaret Atwood novels.

Lizzie Culp '26 (she/her) is a sophomore from Tivoli, New York studying history, theater, and environmental studies. She is a soprano in the Swarthmore Chorus and Garnet Singers, participates in Offbeat and Drama Board, and takes part in many theater productions on campus. In her free time she enjoys thrifting with friends, playing soccer, and rewatching Gilmore Girls.

Elijah Dillow '27 (he/him) is a freshman from Shepherdstown, West Virginia studying history and engineering. He is part of Swing Club and Psi Phi. In his free time he looks at maps, draws, and cooks.

Jing Jing Gopinath '26 (they/she) is a sophomore from New Delhi, India. They are an honors history major and potential Arabic honors minor. On campus she is part of Solidarity at Swarthmore, SJP, Drama Board, Mother Puckers and badminton clubs. In her free time, she does some theater, loves doing ballet, reading, writing and playing ice hockey.

Jessica A. Gutierrez '25 (she/her) is a junior from Chicago, Illinois studying political science and Spanish. She hopes to work on diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Latin America with the U.S. State Department. Outside of academics, she loves history, playing Sudoku, and all the NYT Games.

Grant Himes '25 (he/him) is a junior from Atlantic Beach, Florida studying mathematics with an emphasis in applied math and history. At Swarthmore, he plays tuba and euphonium in the Wind Ensemble and works as a TA in the economics department. In his free time, he enjoys swimming, cooking, watching sports, and exploring Philadelphia.

Stephanie Liu '27 (she/her) is a freshman from the Bay Area, California who is interested in studying biology, philosophy, and neuroscience. In her free time, she enjoys reading, crocheting, wireworking, and playing viola for the Swarthmore College Orchestra.

Ruby Novogrodsky '25 (she/her) is a junior from Laramie, Wyoming studying biology and history. Outside of class, she plays violin in the Swarthmore College Orchestra and in chamber ensembles, works on voter outreach efforts through Swat Votes, and hikes in the Crum Woods.

Nina Phillips '25 (she/her) is a junior from Great Neck, New York. She is a history major and computer Science minor and is currently intern Treasurer for the Swarthmore Afro-American Student Society. Her interests include music production, gardening, and swing dance.

Mahika Shergill '26 (she/her) is a sophomore from Mumbai, India. She is a prospective environmental studies and economics double major. At Swarthmore, she enjoys writing news articles for the Phoenix and working as a research fellow for the Historical Political Economy lab. Outside college, she loves reading everything from memoirs to mysteries, playing the piano, and working for environmental causes.

June Shin '25 (he/him) is a junior from Irvine, California double majoring in history and political sociology. At Swarthmore, he is involved with Solidarity at Swat, SJP, YDSA, and the Petey Greene Program. In his free time, he can be found supporting FC Barcelona, listening to random indie music, and watching movies.

Bella Thoen '27 (she/her) is a freshman from Wayland, Massachusetts. She is interested in studying engineering and chemical physics. She is on the cross country team and enjoys music, spending time in nature, and reading in her free time.

Elsa Toland '25 (she/her) is a junior from Central Ohio studying history, political science, and math. At Swarthmore, she is president of the Swing Club, runs the Psi Phi Library, and works as an archivist assistant in the Peace Collection. In her free time, she crochets, knits, sews, gardens, bakes, and sometimes gets enough sleep.

Duncan Wall '26 (he/him) is a freshman from Niskayuna, New York. He is a prospective philosophy major and music minor. He enjoys playing the French Horn in the Swarthmore College Orchestra and is an avid reader of science-fiction.

Chesapeake Weinfeld '27 (he/him) is a freshman from Austin, Texas studying politics, philosophy, and economics. Other than being an editor for the journal, he is active in the Architecture Club, Swarthmore Effective Altruism, Chabad, and Badminton.

Melanie Zelle '26 (she/her) is a sophomore from St. Paul, Minnesota studying anthropology and history. She is also an editor for and regular contributor to the Swarthmore Phoenix. In her free time you may catch her reading poetry, listening to folk music, and napping.

Cynthia Zhang '27 (she//her) is a freshman from Beijing, China studying sociology and economics. She edits the culture section at Swarthmore Voices, tutors at the Chester Children's Chorus, plays the piano in the Swarthmore Jazz Ensemble, and works at the Lang Center's Social Innovation Lab.

Swastikas at Swat and Student Holocaust Memorial Culture

Nathanael D. Brown

Swarthmore College

Abstract: A series of antisemitic incidents on the campus of Swarthmore College in 2016 invoked a larger memory culture of the Holocaust for Jewish students. This phenomenon was not an aberration, but rather the product of a well-documented effort by Jewish organizations to create a Holocaust memorial culture that would leave a lasting impact on those who experienced it, especially students. By researching the larger picture of how Holocaust Memory culture was created, and using that and Maurice Halbwachs's "lieu de mémoire" method of historiography as frameworks, we gain insight into how some Jewish students' perceptions of antisemitism in 2016 were shaped by Holocaust memory culture.

On August 30th, 2016, several students found a spray-painted swastika in a bathroom in

the McCabe Library of Swarthmore College. What followed this incident were several months of

repeated antisemitic graffiti across Swarthmore College's campus. Responses to this incident

were immediate, with the first response in Swarthmore College's campus newspaper *The*

Phoenix being written by William Meyer, vice president of Swarthmore College's Jewish student

organization, Kehilah. Almost immediately, this incident and the responses to it brought to mind

the painful memory of antisemitism and genocide to the college's Jewish community. In his

op-ed for *The Phoenix*, Meyer commented on the depressing numbness he felt to see the symbols

of the regime that killed his great-grandfather and other members of his family spray painted in

his campus library.[1] The swastika painted in the library served as a painful "lieu de mémoire," a

site of memory that has "become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any

community."[2] In this case, the specific recollection is of a familial and/or collective memory of

the Holocaust. The response of recollection also acts as a site of memory.

Meyer was not alone in recalling family memories of the Holocaust, for other members

of Swarthmore's Jewish community, recent incidents of antisemitic hate speech on Swarthmore

College's campus evoked personal memories of antisemitism as well as familial and collective

memories of the Holocaust. The individuals thus engaged in both collective and personal

remembrances of these incidents and used this memory as a way to interpret the current political

climate surrounding First Amendment rights and hate speech. Through examination of sources

created at the time and an oral history interview with a board member of Kehilah, I will explore

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[1] William Meyer, "A Response to Yesterday's Anti-Semitic Hate Crime," *The Phoenix,*
September 1, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/01/37672/.
[2] Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New
York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

what specific memories were evoked, what they tell us about the memories of the Holocaust held

by these students, and what those memories signify for these individuals in larger political

culture.

This memory was significant for William Meyer because it influenced how he understood

the political climate of 2016. In his article for *The Phoenix*, Meyer began with a history of the

symbol in Nazi Germany and then proceeded into a discussion of the rising tide of acceptance of

antisemitism in the US that he and other Jewish students saw. Meyer drew a direct link between

the normalization of antisemitism in 1930s Germany through graffiti on Jewish shops— which

led to the German population's acquiescence to Nazi policies of genocide— and the rising

acceptance of antisemitism in the US and abroad today. In his article, Meyer discusses how, due

to Jews being "…disproportionately represented in fields of law, finance, and medicine," their

attempts to draw attention to their plight were dismissed as "whining."[3]

This memory was not just passed down through his education in history classes, it was

supplemented by Holocaust memory culture in the United States, originating from institutions

such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). The establishment of

museums such as the USHMM, which opened in 2005, provided American teenagers with access

to the new culture of memories emerging from such sites.[4] Memorials and museums like this act

as a vehicle of memory, a "…representation of the past and the making of it into a shared cultural

knowledge…"[5] This method of memory production is especially prescient for Jews in regards to

the preservation of and remembrance of their shared history. In an article for *The New Yorker*,

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[3] William Meyer, "A Response to Yesterday's Anti-Semitic Hate Crime," *The Phoenix,*
September 1, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/01/37672/.
[4] "Mission and History — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," accessed May 2, 2023,
https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/mission-and-history.
[5] Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American
Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386–1403, https://doi.org/10.2307/2171069. 1386.

"Why Jewish history is so hard to write," Jewish writer Adam Hirsch says of Judaism, "…it is possible to see Judaism itself as a technology of memory, a set of practices designed to make the past present."[6] The title of Meyer's article reflects this: "'A Response to Yesterday's Anti-Semitic[7] Hate Crime from a "Whiny Brat Jew"'"[8] Meyer was drawing a direct link between the remembered, lived experience of his recent ancestors and the current events he was experiencing. By remembering his ancestors as being accused of "whining" in the face of antisemitic persecution and then placing himself in the same category of "whining Jew," Meyer is demonstrating an understanding of his circumstances of experiencing antisemitism that directly originates from his memories of his ancestors.

Meyer also references memories of this direct experience during his time at Swarthmore. One example is facing antisemitic comments on Yik-Yak, an anonymous social media platform localized to college campuses. Two antisemitic comments he recalls in his op-ed are a post asserting that "Jews should view their ethnic heritage as akin to being "descended from a Confederate officer" and that "anti-Semitism itself is a conspiracy invented by the Rothschild banking family to let Jews oppress people of color."[9] These two comments reflect antipathy towards Jews and the dismissal of antisemitism. Myers connects these recent personal memories of the dismissal of the existence of antisemitism to the dismissal of antisemitism that his recent ancestors experienced.

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[6] Adam Kirsch, "Why Jewish History Is So Hard to Write," *The New Yorker*, March 19, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/03/26/why-jewish-history-is-so-hard-to-write.

[7] Popularly the anti-Semitism as written with a dash and capital S refers to discrimination against people of Semitic origin, however, as read literally, it is opposing Semitism, a pseudoscientific term for the orientalizing study of Semitic peoples. As such, I use antisemitism and antisemitic in this paper, however some original quotes contain the popular spelling of the term.

[8] William Meyer, "A Response to Yesterday's Anti-Semitic Hate Crime," *The Phoenix,* September 1, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/01/37672/.

[9] Ibid.

This method of Holocaust remembrance is a common phenomenon experienced by descendants of Holocaust survivor families. In her article "Survivor Family Memory Work at Sites of Holocaust Remembrance Institutional Enlistment or Family Agency?," Carol A. Kidron explores the phenomenon by which Jewish youth are placed in their ancestors' shoes as part of their cultural education. Trips to Israel, such as those sponsored by organizations like Taglit-Birthright Israel, place a spotlight on individuals with Holocaust survivors or victims in their families.

Kidron explains that students with a familial connection to the Holocaust can have this connection emphasized (or in some cases explained) for the first time before a trip to Israel. This links directly with a phenomenon that the scholar on Jewish tourism to Israel and its political impact, Jackie Feldman, notes in his book *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity,* whereby students with direct Holocaust-connected ancestry are a crucial part of the memory that many Israeli-funded or -aligned Holocaust education programs tell to students. These students are often singled out and asked to tell their familial story of the Holocaust to the larger group of the students, and through this process become what Kidron calls "technologies of self of the vocal witness in the service of Holocaust memory,".[10] Meyer was acting in this exact role both while he recounted the story of his family's connection to the Holocaust when he wrote the op-ed in *The Phoenix*. The students on Swarthmore's campus at this time were primarily born between 1994-1998 and were witness to a massive boom in Holocaust memory culture creation.

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[10] Jackie Feldman, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 60-64. ; Carol A. Kidron. "Survivor Family Memory Work at Sites of Holocaust Remembrance: Institutional Enlistment or Family Agency?," *History and Memory* 27, no. 2 (September, 2015) 47.

In 1949, the Ghetto Fighters' House was opened in Akko, Israel. It was the first

institution created to record the history of the Holocaust, and its goal was primarily the

recollection of history. In 1953, Yad Vashem was founded with the specific goal of being. "The

World Center for Holocaust Remembrance." Yad Vashem plays a key role in developing the

historical memory of the Holocaust for the hundreds of thousands who visit it every year. Yad

Vashem is not a museum, but a "Holocaust Remembrance Center." Its name in Hebrew means

"A Memorial and a Name."[11] Throughout the 1950s and 60s various concentration camps

became open to the public, as did the Anne Frank House. Beginning in 1993 with the foundation

of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Fundación Memoria del Holocausto,

there would be a wellspring of new museums and memorials in the United States and abroad.[12]

These new sites of memory would create a new Holocaust memory culture for a new generation.

Students on Swarthmore's campus at the time would have had access to and been influenced by

the new memorials and museums being opened up at this time. In the United States, there are 27

Holocaust museums, education centers, and memorial museums, many of them opened after

1990.[13] As Lacin Idil Oztig writes: "Holocaust museums that are spread all around the world,

including the US, Australia, and South Africa, reflect the internationalization of the Holocaust

memorial culture."[14] For American college students in 2016, the memory had been readily

accessible to them and instrumental in shaping their memory of the Holocaust. While this

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[11] "Visit Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center," accessed April 21, 2023, https://www.yadvashem.org/visiting.html.

[12] Chelsey Parrott-Sheffer, "Holocaust Museum | Locations, History, Contents, & Facts | Britannica," April 19, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Holocaust-museum.

[13] "Holocaust Museums near the Us," Holocaust museums near the us, accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.google.com/maps/search/holocaust+museums+in+the+us/@33.0842258,-108.2506215,4z/data=!4m2!2m1!6e1.

[14] Lacin Idil Oztig, "Holocaust Museums, Holocaust Memorial Culture, and Individuals: A Constructivist Perspective," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 22, no. 1 (January 2023): 62–83, https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2021.2011607.

memory culture was readily available in the United States, it was also growing stronger in Israel, Yad Vashem underwent massive renovations in 2005 opening the New Holocaust History Museum and the Visual Center.[15]

A personal remembrance of the Holocaust, such as personally created memory is the byproduct of conscious design decisions in museums like Yad Vashem and the USHMM. As Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich writes in her book *Holocaust Memory Reframed*, specific design decisions were made in these museums "..in an effort to metaphorically overcome geographic and temporal-and thereby psychological-distance."[16] The goal of these museums is to connect the visitors of these museums to the lived experience of the Jews during the Holocaust regardless of if they have a familial connection. William Meyers' earlier statement that "... many, if not most, of the Jews you meet here [Swarthmore College] had grandparents, great-grandparents, or other family members who were tortured and killed [in the Holocaust]."[17] is erroneous given the well-established American-Jewish community before the Holocaust that many American Jews are descended from. Museums like Yad Vashem and the USHMM focus on connecting these non-Holocaust-descended Jews to the experience of Holocaust victims. At Vad Yeshem, in 2005, the new Holocaust History Museum was opened, Hansen-Glucklich says of its architecture:

> The new Holocaust History Museum demonstrates the power of evocative architecture as it creates in its visitors an empathetic, visceral identification with the victims of the Holocaust and inspires a redemptive reading of its narrative.[18]

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[15] "Events 2005 | Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center," accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.yadvashem.org/about/events/2005.html.

[16] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich. *Holocaust Memory Reframed* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 6.

[17] William Meyer, "A Response to Yesterday's Anti-Semitic Hate Crime," *The Phoenix,* September 1, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/01/37672/.

[18] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 66.

The experience of American Jews visiting these locations and their perceptions would be identification with the victims of the Holocaust regardless of family connection.

The change in memory between Dawass' interview and her remarks in the Phoenix article written at the time represents the largest contrast in memory between the swastika graffiti event and my interviews seven years later. At the time of the event, Dawass expressed dissatisfaction with the response of the college administration and other student groups to the incident. In an interview for a *Phoenix* article titled "How Swarthmore Reacted to McCabe Swastikas," Dawass says: "[Other groups] didn't go out of their way to have conversations about it." This remark combined with what *The Phoenix* terms as "…disappointment that only Kehilah reacted with a dedicated event." indicates displeasure with the response.[19] However, by the time of my interview with Dawass, this perspective had changed and she instead said "I remember being really pleased."[20] This change in memory can be attributed to several factors, most likely that in the ensuing time the perpetrator of the graffiti was found and there was a larger response from the administration after multiple incidents of graffiti occurred.

Another memory that has changed between the time of the event and the present is her memory surrounding Jewish first-year students on campus. First-year students are mentioned in both *The Phoenix* article and in my interview with Dawass. Dawass notes that she remembers new students being very concerned that Swarthmore was not going to be a safe and inclusive environment, given that this incident occurred during their first week on campus. In her interview for *The Phoenix*, Dawass says: "as the conversation [a Kehiliah meeting in Bond Memorial Hall] progressed the first-year appeared to become more comfortable."[21] However, in

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[19] Eduard Saakashvili, "How Swarthmore Reacted to McCabe Swastikas (Includes Photo)," September 6, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/06/37802/.
[20] Simona Dawass, Oral history interview with author, phone call, March 4, 2023.
[21] Eduard Saakashvili, "How Swarthmore Reacted to McCabe Swastikas (Includes Photo)," *The Phoenix,* September 6, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/06/37802/.

her recollection during our interview Dawass says that she does not remember students, "feeling

as safe or comfortable in Kehilah,"[22] and although some had been active the first week, they

became much less involved. These two gaps represent conflicting remembrances, in one case

Dawass' recollections are more positive given space and time as reflected by her response that

she was pleased with the administration's response. In the other case, Dawass' memory is that of

a less positive outcome than the one that she comments on to *The Phoenix*. As readers, we see a

student scared away from remaining active in Jewish life on campus rather than one who "feels

more comfortable."

Dawass commented that she believed the political culture in the United States caused by

the 2016 election was linked to the incidents. She draws a direct connection by making several

comments in her interview about the role she thought the 2016 election played in the incident,

and through this, we can see how the 2016 incident shaped her perspective of the incident and

also how her memory of the Holocaust and antisemitism as evoked by the incident affect her

remembrance of the incident. Dawass says of 2016: "I don't know if that discovery, or even like

this debris of the swastikas caused any particular friction on campus, or was the start of any

particular friction on campus. It was just like a weird time to be living on a college campus,

especially a very liberal one. There was like a lot of negativity in the air, always."[23] Dawass

follows with a comment about the difficulty in finding a balance that allows free expression

while not hurting people. She again references the student who was "scared off" by the graffiti

incidents. In doing so, she taps into the larger body of thought on how graffiti like this falls

between hate speech and First Amendment rights. Symbols such as the swastika act as powerful

sites of memory whereby the memory of their history is evoked by them, as is the nature of

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[22] Simona Dawass, Oral history interview with author, phone call, March 4, 2023.
[23] Ibid.

symbolic objects. Because the Swastika is so intimately tied with antisemitism as the emblem of a regime whose memory is defined by antisemitism, it can not be seen without evoking that memory.

Another such symbol witnessed at Swarthmore's sister school Bryn Mawr, the Confederate flag, sparked a similar discussion. In 2014 two Bryn Mawr students displayed a Confederate flag in a common room in a dormitory and created a "Mason-Dixon Line" with neon tape through the space. What followed was over a week of protesting and a discussion about diversity and inclusion on campus. The flag evoked this controversy because of the memory of what the flag stands for. As an article published by a student newspaper at the time states, "The flag [the Confederate "Stars and Bars"], which served as a national symbol of the slaveholding South during the Civil War, maintains a strong anti-Black connotation for many."[24] While the flag displayed was not the actual national flag of the Confederacy, but rather the "Stars and Bars," the flag adopted by segregationists in the 1940s-60s, it retains the anti-Black connotations of the official flag of the Confederacy for many. Symbols can retain their meaning even when divorced from their original context. Such as the swastika being spray painted by someone of presumably no association with the Third Reich. Swarthmore students and Bryn Mawr students at the time reflect on the feeling of insecurity they felt as the "bubble" of safety and tolerance they felt their campuses to be was violated by this hate.[25][26]

The debate surrounding hate speech versus freedom of expression in both of these cases serves as examples of instrumental presentism. Presentism is the role the present plays in shaping

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[24] Bobby Zipp, "Bryn Mawr Campus Roiled by Confederate Flag, Mason-Dixon Line in Dormitory," *The Phoenix*, September 25, 2014, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/09/25/bryn-mawr-campus-roiled-by-confederate-flag-mason-dixon-line-in-dormitory/.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Eduard Saakashvili, "How Swarthmore Reacted to McCabe Swastikas (Includes Photo)," *The Phoenix*, September 6, 2016, https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/09/06/37802/.

and understanding historical memory. Presentism emerged because as Maurice Halbwachs puts it

"…the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present."[27] History is

remembered in the shadow of present events. At the same time, the interpretation of memory is

shaped, "constituted by the commandments of our present society."[28] In my interview with

Simona Dawass, I saw how the current conversations regarding free speech and public

acceptance of antisemitism shaped her memory of the Holocaust and in the reverse how those

current events colored the remembrance of the Holocaust. This phenomenon is reflected in the

parallels that they draw in both directions, equating the present with the past. This understanding

of history, Jewish history, in this case, acts as a way to make the past present.

Instrumental presentism is also a tool used in a lot of historical memory work, such as

that done by pro-Israeli education programs. Museums such as Yad Vashem and organizations

such as Birthright use the memory of the Holocaust and antisemitism as justification for the

policies of the nation of Israel. The website for Yad Vashem has a section titled "Holocaust

Survivors and the State of Israel." The picture shows a man in the striped uniform assigned to

prisoners in concentration camps holding the flag of Israel.[29] A striking image that creates an

immediate association between Holocaust survivors and the existence of Israel as a refuge for

them. As James E. Young says in his chapter "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in

History" for the book *Cultural Memory Studies,* "Memory of the Holocaust is never shaped in a

vacuum, and the motives for such memory are never pure."[30] As recent as 2006, before a

planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Israeli settlers wore orange stars on their sleeves

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[27] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 1992). 40.
[28] Ibid. 50.
[29] "Holocaust Survivors and the State of Israel | Yad Vashem," accessed April 21, 2023, https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/survivors/index.asp.
[30] "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History," in *Cultural Memory Studies*, vol. 8, Media and Cultural Memory / Medien Und Kulturelle Erinnerung (Germany: De Gruyter, Inc, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110207262.6.357. 357.

reminiscent of those worn by Jewish citizens in Nazi-dominated countries.[31] The memory of the

Holocaust serves not only as a reason for the creation of Israel but also for its sustained

existence. The continued occupation of Palestine, military actions against the Palestinian people,

and erasure of Palestinian culture are justified by the supposed need for a Jewish homeland in the

wake of the Holocaust.[32]

Professor Dalia Ofer, an Israeli Professor born in Palestine who experienced life with

Holocaust survivors daily as a child, explains how Israel strove to create a narrative by which

historical memory coupled with Zionist ethos justified and normalized the existence of a Jewish

state: "Israel was aiming to construct a master narrative of the Holocaust that would ensure

recognition of the major elements of the Zionist ethos of destruction and rebirth and those of

exile and redemption by utilizing the tools it had devised—Yad Vashem, state ceremonies, and

the educational system."[33] All of these act as tools of memory, by which the destruction of

Palestine that was is completed, and in its place a Jewish state, Israel is born. This is not possible,

or at least its feasibility is severely limited, without the use of memory politics by the Israeli

government. This project requires reaching out to Jews, especially young Jews, in the diaspora

and gaining their support for Israel. This outreach benefits Israel in two main ways. First, it

reaches young Jews who might not otherwise experience Israel and strives to build a positive

opinion of Israel through trips to Israel, educational programs, or other cultural, educational, or

religious activities. Secondly, this programming appeals to older Israeli and diaspora Jews by

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[31] Ofer, Dalia. "We Israelis Remember, But How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience." *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 70. https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.18.2.70.
[32] Weiner, Melissa F. "Palestinian Erasure and Dehumanization in Introductory Sociology Texts." *Critical Sociology* 49, no. 6 (September 1, 2023): 993. https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205221132839.
[33]Ofer, Dalia. "We Israelis Remember, But How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience." *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 75. https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.18.2.70.

showing cultural Jewish education and the success of Zionist programs. This wins support for these types of programs and allows them to expand and reach more young Jews. It is crucial to understand that much of the memory culture experienced by these young Jews, including those on Swarthmore's campus in 2016, was the result of a deliberate decision to create a specific memory and memorialize the Holocaust.

In a recent article for *The New Yorker*, Masha Gessen writes about how deeply Holocaust memory runs in Germany. Angela Merkel, former German chancellor stated that part of Germany's "Staatsräson", the reason for the existence of the state, was the security of Israel. In the aftermath of the acceleration of conflict in Israel beginning in early October 2023, Germany has taken drastic steps to prosecute antisemitism and ensure the safety of Jewish citizens.[34] This crackdown has been coupled with action against Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) protests against the Israeli government and Palestinian Solidarity protests and marches.[35] The German government's views on the current war in Gaza and on domestic protests are deeply colored by Holocaust memory culture, and this culture was intentionally created by Israel. While there is no conclusive current scholarship, due to the recency of events, in the past, perceptions of Palestinian Liberation and BDS Movements have been colored for some students, especially Jewish students, by Holocaust memory.

For Jewish students at Swarthmore, the memories of the Holocaust were not far from their minds as they witnessed an act of swastika graffiti and the ensuing conversation about antisemitism. At the same time, the conditions of the present were never far from their mind as

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[34] Gessen, Masha. "In the Shadow of the Holocaust." *The New Yorker*, December 9, 2023. https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-weekend-essay/in-the-shadow-of-the-holocaust.
[35] Shamir, Jonathan. "An Anti-Palestinian Crackdown Across Europe." Jewish Currents. Accessed December 14, 2023. https://jewishcurrents.org/an-anti-palestinian-crackdown-across-europe.

they remembered the Holocaust. The past and present acted in complement to each other,

shaping each other as history provided a lens through which to perceive the present, and

simultaneously, memories created through collective and familial remembrance existed in

service to the present. As students sought a way to cope with and understand the conditions they

were witnessing, they were engaging in one of the most important parts of Jewish identity,

zakhor. Zahkor, "to remember " in Hebrew, is an injunction repeated on holidays, issued

repeatedly to the Israelites is a core part of Jewish identity.[36] For Jews, "the past is never dead, its

not even past."[37] Rather it is a core part of the lived experience of Jews, especially those who live

in families and communities that strive to ensure the past is not forgotten through the continued

passing down of stories and traditions. This is supplemented by the memory work done by

organizations such as Birthright and institutions such as Yad Vashem that work to ensure the

continuity of Jewish memory and the identity so closely tied to it. The Holocaust and personal

and familial memories of antisemitism are instrumental in understanding how these Jewish

students perceived the world around them and debates about hate speech and Israel.

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[36] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Zakhor : Jewish History and Jewish Memory," 2011,
https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/ZTAwMHhuYV9fMTA1MjI5OV9fQU41
?sid=07dcb9be-cd15-402d-b80d-858743946c81@redis&vid=0&format=EB&lpid=lp_vii&rid=0.
[37] William Faulkner, and Noel. Polk. *Requiem for a Nun*. New York: Garland Pub., 1987.

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Conflict, Resistance, and Resolve: Uncovering Lost Narratives in Japanese-American Internment

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Abstract: By the end of 1942, the U.S. army and the national government had forcibly removed 120,000 Japanese descended individuals from their homes on the West Coast, confining them to ten internment camps across the nation. In an effort to construct a more accurate representation of the mindset of internees in the wartime era, my thesis hones in on conflict and division within camp life. I emphasize the heterogeneity of Japanese-American voices and push back against the oversimplification of the different internee subgroups: the Japan-born immigrants ("Issei"), U.S.-born citizens ("Nisei"), and Japan-educated Nisei who returned home before the war ("Kibei"). Throughout the course of the internment era, they have been characterized as "loyal" or "disloyal." The continued use of these labels, both in the wartime period and in the subsequent scholarship on internment, minimizes the complexity of internees' views. Their mindsets were shaped by the traumatic nature of removal, the treatment they received in the camps, and their fears about post-camp life. Depending on their individual experiences, internees chose to act in distinct ways. For example, some internees resisted governmental authority while others served as government informants. However, their choices were not necessarily indicative of undying loyalty to Japan or the United States. Through a case study of the Manzanar internment camp in California and the Poston internment camp in Arizona, I demonstrate that the "disloyal" and "loyal" labels provide an incomplete understanding of life in the camps. Deep disagreements shaped internees' experiences, and the intricacies of the internment experience are silenced through racialized assumptions about people of Japanese ancestry. With conflict as a lens for viewing the internment experience, a much clearer picture wartime Japanese American experiences comes to the forefront.

Reader's Note: Please note that this version of my thesis has been adapted for publication. I have only chosen to publish the second chapter (of three) and I have included a trimmed-down introduction and conclusion to provide more context on my overall work. My bibliography has not been altered and reflects the full list of sources that I consulted throughout my research.

Introduction

In 1980, almost four decades after Japanese American Internment took place, the United States Congress created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The Commission assessed Executive Order 9066, which officially mandated the exclusion of Japanese-descended individuals on the West Coast, and it reviewed the Army's handling of the removal and internment process.[1] Its work culminated in a 1983 report entitled *Personal Justice Denied*, which concluded that "careful review of the facts…has not revealed any security or military threat from the West Coast ethnic Japanese in 1942."[2] This was crucial because it completely invalidated the internment process and contradicted the endless "evidence" that had established the Japanese as an unpredictable danger to national security.

In the chapters that follow, I argue that "careful review" enables historians to gain a truer understanding of internment, one that extends beyond broad assumptions about the Japanese population. My research demonstrates that Japanese internees not only faced extreme racial prejudice, but also recognized it as such and pushed back against it. I emphasize the heterogeneity of Japanese-American voices from the late 1930s-1946, emphasizing conflict in the internment experience. Adopting a focus on conflict allows historians studying the internment era to explain another kind of racist wrong, which was the oversimplification of many different kinds of people under the labels of "disloyal" and "loyal." Deep disagreements shaped internees' experiences, and using racialized assumptions about Japanese-descended people to categorize internees creates silences in the internment narrative.

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[1] United States, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 455.
[2] Ibid, 455.

After conducting their investigation of internment, the Commission concluded that "the broad historical causes which shaped…[internment]...were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."[3] Outwardly acknowledging the role of racial discrimination in the decision to intern the Japanese-descended population from the West Coast was key, as notable governmental actors denied these same claims throughout the wartime period. The Commission also struck down the "military necessity" rationale that justified the internment process and led to a "loss of property and personal liberty" for the internees.[4] In acknowledging the material and psychological effects of internment, the Commission constituted the first true example of the government taking responsibility for its decisions during WWII. Although these conclusions were drawn long after internment had ended, they were still a notable step in recognizing the power of racial stereotypes and the grave mistake that the government made by mandating internment.

Ultimately, the Commission's findings resulted in passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, a landmark piece of legislation that provided reparations for the Japanese Americans who had been interned. The text of the act declared that:

> "(1) a grave injustice was done to citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry by the evacuation, relocation, and internment of civilians during World War II; (2) these actions were without security reasons and without any acts of espionage or sabotage documented by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, and were motivated by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership; (3) the excluded individuals suffered enormous damages for which appropriate compensation has not been made; and (4) the Congress apologizes on behalf of the Nation."[5]

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[3] Ibid, 18.
[4] Ibid, 457-458.
[5] Library of Congress, "Summary: H.R.442 — 100th Congress (1987-1988)," Congress.gov, last modified July 26, 1988, https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-bill/442#:~:text=Title%20I%3A%20United%20States%20Citizens,because%20they%20refused%20to%20accept.

Along with this statement, the act ordered the Attorney General to find individuals who were eligible

for reparations and pay each of them $20,000 in damages.[6] In making these powerful claims and

issuing reparations, Congress invalidated every aspect of the Executive Order and the pieces of

"evidence" that were gathered against Japanese-descended individuals to support internment. The

language of the act also acknowledges the racial prejudice that permeated every stage of the removal

process, a reality that was vehemently denied in the internment era itself.

For two to three decades after World War II and internment had ended, the historical

scholarship on Japanese American internment was written from the perspective of the War Relocation

Authority (WRA), the federal government, and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). The

reasons for this were two-fold: 1) historians researching internment were analyzing primary sources

that had been produced by these groups, leading to a subconscious representation of these dominant

perspectives and 2) the JACL took deliberate steps to disseminate a portrayal of Japanese Americans

(Nisei) as a model minority and in doing so, obscured the harmful effects of racism.

In 1960, the JACL National President, Shigeo Wakamatsu, announced the beginning of the

Japanese American Research Project (JARP), which was intended to document Japanese American

history and present the group as trustworthy citizens in the aftermath of WWII.[7] Researchers worked

closely with the JACL to publish books that highlighted the organization's activism as well as their

collaboration with the federal government. Bill Hosokawa was a prominent historian who took part in

JARP, publishing *Nisei*: *The Quiet Americans* in 1969. The publication of his book embodies both of

the issues outlined above. One instance of Hosokawa's subconscious portrayal of governmental figures

occurs in his discussion of WRA director Dillon Myer and the loyalty questionnaire of 1943.[8]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Katie L. Furuyama, "Imagining Equality, Constructing Ethnicity, Race, Identity, and Nation: The Japanese American Citizens League and the League of United Latin American Citizens" (PhD diss., University of California Irvine, 2012), 82, https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/imagining-equality-constructing-ethnicity-race/docview/920153327/se-2?accountid=14707.

[8] I will discuss the loyalty questionnaire in detail in Chapter Three.

Questions No. 27 and 28 were particularly contentious, asking if the internees would denounce their allegiance to any country other than the United States. The government modified question 28 in response to negative reactions that arose in the camps, specifically by the Issei. Answering the question affirmatively meant that they had to renounce their citizenship to Japan, the only country they had citizenship in. While this is merely one example of the complexity of the loyalty questionnaire, Hosokawa provides a very surface level analysis of the "No" responses to questions 27 and 28. He uses the reasoning of Dillon Myer, director of the WRA, to explain these answers—thus ruling out any varying perspectives. According to Myer, "most of the ["no" replies] were expressions of people who had failed to become integrated into their prewar communities, who were weary of fighting against discrimination, [and] who were unhappy with the way they had been treated in the Evacuation."[9] In this sense, Hosokawa took Myer's perspective as fact, failing to recognize possible deeper motivations for the internees.

Additionally, a major part of Hosokawa's analysis involves deemphasizing the role of resisters within the camps. By labeling the Nisei as "quiet Americans" in the title of his book, Hosokawa frames the Japanese American community as less problematic and disturbing in the camps. He also advances a heroic depiction of the JACL, praising the way it swept in to deal with the resistance that did occur amongst the internee community more generally. In fact, one of Hosokawa's chapter titles is "The Dedicated JACL-ers," and within it, he emphasizes that the "JACL… proceeded with its work quietly and usually effectively despite the inclination of substantial numbers of evacuees to blame it for everything from the evacuation decision to inadequate food in the camps."[10] Essentially, he frames the work of the JACL as noble and brave despite the onslaught of criticism they faced within the camps.

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[9] Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, rev. ed. (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2002), 365.
[10] Ibid, 387.

Gradually, this WRA/JACL perspective began to crumble, as other historians gained more access to primary sources that highlighted the perspectives of the internees themselves. The essay "The Manzanar Riot: An Ethnic Perspective," written by Arthur A. Hansen and David A. Hacker in 1974, is one of the first works to make this switch and expose previously hidden perspectives. As the title suggests, the authors adopt what they call an "ethnic perspective" on analyzing the Manzanar Riot, which occurred in December 1942 at the Manzanar internment Camp.[11] Prior to delving into their argument, the authors explain how the WRA/JACL perspective downplayed the riot's cultural significance in the Japanese American community.[12] Proponents of the WRA/JACL perspective tended to use language that reduced the significance of the riot to a one time "incident." Using the word "riot" or other terms that indicated deep-rooted grievances would have undermined the WRA's image and the way their policies were viewed by the American populace.[13]

This trend of exposing new interpretations continued in the works of historians who looked to provide new viewpoints on the years leading up to internment as well as The Pacific War as a whole. A key historiographical turning point was Roger Daniels's *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (1971), which utilized racism as a lens throughout the course of the book. He argued that the commonly known "military necessity" rationale, which originated in government documents and was re-emphasized in secondary literature, was just an excuse to cover up the true driving factors behind internment. He boldly asserts that "the myth of military necessity was used as a fig leaf for a particular variant of American racism."[14] While he gives the most weight to racism in his analysis, he also highlights other factors, such as political motives and the personal attitudes of government officials.

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[11] The Manzanar Riot and its background will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

[12] The WRA/JACL perspective refers to the viewpoint of WRA and JACL themselves along with the ideas of historians who adopted it in the secondary literature about the riot itself.

[13] Arthur A. Hansen and David A. Hacker, "The Manzanar Riot: An Ethnic Perspective," *Amerasia Journal* 2, no. 2 (1974): 119.

[14] Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), 71.

In regards to the Pacific War on a larger scale, John Dower's *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1983) traces the long history of anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast, and he delves extensively into the "foreignizing" of Japanese immigrants to the U.S. as well as Japanese Americans. Japanese-descended individuals were constantly dehumanized in propaganda and in the media as a whole, which helped reconcile the contradictory views of Japanese as "lesser than" *and* superhuman.[15] In this sense, the mainstream media framed the Japanese as inferior while also cultivating intense fear about Japanese prowess and abilities; both of these arguments would help to justify internment in the minds of the American people. Dower emphasizes that the main difference between the Japanese enemy in Asia and the German enemy was that the hatred for the Japanese enemy was deeply rooted in racial bias as opposed to the events of the war itself. Dower's work was extremely impactful in that it offered a racial analysis of WWII's Pacific front that had not been explored before.

Additionally, Brian Hayashi's book, *Democratizing the Enemy: Japanese American Internment* (2004) features a broader perspective on the period of internment as a whole. He analyzes cultural, social, economic, and other factors that led to the mass removal and internment of Japanese Americans and Japanese-born immigrants. He is part of a large body of scholars who gained access to previously unseen documents after the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and once reparations began to be distributed to all former internees.[16] Many of these documents came from former internees, and with these sources in mind, Hayashi focuses largely on the "wider, global context influencing decision makers and the victims."[17] With views becoming more polarized as the war

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[15] John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, 7th ed (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1993), 89.
[16] Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 7. In addition to Hayashi, I will consult a variety of revisionist works, including the following: Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011). Cherstin M. Lyon, *Prisons and Patriots: Japanese American Wartime Citizenship, Civil Disobedience, and Historical Memory* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2012). Peter H. Irons, *Justice at War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983). Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003).
[17] Ibid, 5.

began, the removal and internment of these varying groups would prove to be problematic in the camps–these tensions are explored by Hayashi later on in his book. While this is only a brief discussion of Hayashi's focus, the emergence of a plethora of new documents in recent years has allowed other researchers to gain more insight into individual Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrant pre-war communities, as well as personal experiences in the internment camps.

My thesis adopts a similar framework as Hayashi in the sense that I will explore a variety of factors in regards to internment–not just race. However, my approach differs in that it will hone in on the viewpoints of dissenting individuals in an environment where there were severe restrictions on their ability to express their personal and political opinions. The JACL dominated the already limited political space in the internment camps because of their fervent commitment to Americanism, making it crucial to uncover voices that have traditionally been minimized. Given this context, I will examine the ways in which those deemed "loyal" and "disloyal" interacted with one another and how they saw each other's viewpoints. Part of this process involves exploring the relationship between "loyal" individuals and the government, exemplified through the JACL's official policy of cooperation that persisted prior to removal, through internment, and into the post-war era. When considering "disloyal" individuals, I will investigate the reasoning behind their actions and explain their mindset as a product of years of anti-Japanese discrimination, the trauma of the removal experience, life in the internment camps, and concerns about their welfare in the post-war era. In regards to both "loyal" and "disloyal" individuals, I will question traditional notions of who belonged to each category and critically examine the idea that certain segments of the Japanese population belonged to one category or the other. My approach focuses on conflict, encompassing mass resistance and everyday acts of rebellion.

To accomplish this goal of bringing conflict to the forefront of the internment narrative, my thesis is structured into three chapters. In Chapter One, I delve into the factors that led to internment, exploring the racial stereotypes that Japanese individuals faced and the pervasiveness of negative public opinion towards the Japanese. Through the use of governmental and Army sources, I

demonstrate the different factors that allowed internment to occur in the first place. However, I also outline the activism of the JACL during this time period, exposing their economic, social, and cultural arguments against internment. These pleas against mass internment occurred alongside their commitment to cooperating with whatever decision the government chose to act on, their definition of the show of loyalty that caused division within the Japanese community.

The JACL is a multi-generational, long-standing institution that still exists today. The modern day JACL is not the same as the JACL that operated in the 1940s, and while the organization has inherited elements of its past, the context in which it now works is vastly different. The wartime JACL aligned itself with the government in the WWII era, looking to protect Japanese Americans by portraying them as loyal citizens. Prior to removal, the JACL distanced itself from what the U.S. government saw as threatening elements of the Japanese population. Within the internment period, their strategy involved the repression of conflict and resistance in the camps, which did not comply with their definition of national allegiance. In the post-war period, the JACL looked to advance the experiences of "loyal" Japanese American soldiers at the expense of stories of resistance. Throughout the following chapters, I contextualize the organization's actions at different points in its history, and I analyze how the wartime JACL and the government advanced a joint narrative that effectively erased dissenting internee perspectives. This slanted narrative then persisted into the post-war period and has since been reproduced by historians, obscuring the truth about life in the internment camps.

After having established important background knowledge on internment, Chapter Two represents the core of my thesis with its assertion that conflict characterized the Japanese internment experience and that it should be at the center of debates about how it is remembered. This chapter primarily relies on sources created by internees to expose their thought processes and beliefs, both of which are important to understanding why certain internees chose to resist and why others did not. To focus my argument, I utilize two case studies: 1) the Poston Strike of November 1942 and 2) the Manzanar Riot of December 1942. These two acts of resistance are the most notable instances of

violence and division in the camps, and are extremely useful in exploring the division between "disloyal" and "loyal" individuals. It is in this chapter that I challenge traditional notions of who belonged to each of these categories, and how internees conceptualized themselves in the internment environment. While these two camps are not representative of all of the internment camps and the experiences that internees had, they are a valuable starting point for challenging ideas about conflict in this complex historical era.

In order to emphasize the importance of the internee perspective, Chapter Three delves into the governmental narratives that persisted during the internment era. This perspective goes hand in hand with that of the JACL, who closely allied with the government and helped provide insider information from within the camps to governmental authorities. This chapter revolves around the idea that the government erased the complex perspectives of internees for its own goals, which were closely tied to propaganda and public image. Understanding how the government reacted to Manzanar and Poston as well as their point of view on initiatives such as the loyalty questionnaire reveal the simplification of internee perspectives and the downplaying of resistance.

In addition to online resources, my thesis draws heavily on archival sources from my research trips to California, Washington D.C., and College Park, MD. While I was in California, I visited the Bancroft Library at the University of California Berkeley, where I focused my attention on microfilm reels from within the internment camps themselves. In addition to Bancroft, I visited the Japanese American National Library in San Francisco, which provided me with access to personal papers from key players in the Manzanar Riot as well as governmental correspondence regarding questions of loyalty during the internment era. By visiting both branches of the National Archives in Washington D.C. and Maryland, I gained access to a considerable amount of governmental sources which contributed to the third chapter of my thesis. These sources helped to cement the government's perspective on important topics such as loyalty, the Poston Strike and the Manzanar Riot, and they also demonstrated the way the government took action in these situations. While visiting the National

Archives, I also gained access to microfilm reels of internee publications from within the camps, which were useful in tracking the ways in which internees, both "loyal" and "disloyal," reacted to life in the internment period. While my thesis hinges on the importance of internee perspectives, the use of government sources is crucial to contrasting these narratives and emphasizing the importance of doing away with generalizations about internee points of view.

My thesis directly challenges the strict labels that have been used to describe internment and thus demonstrates the centrality of division to the internment experience. The ideas and perspectives of the internee population were fluid and ever changing, just as the WWII environment was unpredictable. More specifically, the evidence that I present combats the idea that the Japanese American citizens were a homogenous group, unwavering in their patriotism and loyalty. In reality, internees operated outside of the boundaries that they were arbitrarily assigned to, each with their own reasons for fighting against or supporting the WRA and the government. The ambiguity of the internment camp experience provides a truer understanding of the lives of all internees, and makes space for the uncertainty that existed in day to day life. Aside from portraying a more accurate view of the internment era, embracing ambiguity prevents historians from inheriting the erasures that have persisted in discussions of Japanese American internment.

Important to the construction of my thesis is the acknowledgement of the fact that internee perspectives can be difficult to uncover. Internees were greatly limited in their ability to express themselves and thus the source material that is left behind is minimal. The oppressive nature of the internment camps limited the number of sources written by Japanese and Japanese Americans and in many cases, sources written by internees were heavily influenced by the WRA and the government as a whole. Thus, the governmental sources that I employ throughout my thesis demonstrate the government's oversimplification of internment, but I also use them to investigate internee perspectives in a new way. Sociological reports, for example, are one way in which non-Japanese perspectives were instrumental in highlighting internees' mindsets.

In 2012, the JACL began an educational campaign entitled "Power of Words," aimed at "understand[ing] language euphemisms used to describe the Japanese American World War II experience and the preferred terminology that more accurately describes the dire realities of the experience."[18] For example, they encourage the use of the term "incarceration" as opposed to "internment": "The word incarceration more accurately describes those held in WRA camps. Incarcerate…reflects the prison-like conditions faced by Japanese Americans as well as the view that they were treated as if guilty of sabotage, espionage, and/or suspect loyalty."[19] Although I appreciate the JACL's perspective and the imagery that the word "incarcerate" invokes, I prefer the term "internment" to better highlight the wartime context. Additionally, I use the term "internee" as opposed to "evacuee" when referencing the Japanese Americans and others that were forcibly removed from their homes in 1942. While some secondary sources uncritically refer to these individuals as evacuees, the term minimizes the negative effects of the internment process.[20] "Evacuee" suggests that the Japanese on the West Coast were merely evacuated to protect the nation, which grossly distorts their experience. Employing the term "evacuee" thus downplays the significance of the internment era and ignores the history of life within the camps, as it treats forced removal as a temporary inconvenience.

I argue that conflict and division are central to understanding Japanese American internment, and that this tension stemmed in part from government and JACL definitions of who was "loyal" and "disloyal." Understanding the variety of perspectives that emerged in the camps is complicated due to the erasure of dissenting opinions. This erasure proliferated in the internment era but was also inherited

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[18] Japanese American Citizens League, "The Power of Words," Japanese American Citizens League, last modified 2013, https://jacl.org/power-of-words.

[19] Japanese American Citizens League, comp., *Power of Words Handbook* (San Francisco, CA: NATIONAL JACL POWER OF WORDS II COMMITTEE, 2013), 10, https://jacl.org/power-of-words.

[20] Prior to the publication of Roger Daniels's 1971 work *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II*, historians uncritically adapted government euphemisms (such as evacuation, evacuee, relocation) in their studies of internment. Beginning in the 1970s and in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, the role of racism became more important in Japanese American internment studies. In this new context, government terms began to be called into question and historians replaced these terms with words that were more appropriate to the experiences of Japanese descended individuals (such as internee, internment, removal).

by subsequent historians. These silences take away the agency of Japanese Americans who risked their lives to express dissent. The JACL and U.S. government representations that minimize this fact feed into a stereotype of Japanese Americans as loyal and cooperative, one that endures to the present. My thesis works against this erasure to highlight underrepresented voices.

While the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was a victory for the Japanese Americans who had suffered throughout the internment process, it does not represent a complete understanding of internment history. Awarding reparations is not a conclusion to the internment experience–the stories from the period live on to reveal the complexity of life in the camps. Governmental narratives of internment downplay the conflict and division that existed in between internees, suggesting that all Japanese Americans possessed an unwavering loyalty to the U.S. The Japanese American Citizens League has reinforced this narrative, neglecting the stories of individuals who did not fit this mold.[21] The 1988 Act is a symbol of progress, but internment history is not a matter of the past. The internee experience and the infractions of the government are still relevant to the way that Japanese Americans interact within society today.

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[21] More background on the JACL as an organization as well as their claims will be discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter Two: Forming New Identities: Life and Conflict in the Internment Camps

Despite the greatest efforts of the JACL, forced removal was mandated by the U.S. government and General DeWitt's civilian exclusion orders were disseminated across Military Areas No. 1 and No. 2. By August 1942, the army had forcibly removed all individuals of Japanese descent from both military areas.[22] Later that same year, internees undertook two major acts of resistance: the Poston Strike in November 1942, and the Manzanar Riot in December 1942. Due to the fact that two key acts of organized resistance took place during the first year of internment, it can be tempting to posit 1942 as the primary year of struggle in the camps. However, such a view is extremely limiting and suggests that the entirety of internment was not a divisive and jarring experience. In light of this, this chapter will argue that dissent and conflict characterized the Japanese internment experience and should be at the center of debates about how it is remembered.

This chapter analyzes two large scale acts of resistance from the internment period, the Poston Strike of November 1942 and the Manzanar Riot of December 1942. Using archival documents to explore the sentiments of those deemed "resisters" offers insights into the types of stressors that persisted long after the conflicts had ended. Utilizing these events is crucial because there is a misconception that internees seldom resisted, and Poston and Manzanar are often posited as exceptions to this narrative. I argue that these events are emblematic of sentiments that *persisted* from the start of internment until it ended. By exploring the complexity of the internee population, the evidence presented here demonstrates that Nisei also joined acts of resistance, and that the Poston Strike and Manzanar Riot do not depart from the norm of camp life. Resistance was an everyday part of the internment camp experience, and internees across the nation protested their situation.

Furthermore, internees who resisted the authority of the WRA did so not as a single departure in their lives but rather as a part of who they were. Viewing internment in the context of the past and

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[22] Brian Niiya, "Civilian Exclusion Orders," Densho Encyclopedia, last modified June 12, 2020, accessed September 2, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Civilian_exclusion_orders.

acknowledging its implications for the future reveals more about pre-war times, Japanese culture, familial structure, socioeconomic patterns, and overall, provides a more accurate picture of its impact on the individuals involved. I take this approach because the internees did not live in a fixed state where their actions in the present were not affected by their past experiences or their thoughts about the future. Not only did they live in a dynamic, ever-changing world that was plagued by World War II, but they tied their own experiences and thoughts to the events of the world at large. In order to understand life in the camps and the reasoning behind divisions in the internee population, internment should be viewed as a continuation of the past and as an element that helped shape the future.

Upon arrival in the camps, internees were forced to adjust to a completely new and unfamiliar environment where they were confronted with the fact that aliens and citizens alike, regardless of their demonstrations of loyalty, were considered dangerous to the United States. By forming religious organizations, arranging recreational activities, and producing publications, internees reclaimed aspects of their prior lives and created a sense of normalcy in a situation that they could not control. By participating in such activities and choosing where to devote their energies, internees regained some autonomy over their lives and forged their own narratives of internment. Publications are helpful when looking to gain insight into the mindset of internees, as they were directly written and produced by the Japanese in the camps–not the WRA administration. Although internees wrote these publications, their level of influence on the publications can be difficult to determine. In many cases, the administration determined appropriate topics of discussion, obscuring the perspectives of the internees. Additionally, the administration's influence often led to an evasion of the problems within the camps. Many publications failed to capture the true nature of the camps and the divisions that existed. Examples from within the Poston camp include newspapers from the Young Buddhist Association, the Bussei Bugle, Choir Times, and Library News, as well as special editions such as the Poston New Year's Festival and the Poston Christmas edition. While it would be a mistake to assume that *all* publications within the internment camps imposed a more positive view of internment and encouraged residents to

look away from the tensions that existed, there are plenty of examples of this perspective. Publications

that consistently deemphasized the struggles of internment deepened the divide between those who

supported the U.S. government's actions and those who were unwilling to accept internment by

enforcing an inaccurate version of reality. Internees lived in an environment that limited their ability to

voice their opinions, even in situations where they had some control. Therefore, acts of resistance are

crucial to reconstructing how internees reclaimed agency over their lives and fought for change.

Poston New Year's Festival Publication

Before discussing the Poston Strike and the Manzanar Riot, I will explore an example of a

publication that minimizes the strenuous nature of camp life and hides dissenting narratives. A

publication for the New Year's Festival at Poston, produced six weeks after the strike, emphasized the

way in which the camp population was able to overcome the obstacles of internment and the conflicts

that had occurred. This pamphlet was produced by internees who were a part of the Unit II committee

that was organizing the festival. In this sense, the pamphlet was not part of a larger newspaper

publication. Instead, it contained a program for the New Year's Concert along with the variety of

activities that were planned for the internees. An article from the Poston Chronicle discusses the

committee's efforts, explaining that they were "working practically 24 hours a day," and that the

committee anticipated that "'our Festival is going to be a smashing success!'"[23] While it is not

outlandish to argue that internees became more aware of the different elements of camp life and grew

into a routine, the idea of a "new spirit" in the community was not an attitude shared by all internees;

this reality will be explored later in this chapter.[24]

This New Year publication by Unit II at Poston is intriguing because the authors had a clear

understanding of their position in American society as well as the internment process. Their emphasis

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[23] "Poston Two New Year Festival Plans Going Ahead Despite Xmas Holiday Festivities," *Poston Chronicle* (Poston, AZ), December 25, 1942, 2, accessed November 2, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83025333/1942-12-25/ed-1/?q=Christmas&sp=2&st=text&r=0.073,-0.049,0.904,0.722,0.

[24] "Poston New Year's Festival," January 1, 1943, Reel 30, Record Group 210: Records of the War Relocation Authority, 1941-1989, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington D.C, 1.

on unity, cooperation, and the "new spirit" was not based in ignorance or a misunderstanding of the government's decisions. The introductory page had a statement from John Maeno, Chairman of the Community Congress for Unit II, in which he discussed the tribulations of 1942 and the circumstances of the camps. He emphasized that the residents of Poston "came to this desert, jungle which was baked in unimaginable heat and intolerable dust under most unwelcome, undemocratic, and unAmerican circumstances."[25] Not only was Maeno aware of the struggle behind removal and the difficulty of life in the internment camps, he directly addressed its "unAmerican" nature. Despite this, the publication as a whole actively chose to place emphasis on the unity and character of Poston, urging residents to carry their resolve into the new year. While the Poston New Year's Bulletin is only one example of an internment camp publication that supported the government's activities, it reveals that the idea of being "pro-American" did not always come in the form of dramatic displays of patriotism. By diverting attention away from the divisions and struggles of internment, certain internees passively condoned the actions of the government and created conflicting narratives of the internment experience.

Poston Christmas Bulletin Publication

The Poston Christmas Bulletin emulated this forward-looking attitude in its New Year's Resolution section, highlighting internee views and not those of the administration. For instance, the first resolution explains that there should not be sighing or sadness at their current situation for "we salute our nation by doing this act."[26] Another resolution emphasized the importance of purity and denouncing crime, for behaving in this way was wise, virtuous, and representative of the United States as whole.[27] All of the resolutions that were published conveyed the sense of cooperation and duty to the United States that some of the internees felt. In essence, feelings of discontent and complaints were

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[25] Ibid, 1.
[26] "Poston Christmas Bulletin," December 1942, Reel 30, Record Group 210: Records of the War Relocation Authority, 1941-1989, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington D.C, 6.
[27] Ibid, 6.

being pushed to the side because complying with removal and living in the internment camps was seen

as a noble sacrifice. This perspective was closely aligned with the sentiments of the JACL in the pre-

internment era. In the JACL's efforts to prevent removal, they consistently reiterated that they were

against removal but would comply if it was the ultimate decision of the government. They viewed it as

a sacrifice for their nation and part of their duties as citizens, even though they did not see wholesale

removal as a necessary response to the perceived threat that Japanese-descended people posed.[28]

Similarly, the writers of the Poston Christmas Bulletin saw the act of consenting to the restriction of

their freedom and accepting life in the internment camps as honorable, as it would help secure the

future of the internees in the post-war era. By cooperating with the WRA and accepting camp life for

what it was, these individuals downplayed the true nature of internment. A negative consequence of

doing this was a false sense of peace and harmony in the internment process, and the suppression of

narratives that criticized the internment experience and the WRA.

The role of internee produced publications in evading the harmful elements of the internee

experience reveal the complex nature of the camp environment. Many of the publications showcased

the writing of internees that chose to cooperate with the government. Internees had different reasons

for writing narratives that promoted the government's narrative of unity in the camps; some of them

agreed with the government's rhetoric and others approved it for their own survival. Regardless of

internee motivations, these publications erased conflicts that occurred in the camps or at the very least

blurred the motivations of the internees involved. This form of "support" for the U.S. was not

necessarily active because it was not the same as individuals who pledged full allegiance to the U.S.

and were passionate about acts of loyalty such as military service, but it is still central to the

internment narrative. Regardless of the degree of any given internee's "pro-American" views, it is

obvious that some were alienated by such ideas. Living in the camps was directly antithetical to U.S.

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[28] Seattle Chapter Japanese American Citizens League, "Report Submitted to Tolan Congressional Committee on National Defense Migration," 2.

ideals of democracy, which raises the question of how people with such diverging perspectives were able to coexist, reside, and adapt to camp life with one another.

General Discontent in Poston: Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives

Despite internees' attempts to coexist in the oppressive environment of the internment camps, disagreements amongst the various internee groups proliferated. Although publications and WRA administrators attempted to strengthen the community and promote togetherness, it was extremely difficult for all the internee groups to coexist. One of the most prominent examples of the division and discontent that plagued the internment camps is the Poston Strike, which began to unfold on November 15th, 1942. In addition to a thorough analysis of the strike and its aftermath, understanding the conditions in Poston more generally is crucial to comprehending the dynamics of the camp and the thought processes of the internees.

While it can be tempting to view acts of resistance as the climax of tension and to assume that the levels of discontent decrease, this perspective suggests that some sort of resolution takes place after a conflict occurs. However, after the Poston Strike, sources of discontent did not disappear. Understanding these tensions and highlighting the fact that they still existed long after the strike reveals that despite the publications' discussion of unity and positivity looking into the new year of 1943, the camp was not a center of harmony and cooperation. While the New Year's Bulletin and the Christmas bulletin suggested otherwise, the idea of unity was certainly not shared by all. Common sources of discontent were the lack of information or the spread of inaccurate stories, the environment of the camp itself, inequalities between the administration and the internees, and frustration due to a lack of supplies and daily necessities.

In an effort to understand the internee population and their mindset, sociologists were sent to the camps to live amongst the internees and learn more about them. One prominent example was anthropologist John F. Embree, and his analysis of the internees provides more insight into the discontent that they felt. Embree was considered to be an expert on both mainland Japanese and

Japanese Americans, and one of his most notable studies was entitled *Suye Mura, A Japanese Village*, based on his fieldwork in Kumamoto, Japan.[29] He also engaged in anthropological research in a Japanese American community in Kona, Hawai'i, which led to the publication of *Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii*.[30] Due to his extensive expertise and knowledge of Japanese culture, attitudes, and dynamics, he was sought out by the WRA to assist them throughout the internment process. In his own notes, he explained that the occurrences and daily life at Poston were very well-documented by various researchers. He highlighted the "large scale study of the whole project" by Dr. Alexander Leighton and Ned Spicer from the Bureau of Sociological Research, and their focus on capturing the sentiments of internees *and* administrators.[31] Although Embree's remarks cannot be taken with absolute certainty due to his positionality as a white man who was not subjected to the racial motivations that resulted in internment, his conclusions are still useful in understanding the internees' thought processes.

In September of 1942, prior to the strike, Embree discussed the resentment that some internees felt due to the fact that Poston was overstaffed. The main reason behind this problem in Poston's early years arose from the joint operation of the camp by the WRA and the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA). Embree interviewed many internees, including quotes from them in his reports. In his discussion of this overstaffing problem, a Japanese American that he spoke to lamented that "there is an expert for every evacuee. The educated young people especially resent being guinea pigs. They also resent the patronizing attitude of the staff. Many evacuees resent the association of Poston with the Indian Service, as they feel that they are being treated like Indians on a reservation."[32] On the surface, this

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[29] Densho Encyclopedia Contributors, "John F. Embree," Densho Encyclopedia, last modified June 15, 2020, accessed November 3, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/John_F._Embree/.
[30] Ibid.
[31] John F. Embree, "Notes on the Poston Project," September 9, 1942, BANC MSS 67/14 c, folder J 1.001, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1941-1953, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 9. For more information on Leighton's conclusions from Poston, consult his work. Alexander H. Leighton, *The Governing of Men: General Principles and Recommendations Based on Experience at a Japanese Relocation Camp* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945).
[32] Ibid, 8.

reaction seems to be a simplistic response to the excessive number of staff members in the camp, but it actually reveals a great deal about the stance of some Nisei leading up to the strike. The Nisei that was interviewed by Embree acknowledged his educational status and the fact that many others felt that their knowledge and experience should have prevented them from being treated as "guinea pigs." The use of the word "expert" to describe the staff also highlights the patronizing attitude that some Japanese Americans received from the administrators, who automatically discredited the abilities of the internees and viewed themselves above the entire internee population. It could also imply that the administrators acted as though they knew what the internees felt, but in reality they could not understand the difficulty of the internment process and the complex nature of the population.

More striking, however, is the comment about internees feeling as though they were "Indians on a reservation." Evidently, sharing the same territory as Native Americans, working on the same land, and living in a restricted way was frustrating to Japanese Americans because it reminded them of the fact that the U.S. viewed them as racially inferior. Being treated in such a way made them feel subjugated, a reality that they attributed to the lives of Native Americans in the United States. This comment brings a new dimension to the discontent that Japanese Americans experienced–not only was the situation in the camps complicated, frustrating, and upsetting–it caused the internees to compare themselves to a group in American society that they recognized as oppressed. Out of this comparison arose a resentment within the internees, as the similarities that they drew between both groups highlighted the fact that their citizenship rights were completely disregarded. Despite the various examples of assimilation that these internees had felt that they demonstrated in the realms of education, religion, economic life, they were still not viewed as valuable to American society. Another conclusion from this quote is the fact that "anti-American" views were diverse, just as "pro-American" views were. The government saw negative comments against them as the work of pro-Japanese radicals, when in reality many internees looked to highlight the hypocritical nature of internment in a country that prided itself on democratic values. Due to the oppressive environment of camp life, the

WRA mislabeled these individuals and suggested that everyone who spoke out against the government

was aggressively loyal to Japan. The label of "anti-American" should not only conjure up images of

pro-Japanese militarists–this category also included many Japanese Americans and other internees

who were unable to accept the reality of internment and the injustices that they were forced to endure.

In regards to the attitudes of young Japanese Americans, Embree explored the connection

between liberty and religion as a way of revealing the impact of internment. He stressed that "Young

Japanese Americans cannot see why, as American citizens, they should be put in a concentration

camp," and that "the limited liberties they enjoy are distrusted."[33] Such details are important in gaining

an understanding of the way that the internees felt about their daily lives–while some individuals clung

to the power and autonomy they did have, others were wary of exercising such limited rights because

they feared repercussions. Embree demonstrated this fear by discussing religious liberty, as internees

felt that this freedom was given so that "the whites can then point to Buddhist developments as an

argument that Japanese are unassimilable and should be shipped back to Japan."[34] The fact that some

internees viewed freedom as dangerous reveals their lack of confidence in the U.S. government and the

WRA administrators. There was clearly no regard for citizenship rights in the past, so they feared

being punished further with repatriation or other consequences. This outlook led to increased

participation in Christian Sunday schools, which is significant because even in the camps, there was

still a need to present an image of civilization and assimilation to the government. Any sign of

Japanese culture or so-called Eastern values could be seen as a potential threat due to the government's

belief in racial stereotypes. Thus, not only was internment a period of severely limited liberties, but the

few liberties that remained were managed cautiously.

At the same time, there were instances of "young people formerly Christian turn[ing] to

Buddhism feeling that Christianity, which they identify with American democracy, has betrayed

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[33] Ibid, 6.
[34] Ibid, 6.

them."[35] Such a response is also significant because it illustrates that removal and internment radicalized some internees to the point where they could no longer feel the same way about the U.S. and traditionally American values. Some Nisei found a sense of comfort in Buddhism and the connection to their Issei parents, both of which they craved in the uncertainty of the internment era. Due to the fact that Buddhism was oftentimes seen as suspicious and pro-Japanese, these individuals would have been perceived as "anti-American." However, their distrust of America was spearheaded by the removal process, and not an indication of their allegiance to Japan–instead, it can more accurately be referred to as a distancing from American hypocrisy.

Despite claims of unity in the publications created by internees, there was not a sense of togetherness in Poston. In an interview, Reverend Jitsuo Morikawa, a pastor of the Baptist Church in Poston, emphasized that "there is a keen feeling on the part of young people for lack of recreational social life. The formal sermon is the only thing we have to offer."[36] Morikawa was not a member of the younger population at Poston, but he still recognized the disunity and lack of true connection in the camp. He also highlighted the level of misinformation in the camp even in the wake of the strike, suggesting that "there should be a monthly town hall meeting as big as the strike gathering bringing to the people all the salient points of what has happened during the past weeks and what will happen during the next few weeks."[37] There was a desire for information and accurate details as to what was occurring in the camps, and lack of access to these facts was extremely upsetting to internees. The strike, despite its impact and the shocking nature of it, did not bring a resolution to the problems that internees had been experiencing throughout their time in Poston.

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[35] Ibid, 6.
[36] Jitsuo Morikawa, Interview, "On Replacing Caucasians," May 6, 1943, BANC MSS 67/14 c, folder J 15.05, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, 1930-1974, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 3.
[37] Ibid, 2.
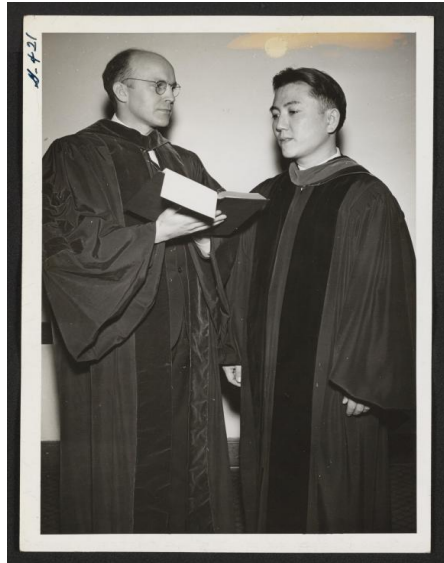
Figure 6: Reverend Jitsuo Morikawa (right) being recognized as a Pastor of the Baptist Church. He was the first Japanese American to assume this role in the Baptist Church. Morikawa's thoughts on the lack of community building structures in Poston were closely connected to his religious practices. He saw the formal sermon as a way for internees to bond with one another and forge connections, lamenting that other camp structures did not offer such opportunities. Source: War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

Echoing these sentiments of discontent was Alexander Leighton, who outlined the tense environment that the internees endured. His background in psychology made him an ideal leader for the Bureau of Sociological Research, an organization formed after internment had begun. The BSR was comprised of social scientists who were assigned to Poston and tasked with studying the internment experience.[38] While his study *The Governing of Men* is an extremely notable and comprehensive source, his personal notes also provide insight into the challenges that internees faced. He explored the fear of suspected informants by talking to internees and gathering information. For instance, a man named Dick Nishimuro stressed that "George Yamaguchi and Toshio Yatsoshiro and Tamie Tsuchiyama are all being talked about in the community and are under suspicion for being stooges and informers."[39] The fact that the community as a whole discussed these individuals reveals

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[38] Okihiro, *Encyclopedia of Japanese American Internment*, 84.
[39] Alexander Leighton, "Leighton's Sociological Journal," November 17, 1942, BANC 67/14c, folder J10.11, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1930-1974, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 2.

that there was an atmosphere of distrust and resentment in the camps. While some internees supported

the actions of these individuals and their affiliation with the government, others experienced betrayal

when their community members cooperated.

Additionally, Leighton's papers illustrate the fears of internees, especially those who sought to

avoid any connection to the administration. Upon visiting the camp hospital on December 2, 1942,

Leighton encountered a man named Matsui, who had been a janitor in Block 28.[40] He was taken to the

hospital on November 24th, and "was fearful and crying and saying that people accused him of being a

spie [sic]. He is an issei and was formerly Japanese typesetter for a newspaper."[41] These accusations

were so severe that he attempted to commit suicide multiple times, explaining "that people thought he

was a spy because he was a Christian and that he wanted to die and if he did he wanted everybody to

know that he had never been a spy but he hoped the United States would win because that way there

would be a better world."[42] Matsui's story is powerful because it reveals the impact of the assumptions

that were made about the various subgroups. Issei were automatically viewed as suspicious and

untrustworthy due to their connection to Japan, and in Matsui's case, his faith and his previous

employment experience made him all the more threatening. However, Matsui was willing to die in

order to prove that he was not a spy, and he reiterated his support for the U.S. in the war effort. In

assuming that all Issei and Kibei were disloyal or that all Nisei were loyal, voices from within the

camps are silenced. Not only that, but the conflict between "loyal" and "disloyal" individuals is

oversimplified, suggesting that all the members of any given subgroup shared the same views.

Chronological Account of the Poston Strike

Having looked at studies and interviews that were conducted within Poston, it is clear that

there was considerable tension amongst internees as well as between internees and the administration.

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[40] Alexander Leighton, "Leighton's Sociological Journal," December 2, 1942, BANC 67/14c, folder J10.11, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement records, 1930-1974, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 3.
[41] Ibid, 3.
[42] Ibid, 3.

Such background is crucial to understand the development of the Poston Strike and its effects. As with many acts of resistance, the sentiments behind the strike are arguably more significant than the event itself–simply knowing the chronology of an event does not reveal anything about the thoughts of those involved or their motivations. Yet in this case, a chronological reconstruction does demonstrate that feelings of conflict ran deep.

On November 15, 1942, George Fujii and Isamu Uchida were arrested as suspects in the beating of an FBI informant, initiating a chain of events that led to the strike.[43] Notably, the arrested suspects were both Kibei, showcasing the tensions between different internee subgroups in the camps. Some internees looked upon FBI informants with disdain because the former saw the latter's close relationship with the government as an indication of believing in Americanism. Showing support for the U.S.'s democratic values seemed inappropriate in the face of internment, a clear betrayal of U.S. citizenship rights. However, if the Kibei men were not responsible for this crime, their suspected involvement reveals the stereotypes that were imposed on different members of the internee community–Kibei were automatically assumed to be dangerous and disloyal, while groups like Nisei were normally seen as loyal.

In the days following the arrests, there were various attempts made to negotiate with the administration for the suspects' freedom, all of which were unsuccessful. Based on rumors that the FBI was arriving to transport the suspects and take complete control of the investigation, blocks 26, 27, 28, 37, 38, 43, and 44 concluded that "drastic" measures were necessary to ensure that the suspects were released.[44] This decision is important because it negates narratives that have framed the Poston Strike as an act of defiance by a pro-Axis minority—alleged supporters of imperial Japan's war against the United States.[45] The fact that the representatives of seven blocks concurred in preventing the FBI from

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[43] "Chronological Account of the Poston Strike," November 15, 1942, BANC MSS 67/14 c, folder J 6.24, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1930-1974, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1.

[44] Ibid, 3.

[45] Analysis of archival sources reveals the government/WRA narrative of the Poston Strike as a "pro-Axis" demonstration. The media also echoed this narrative, and more examples of this will be discussed in chapter three.

removing the suspects suggests that a variety of internees were willing to defy the government and

supported the beating of the FBI informant. On the morning of November 18th, rumors of the FBI's

arrival spread rapidly and a message was sent to "the subjugation and warehouse crews to quit work

and start picketing the police station. Meanwhile three to four hundred residents from the interested

blocks gathered in front of the police station to prevent the F.B.I from taking the prisoners at any

cost."[46] A leader in this crowd then ordered the driver of the block managers' supply truck to

command the block managers to close the office and send the residents of their respective blocks to

protest in front of the camp police station. The crowd increased to 2,500, and even more so after

lunch.[47] Therefore, at its core, the Poston Strike was essentially a show of support for Fujii and

Uchida, and the involvement of thousands of residents highlights the divide between those who

supported the FBI informant and those who stood behind the suspects.

Although the protesters were described as "Issei and Kibei with a sprinkling of Nisei," this

quote contributes to the misunderstanding of the strike itself.[48] It implies that there were minimal Nisei

involved, and creates the perception that only Issei and Kibei positioned themselves against the

government. However, it does not account for fear about participating in the strike or the fact that there

were Kibei and Issei that did not involve themselves in the protest. Mr. John Evans was the acting

project director and addressed the protesters, asserting that justice would be served and that an

outcome based on the actions of the suspects was desired by all. Assuming that the internees would be

content if the suspects were found guilty and given a punishment is a clear misunderstanding of the

sentiments of some internees. While "pro-American" individuals might have been satisfied with such

an outcome, others supported the assault on the FBI informant for the message it sent about

cooperating with the U.S. government. Evans and many other administrators were unable to

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[46] "Chronological Account of the Poston Strike," 3.
[47] Ibid, 3.
[48] Ibid, 4.

comprehend the complexities of the internee population, failing to see the possibility of behaviors overlapping across subgroups. A prominent example of internees operating outside the stereotypes attributed to the different subgroups actually occurred amidst the protest itself, as a Nisei girl was the first to "razz" Evans after his speech.[49] Clearly, Nisei participation in the protest occurred, and with the same zeal as the other protesters.

Additionally, the language of the protesters towards those who sympathized with the administration is telling of the deep divisions within the camps. While these comments can be viewed as derogatory, they reveal the negative perception that was attached to those who showed support for the administration. After the protesters were advised to "have faith in the administration and…give them time until Monday," they "broke out into exclamations of 'Inu!,' ('Dog!') and 'Nagure!' ('Let 's beat him up!')."[50] Even a small comment in support of the administration caused immense anger in the minds of the protesters and led to them trying to beat him up, indicating their reluctance to support a group that had so easily betrayed its own citizens and made assumptions about all Japanese-descended individuals due to their racial background. The target of these comments was Mizushima, a member of the Issei Advisory Board. He is yet another example of the stereotypes associated with different subgroups being inaccurate in some scenarios, as the removal experience clearly had the power to impact *all* groups in different ways. For some individuals, such as Mizushima, removal did not affect their loyalty to the U.S. and they continued to support the administration. On the other hand, people such as the Nisei girl who approached Evans turned away from sources of U.S. authority. Support or disdain for the United States was not confined to one subgroup or another–while there were certain trends, taking these trends literally risks the erasure of other narratives.

As a whole, the strike was very complicated, but key details allow a glimpse of internee perceptions and the community structures in the camps. In the days following the arrests, there were a

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[49] Ibid, 4.
[50] Ibid, 5.

great deal of picketing by the blocks, but more notably, all of the block managers resigned. The decision to resign occurred on November 18th, and the discussions at the meeting highlight the ways in which internees conceptualized the block manager system. An individual in the meeting who recommended this course of action remarked that "the block manager stood at the tail end of the administration and that it was his duty to carry out the policies of the administration. If he joined the strike without resigning from his official post it was dereliction of duty entrusted to him."[51] This quote is crucial because it positions block managers as lower tier administrative members, not as true representatives of the internee community. Thus, in order to truly serve the internee population and participate in the strike like they had wanted to, the block managers had to resign and renounce their obligation to the administration. Although the administration lacked an appropriate understanding of the discontent that pervaded in the camp, they knew that the block managers resigned to show solidarity with the rest of the community members.

Confident in their abilities, the group turned its attention to Uchida after receiving the news that Fujii was released. In their minds, Uchida's guilt was not connected to his freedom, highlighting the internees' willingness to disregard the rules of the administration and American values more generally. For the internees, picketing and fighting for Uchida's freedom was a symbol of solidarity for the Japanese internee community and a rejection of U.S. policies of removal and internment. These feelings of anger and frustration were evident in the use of banners that were modeled on the Japanese flag, as well as the use of dogs as symbols for the FBI and FBI informants. One of the more notable banners was a modified version of Admiral Togo's flag from the Russo-Japanese War. The slogan from the original flag had been changed from "'the rise and fall of our great country depends on this one battle'" to "'the rise and fall of our brotherhood (or race) depends on this one battle.'"[52] This change is crucial in understanding the mindset of the internees, because they were showing support for

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[51] Ibid, 5.
[52] Ibid, 17.

the Japanese *race*, not Japan itself. The Japanese flag was simply a way of expressing such support, even though it was viewed as "pro-Axis," militaristic sentiment. In this sense, the label of "pro-Japanese" did not fit the message of racial solidarity that the internees were demonstrating, even though their actions were often seen as signs of support for the Japanese empire as a whole. For the internees, any sort of expression against the U.S. government was automatically construed as "pro-Japanese," yet for those involved in the strike, staying silent was not a viable option anymore. No matter what the internees said or did, there would be negative consequences, so expressing their support for the Japanese "race" in such a way was the most appealing option.

Similarly, the internees' use of the dog as a symbol reveals this need to defend the Japanese race against the influence of American ideals. A man named Masaki gave a lecture on dogs, highlighting that Japanese dogs begged for food while American dogs were consumed with getting money.[53] His need to outline this difference reveals the fact that some internees felt disdain for Americans' prioritization of money and the selfishness that often came along with it. There was a clear need to separate from American values and adhere to economic and social principles of everyday American life, especially after removal and internment. Discussions also took place between Issei parents and their children, warning them not to become dogs.[54] This fear on the part of some Issei showcases the undesirability of being associated with the administration and supporting an institution that only caused mistreatment and oppression.

The end to violence eventually occurred on November 24th, after a series of negotiations between the Executive Committee of the Emergency Council and the WRA.[55] Despite the fact that the

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[53] Ibid, 17.
[54] Ibid, 17.
[55] The Emergency Council had been elected by the blocks of Unit I, with each block appointing one Nisei and one Issei. They approved the strike, and as events unfolded, they became involved in the negotiation process. On November 20th, The Emergency Council selected an Executive Committee with nine members, and placed those individuals in charge of communicating directly with the WRA administration. The Executive Committee created proposals to discuss with Project Director Head and his team, and the proposals were 1) "Establish a Public Relation Committee to mediate with and settle all problems affecting personal reputations and damages out of court," 2) "the Poston residents to be given the right to select and appoint all evacuee personnel in the administrative and important positions," and 3) "establish a City Planning Board based upon the present Emergency Council within

strike only lasted for about a week, exploring the nuances of it and unpacking the motivations of the strikers is instrumental in gaining a truer picture of life in Poston. It is a misconception to say that all individuals who participated in the strike were Issei or Kibei, or that all of them were pro-Japanese and supported Japan's actions in the war. A 1946 WRA memo that looked back on the strike emphasized the overwhelming presence of pro-Japanese propaganda that emerged immediately after the event. Despite its positionality as a governmental institution, the WRA pointed out the "large number of over-simplified stories and headlines about 'pro-Axis' activity at the center, [which] tended to deepen…the widespread public attitude of suspicion toward the evacuated people."[56] While the universal application of the "pro-Axis" label might have seemed natural to some individuals, there were many internees who made use of Japanese symbols and employed certain language regarding the U.S. and U.S.-sympathizers to display their unwillingness to accept internment. In this sense, they were not attempting to spread Japanese propaganda, they were simply expressing their frustrations and opinions on the internment experience.

Aftermath of the Strike: Continuation of Tension

Arguably more important than studying the strike itself, understanding the reactions to it and the changes that occurred in Poston provide insight into the dynamics of different groups in the camp. There was a reluctance to discuss the strike, as is evident in a block managers' meeting from November 30th. This meeting date was important because it was the first block managers' meeting after the strike, and in it, Evans discussed the resignations that he had received from the block managers during the strike and the need to select new representatives. Notably, he states "'I received your resignation. I felt badly. I received it at the time I needed your help. I felt that I trusted you and that you did not trust me. Maybe some of you still do not trust me, but right now we have the job of

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the framework of the WRA which shall create the necessary administrative, legislative, and economic organizations." These conditions were accepted. Ibid, 8-29.

[56] U.S. Department of the Interior and War Relocation Authority, "WRA: A Story of Human Conservation," 1946, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015002213968&view=1up&seq=8&skin=2021, 48-49.

getting the ball rolling again for the sake of all our people here.'"[57] He is clearly aware that his "trust" for the block managers was not reciprocated. In fact, the WRA was in many ways dependent on the block managers to help enforce their policies and communicate important information to the rest of the internees–a fact that is not often acknowledged but comes through in Evans' comment. It was also very bold of him to suggest a return to normalcy after the strike for the sake of "our" people, as he attempts to position himself as a member of the internee community with the same concerns and interests. After the strike, the administration tried to create a false sense of unity, which involved positioning themselves as "one" with the internees. Evans's views were by no means unique– many WRA administrators framed the strike as "a healthy release for pent-up emotions," and were "generally agreed that Poston emerged as a stronger and more stable community."[58] The overall impact of the strike was continually minimized, and the WRA's view that the tension in the camp had dissipated did not align with the reality of the camp experience following the strike.

In the months following the strike, there was also a need to redefine the roles of the block managers and clarify their position in the camp hierarchy. In the block managers' meeting from December 1, 1942, it was established that "The Block Managers are not a governing body. They have nothing to do with the government of the community. They are in an administrative capacity. This is a Government Project, and there is need to pass physical items to the people from the Government through the Block Managers to the people."[59] While there was not much discussion of the strike in the block manager meetings, there was still a concern about the dynamics between internees and the administration. The above quote establishes that the Block Managers must be responsible to the administration and emphasizes that they are not a governing body, thus undermining the power of these representatives. In essence, the WRA's status as the ultimate authority was reconfirmed, even

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[57] "Block Managers Meeting," November 30, 1942, BANC 67/14 c, folder J13.03, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1941-1953, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 2.
[58] U.S. Department of the Interior and War Relocation Authority, "WRA: A Story of Human Conservation," 48.
[59] "Block Managers Meeting," December 1, 1942, BANC MSS 67/14 c, reel 251 frame 0153 (folder J13.03), Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1941-1953, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1.

though they later asked for suggestions that would help smooth out tensions between the internees and the administration.

Despite these attempts to bridge gaps in the post-strike environment, there were still many problems in the camp for the duration of the internment process. Some examples of this were criminal activity, negative views towards the army and army officials, and concerns about wages and employment outside of the camps. A sociological journal compiled by Tamie Tsuchiyama contains different diaries/writings of internees in the Poston camp. Tsuchiyama was a Nisei born in Hawaii, and was the only woman to work for the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study (JERS) during the war.[60] She was assigned to Poston for the study, yet her work was kept a secret from the internees and she served as a government informant. One notable entry from her sociological journal is from April 26, 1943, and describes the policy of a new military police officer who arrived in Poston. The entry reads "In the barber shop in block 46 a few peoples were discussing the Wakasa case in Topaz. One M.P…was a member of the newly arrived unit of M.P's. He claimed that he returned from Guadalcanal and overhearing the Wakasa case he said: 'If there is any Jap who disobeys orders I will shoot him without asking any questions.'"[61] Briefly, Wakasa was an internee who was walking his dog inside the boundaries of the Topaz internment camp, and he was shot by a military police officer.[62] The brutality of this remark highlights the cruelty of some of the M.P soldiers and provides more context into camp life. The fact that the internees were discussing the Wakasa case indicated their fear or at least concern about the power of the Military Police, which this M.P only confirmed through his statement. He also exuded a white supremacist racial view, making it evident that these sorts of tensions were still prominent in Poston even after the strike. While the strike in and of itself was

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[60] Densho Encyclopedia Contributors, "Tamie Tsuchiyama," Densho Encyclopedia, last modified October 16, 2020, accessed November 3, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Tamie_Tsuchiyama/.

[61] Tamie Tsuchiyama, "Sociological Journal," April 1943, BANC MSS 67/14 c, reel 240 (folder J6.26:1), Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1941-1953. University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1.

[62] "The Wakasa Memorial Rediscovery," Friends of Topaz Museum, https://friendsoftopaz.org/wakasa-memorial.

notable, it did not really solve any core problems in the community, such as the behavior of the

administration and the discrimination that internees faced even within the camps.

Along with negative views of the MPs and the administration, internees also responded

negatively to the U.S. Army itself after the strike. This is important given the fact that the government

began creating a system for drafting "loyal" Japanese Americans into the army in the early years of

1942. There were certainly individuals who supported the U.S. Army and looked forward to being

involved in the draft, but there were still many internees who criticized the U.S army and belittled their

abilities. When an army plane crashed near Camp II in April of 1943, "the camp residents...made

derogatory comments upon this fact. Some said: 'I didn't know we were still in L.A.' Another

comment: 'They don't know where they are going.' 'That's how good American fliers are.' 'I thought

they were all good fliers in the newspapers.'"[63] Internees' responses to an otherwise banal event are

indicative of the resentment that was harbored towards the U.S. Although it is not specified if Issei or

Nisei made these remarks, the quotes are still significant because they demonstrate prominent attitudes

in the camp that could have easily influenced different people. Specifically, the comment "'I thought

they were all good fliers in the newspapers,'" challenges the way the U.S. portrayed itself to the public

as compared to the perceived lack of flying skill in this crash. It also suggests that the U.S. had the

tendency to show the public a side that did not always reflect reality–which could be applied to many

situations in addition to this one. As a whole, these comments reveal that even after the strike, the

same tensions existed and continued to resurface among the internee population.

General Acts of Resistance and Camp Dynamics: Manzanar

Another well-known demonstration of dissent during the internment years was the Manzanar

Riot, which occurred less than a month after the Poston Strike. As was the case in Poston, tensions had

been building in Manzanar months before the riot, and many problems were left unresolved even after

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[63] Tsuchiyama, "Sociological Journal," 6.

the conflict had ended. Both the Manzanar Riot and the Poston Strike were misunderstood by WRA

and government officials, resulting in flawed assumptions about the individuals involved. During both

demonstrations, the government attributed stereotypes to the different internee subgroups as opposed

to investigating the motives of the resisters. In turn, they implied that pro-Japanese Kibei and some

Issei were responsible for the unrest. Having acknowledged these misconceptions in regards to Poston,

the Manzanar Riot requires a similar analysis of internees' motivations and thought processes.

Similar to the Poston Strike, the spark of the Manzanar Riot was the arrest of Harry Uyeno as a

suspect in the beating of Fred Tayama.[64] Tayama was the former president of the Southern California

JACL Chapter, and was notoriously disliked at Manzanar. This was primarily due to the fact that "the

J.A.C.L. attempted to represent the people as a whole and acted as spokesman for the entire Japanese

community" and "often voiced opinions contrary to the thoughts of the population."[65] In many cases,

this included poor treatment or complete neglect of the Issei, along with instances of turning people in

to the FBI for profit. While the JACL and government informers continued to support the

administration's policies, they continuously clashed with those who were frustrated with the

government's actions. This constant source of disagreement underscored the Manzanar Riot, just as it

did in Poston.

Manzanar did not contain a Nisei population that was fully in support of the administration and

its policies. In fact, there was considerable resistance on the part of young Nisei of high school age,

and more generally, there were instances where Nisei expressed frustration for being interned despite

their citizenship status. In a letter written to John Embree, a Nisei internee born in Hawaii chronicles

his experience with Nisei from California while living in Manzanar. He explains that:

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[64] "The Manzanar 'Incident,'" December 1942, BANC MSS 67/14 c, folder O7.00, The Manzanar Riot, [see also: NARA Reel 75, Folders 21 and 23], Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 4.
[65] Ibid, 4.

> "Life among the California niseis is a novel experience for their psychology is at much variance from the kanaka-Japanese outlook on politics and life…their previously isolated community life that gave them little opportunity to mingle with the haoles and the ever-present economic and social discrimination have warped their thinking, embittering them and causing them to lose faith in the white politicians particularly."[66]

This letter provides insight into the minds of individuals who were disillusioned with the internment process, despite the fact that they spoke English "flawlessly" and had been born and raised in America. The writer argues that coupled with isolation from the white community, removal led the California Nisei to adopt a negative outlook towards white politicians. The author's use of words such as "warped" suggest a disapproval with this way of thinking and his possible support for the U.S. Regardless, the writer highlights a perceived sense of mistrust towards the administration and the tension between internees, even those who belonged to the same subgroups.

Along with acknowledging the frustration that Nisei experienced in the removal process, the author explains the tension amongst the Nisei and Issei in regards to leadership. In traditional Japanese culture, the Issei were seen as the rightful leaders, but not all Nisei agreed with this cultural ideal. The same author explains, "When I evacuated from Los Angeles, I anticipated that in Manzanar and the other centers, the niseis will take the leadership. The war and the precipitate evacuation should have made the Japanese, both citizens and residents, realize that the time has come for changing hands in leadership among us."[67] For some Nisei, the wartime era was the perfect opportunity for them to take greater responsibility in the community–especially given their citizenship status. However, these expectations were shattered as "The block leaders which were elected by the people here comprise

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[66] Anonymous to John F. Embree, June 4, 1942, BANC MSS 67/14 c, folder O3.00, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, 1941-1953, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1. The term "haoles" is used by native Hawaiians to refer to white individuals, whether they be visitors to Hawaii or residents there. In her book *Haoles in Hawaii*, political scientist Judy Rohrer focuses "on [the term] haole as a colonial/neocolonial form of whiteness situated in Hawaiʻi" and frames the term in the history of colonization of the island. Judy Rohrer, *Haoles in Hawaiʻi* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2010), 33.

[67] Anonymous to John F. Embree, 2.

mostly isseis, and they manifest no hesitancy in run-ning the only representative (do not take the word literally) group of the Japanese residents in camp in the customary Japanese manner."[68] At the same time that the Nisei resented the way in which removal took place, some of them also resented the continual leadership of the Issei in the camps and their "customary Japanese manner" of handling issues that arose. The author explains that the presence of Issei leadership "must be lamented," indicating a need amongst some Nisei to distance themselves from Japanese society and culture.[69] In many ways, some Nisei saw themselves as more fit to lead the internees in the camps, with the author using phrases such as "should have" to indicate the need for a leadership change in the community. This reveals another layer of complexity in the internment camp experience. In addition to the tension amongst the Nisei and the white politicians that stemmed from the removal process, there was conflict within the camps. Nisei who wanted to have greater responsibility in the internee community disagreed with the traditional Japanese custom of elevating the older generation, only adding to the resentment that they already harbored.

As some Nisei expressed frustration for their inability to assume leadership roles, others closely followed the desires of their parents. Due to the abrupt end to Japanese language classes when removal occurred, there was an eagerness amongst many Issei for classes to resume–they wanted their children to be able to attend and learn Japanese. The same author highlights that "Many young people feel that better knowledge of this enemy language is bound to be useful to them, particularly for securing specialized jobs requiring knowledge of that language."[70] The characterization of Japanese as an "enemy language" is indicative of the author's uncertainty when it came to Nisei learning Japanese, but his discussion of the topic reveals the varied opinions that existed. Japanese language schools were seen as suspicious in the eyes of the U.S. government in the pre-war era, but knowing Japanese

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[68] Ibid, 2.
[69] Ibid, 2.
[70] Ibid, 10.

became a useful skill for Nisei later on. However, the Issei response in this matter showcases that they were influential in driving the activities of Nisei, and contributed to their later actions of resistance. Historians Arthur Hansen and David Hacker capitalize on this generational influence in their article "The Manzanar Riot: An Ethnic Perspective," advancing a revisionist view of the riot. Their analysis was grounded in the cultural elements of the Japanese American community in the pre-war context. They suggested that the "usual picture of Nisei as thoroughly Americanized is far from accurate, for countervailing forces were diminishing the social distance [between Nisei and Issei]."[71] An example of this pressure was the mandated participation of the Nisei in Japanese clubs, which the Issei employed as a tool to undermine American values.[72] While there were broader societal challenges to the assimilation of the Nisei, such as racial discrimination and a lack of employment despite having higher education degree(s), the parental influence of the Issei is an element that cannot be ignored. This connection did not disappear with the start of internment; instead, Issei influence also manifested in motivating the Nisei to speak out against the WRA and the U.S. government. In other words, some Issei pushed Nisei closer to the Japanese language and their heritage, thus motivating them to get involved in resistance.

Manzanar was also the site of many so-called "underground" groups, which sparked considerable fear in the minds of the WRA. Instead of keeping the presence of these organizations under wraps, the administration reported the groups' activities. This contradicts the idea that the problems in the camps originated from a small portion of the internee population because multiple underground groups concerned the administrators. Of course, the resistance in Manzanar was not limited to underground groups, but their presence is important in understanding camp dynamics. Ralph P. Merritt, Project Director, reported that the bulletins of the Southern California Blood Brothers Corps and the Manzanar Black Dragon Society were distributed across the whole center and appeared in all

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[71] Hansen and Hacker, "The Manzanar Riot: An Ethnic Perspective," 122.
[72] Hansen and Hacker, "The Manzanar Riot: An Ethnic Perspective," 122.

thirty six blocks.[73] Allegedly put together by clandestine militant pro-Japan groups, these bulletins

positioned themselves against self-government and were also opposed to the camouflage net factory

program, which would task internees with producing materials for the war effort.[74] The underground

organizations set themselves against internee self-government, furthering themselves from U.S.

interests. They refused to participate in any activities that would benefit the government and the army,

reflecting their bitterness over the internment decision. It was contradictory for the U.S. to expect help

from the internees in a war to save democracy while the government was currently restricting their

freedoms and discriminating against them. The anonymity of these underground organizations

indicates the oppression of such divisive voices and the need to protect themselves to continue sharing

their messages.

Notably, the report highlights a connection between the younger "gangs" at Manzanar and the

underground organizations.[75] There were many known acts of resistance from high school students and

the younger population in the camps. Such events increased in the period leading up to the riot, and in

particular, the personal diary of Lucy Adams is helpful in exploring these so-called "disturbances."

Adams was temporarily replacing Dr. Carter, who was the superintendent of education at Manzanar.

She arrived on November 17th, 1942, and was informed of incidents such as "beatings, breaking of

windows, intimidation of the police, the organization of the mess hall workers and their demands,

accusations against staff members, [and] the fears of some of the people on the project that gangs were

out to 'get' them."[76] The discussion of these actions is notable because it highlights the "smaller" acts

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[73] Project Reports Officer to E. R. Fryer, memorandum, "Preliminary Findings Surveys on 'Underground' Groups," December 1, 1942, Reel 76, RG 210: Records of the War Relocation Authority, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington D.C, 1. These underground groups are not the focus of my thesis, but are important in establishing the complex nature of the internment camp environment. The following are two other primary sources discussing these groups: "FBI Raids Jap Terrorists," *The San Francisco News* (San Francisco, CA), March 31, 1942, accessed December 1, 2022, http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist8/terrorists1.html. Special Committee on Un-American Activities. Report and Minority Views of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities on Japanese War Relocation Centers, H.R. Rep. (Sept. 30, 1943). https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/102360725.
[74] Project Reports Officer to E. R. Fryer, memorandum, "Preliminary Findings Surveys on 'Underground' Groups," 2.
[75] Ibid, 4.
[76] Lucy Adams, "Notes on Manzanar Disturbances 1942," 1942, folder O 10.00, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records 1930-1974, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 2. Adams referred to any sort of unruly or rebellious actions

of resistance that led up to the Manzanar riot and reveals how much the administration feared these actions. The WRA did not know how to control these individuals and they were unsure how much of a threat these groups posed. There was a clear disconnect between the WRA and the internees, as the WRA did not know why internees were engaging in such acts or how to manage them. The riot was not a one-off incident spearheaded by a crazed, pro-Axis minority–tension was a constant part of the camp atmosphere from the start. The internees involved in the riot acted in a deliberate manner and knew their motivations, just as they expressed their frustrations in these "smaller" disturbances.

Manzanar Riot

Given this background, the arrest of Harry Uyeno as a suspect in Tayama's beating was extremely frustrating to many members of the internee population, leading to a mass meeting on December 6, 1942–the day after Uyeno had been arrested. This meeting consisted of 2,000 people, and they planned to go to the jail to demand Uyeno's release.[77] What is important to note about this meeting is the fact that a considerable number of people gathered in support of Uyeno, at least partially because of the resentment that many internees held against the JACL. Despite its claims of representing all Nisei, the JACL was severely discredited to the point where it struggled to amass support in the period leading up to removal.[78]

Much of the support for Uyeno stemmed from disdain for the JACL, but Uyeno's own actions as a mess hall worker are also key to understanding his centrality to the riot. Uyeno organized a Kitchen Hall Workers' Union based on his dissatisfaction with the Work Corps. He attended a Work Corps meeting as a representative "from the mess workers of Block 22…and he reached the

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as "disturbances," which explains why she named her journal account "Notes on Manzanar Disturbances." To her, the demonstrations of discontent that she witnessed were not rooted in deeper dissatisfaction. However, a deeper analysis of the use of the word disturbance reveals that in this context, the word minimizes the significance of the riot. "Disturbance" implies a minor inconvenience as opposed to a culmination of resistance and resentment.

[77] "The Manzanar 'Incident,'" 4.

[78] Ibid, 2.

conclusion that it would not take sufficient steps fully to protect the interests of the kitchen workers."[79] This realization led him to form a separate union for the mess hall workers, which became a reality by September 1942. Interestingly, Fred Tayama served as the chairman of the Work Corps and led the meetings, adding to the personal tension between the two men. People such as Tayama, who affiliated themselves with the JACL and "pro-American" attitudes, did not focus on the interests of people who worked in the mess halls. Instead, they aimed to advance the internee population's interests in ways that did not alienate the government and WRA. However, Uyeno's choice to create a separate union did not make him "anti-American"–it simply made him someone who was thinking practically and who sought to protect mess hall workers' interests. By viewing the two sides in this way, "pro-American" and "anti-American" are clearly more complex than the labels imply. Understanding the motivations of internees conceptualizes the Manzanar Riot and the dynamics in the camps more generally.

Anger over sugar shortages led internees to support Uyeno's Kitchen Workers' Union. Unionized workers initiated an investigation into the WRA's responsibility for the sugar shortages which took place in July and October of 1942. The Union set out to determine whether the internees had been receiving the eight ounces of sugar that they were entitled to per week. When they concluded that the WRA did not meet this allowance, it fueled the tension between the administration and the internees.[80] On November 29, 1942, the Union held a private meeting in Japanese, and they did so without the approval of the Project Director.[81] The subject matter of the private meeting revolved around the sugar shortage, and the Union compiled a list of demands; this list revealed the frustration, confusion, and lack of communication between the administration and the internees. For example, one

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[79] Robert B. Throckmorton to Ralph P. Merritt, memorandum, "Report on Personal Interviews in the Independence Jail," December 19, 1942, Documents from Harry Ueno Re: Manzanar 1942-1943, Japanese American National Library, San Francisco, CA, 2.
[80] Ibid, 2-3.
[81] Ibid, 9.

of the list items (#11) described a permit that allowed for the production of Shoyu and Miso.[82]

However, once Shoyu production commenced, the sugar that was needed for it was taken out of the

residents' rations.[83] The internees had not been informed of this fact, resulting in shock when their

sugar rations were suddenly cut. Because they knew larger sugar deliveries were being made to the

mess halls of white administrators, anger at the sugar shortages also reflected anger at those

involved.[84] The meeting itself is important because it occurred only a few days before the riot and

without the permission of the WRA's own committee investigating the sugar shortage. The internees'

choice to hold the meeting in Japanese reflected their mistrust and outward defiance of the white

administration.

In contrast to the Poston Strike, which lasted for over a week, the riot at Manzanar was short

lived. After the December 6th meeting, a large group approached the police station to advocate for

Uyeno's release. Merritt attempted to manage the situation by informing the group that he would not

give into the demands of an unruly mob. He expressed his desire to speak with a committee, urging the

group to go home so that he could do so.[85] When that failed, he and other prominent administrators

concluded that the best way to prevent violence was to release Uyeno from the community jail at

Independence, CA and return him to Manzanar.[86] More specifically, he would be incarcerated in the

Manzanar jail and "stand trial before the Judicial Committee, who would decide whether Uyeno

should be tried here or in an outside court."[87] Merritt then suggested that once the immediate issue had

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[82] Shoyu was a Japanese sauce that was made from soybeans, and a shoyu factory was constructed in Block 1. Miso was a fermented soybean paste common in Japanese cuisine. In 1944, 36,000 pounds of miso were produced for the mess halls, and the shoyu plant made 1,500 gallons a month. Harlan D. Unrau, *Historic Resource Study/Special History Study*, vol. 1, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry during World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center* (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1996), 270, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ien.35556032019739&view=1up&seq=1. Harlan D. Unrau, *Historic Resource Study/Special History Study*, vol. 2, *The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry during World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center* (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1996), 560, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.l0078098274&view=1up&seq=5.
[83] Throckmorton to Ralph P. Merritt, memorandum, "Report on Personal Interviews in the Independence Jail," 10.
[84] Ibid, 12.
[85] "The Manzanar 'Incident,'" 6.
[86] Ibid, 7.
[87] Ibid, 7.

been resolved, the committee would have a chance to discuss other grievances and find the person guilty of Tayama's beating. This attempt at compromise reveals the administration's misunderstanding of the rioters' motivations–they failed to understand why Uyeno's release was so important, and how it tied into the greater conflict between internees who supported the government and those who resented it. The Manzanar administration thought that the compromise would actually lead to a solution, but instead, the group met again later that night.

The subject matter of the December 6th evening meeting highlights the tensions that existed in the camp and the way in which this inflamed the riot. Once again, a key topic of conversation at the meeting was the sugar shortage, emphasizing the group's preoccupation with the administration's abuse of power. Notably, the group felt that Uyeno was arrested for his knowledge about the shortage and his background with the Union.[88] Additionally, "a list of 'Dogs in Camp' was read off–'All must be killed.' The group cried for the names which are as follows, Toku Slocumb, Togo Tanaka, John Sinoda, Fred Tayama, George Hayakawa, and Tom Imai."[89] The group's ability to target specific individuals for their supposed betrayal of the community reveals the depth of the conflict in the camps. Tensions between internees proliferated, demonstrating the negative impact that FBI informers and government sympathizers had on those who actively fought back against the government.

Opposing internee viewpoints of the riot are instrumental in understanding the acts of the resisters, making the accounts of Tokutaro Nishimura Slocum particularly compelling. More commonly known as Tokie, Slocum had a long history of supporting the U.S. and the WRA. By the time of the riot, he had been an FBI informant and was also an intelligence officer for the Manzanar police.[90] In a hearing before the Committee on Military Affairs, he explained that his duties were "to

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[88] Ibid, 8.
[89] Ibid, 10.
[90] "Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate Seventy-Eighth Congress First Session on S. 444 A Bill Providing for the Transfer of Certain Functions of the War Relocation Authority to the War Department," January 1943, Documents from Harry Ueno Re: Manzanar 1942-1943, Japanese American National Library, San Francisco, CA, 121-122.

make observations and analyses, trace down the rumors, gossips, and various subversive activities in

the camp and make reports to the Federal Bureau of Investigation," to which he added, "during that

time I believe I was of some help to our Government."[91] This background on Tokie is important

because it confirms the presence of FBI informants amongst the internee population. These informants

cultivated mistrust and fear in the community because they constituted a constant, overbearing

presence of authority. It also hints at the resentment and betrayal that some internees experienced as a

result of encountering such informants who were actively helping the U.S. government, even after the

tragedy of removal.

Figure 7: Tokutaro Slocum in front of the Japanese American Citizens League headquarters in Los Angeles. This photo was taken on April 11, 1942, one month prior to the end of the mandatory removal of Japanese-descended individuals from the West Coast. Source: War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

Interestingly, Tokie also discusses the Blood Brothers and instances of "pro-Japanese"

activities in the camp, speaking with disdain about their actions. This opposing account of so-called

"subversive" groups further highlights the fact that the divisions in the camp were extremely hard to

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[91] Ibid, 122.

overcome. Neither side truly understood the motivations behind the other, and Tokie's account

criticizes other internees' use of radio broadcasts, the Japanese language, and their intimidation tactics,

emphasizing his negative perception of "pro-Japanese" factions. Tokie viewed these groups as

troublemakers, as evidenced through his discussion of a sign which read "'Watch these pro-

Americans. They are taking down our signs. We will take care of them.'"[92] The escalation from unrest

to violence can be traced through signs such as this one. In general, signs reflect the deep-rooted

sentiments of frustration, anger, and resentment against "pro American" groups. Tokie also mentions

the JACL in his testimony, which is crucial because he delves into the JACL agenda at the Salt Lake

City meeting and the plan for Nisei enlistment in the army, both of which were extremely distressing

to the "pro-Japanese" faction.[93] Rumors about drafting Nisei into the army had only just begun to

spread, as the loyalty questionnaire was only distributed in 1943. Tokie explains that the Kibei were

particularly angry about these developments, leading to the beating of Tayama and their desire to "kill"

other "pro-Americans." Therefore, while Tokie had a basic understanding of certain events that

inflamed the minds of the "pro-Japanese" internees, he did not comprehend the profound nature of

these tensions.

When asked about estimations of loyalty within the camps, Tokie expressed that the Kibei

were the disloyal element, thus silencing the stories of Nisei who also participated in the riot and other

acts of defiance. He explains that 75% of the individuals in the camps were loyal Americans, but only

25% of this 75% were 'militant' Americans, and the other 50 were loyal but not outspoken in any

way.[94] The 25% who are not loyal are classified as Kibei, which is limiting because this erases the

stories of people like Nisei who were swayed to anti-American views after life in the internment camps

or those who had consistently been wary of the U.S. government. One of the ways in which the

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[92] "Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate Seventy-Eighth Congress First Session on S. 444 A Bill Providing for the Transfer of Certain Functions of the War Relocation Authority to the War Department," 123.
[93] Ibid, 123.
[94] Ibid, 124.

involvement of Nisei in the Manzanar Riot surfaces is through the casualties. After the December 6th

evening meeting, the crowd split up into two groups, with one group storming the police station.[95]

Amidst confusion and throwing of rocks by internees, military police shot the rioters.[96] In a report of

the Manzanar Riot compiled on December 14, 1942, there is an injury summary which contains the

names, ages, and subgroups of the individuals who were injured or killed.[97] Notably, four out of the

eleven names on the list were Nisei, one of which was killed. James Ito was a 17 year old, and died of

a gunshot wound to the abdomen and heart, while Tom Uatanaka, 25, remained in critical condition

after his perforated intestine was removed.[98] The two other Nisei were classified as being in good

physical condition after sustaining leg injuries. Given that Issei, Nisei, and Kibei were injured, the riot

cannot be taken as the irrational actions of a pro-Axis mob. Strikingly, there was a clear involvement

of Nisei, even though they were typically considered to be loyal. Therefore, despite the stereotypes that

were attributed to each of the subgroups, it is clear that the labels that were placed on individuals in the

camps were not always indicative of their beliefs or views on internment life.

As seen through the meetings of the resisters, and the accounts of FBI informants such as

Tokie, the chronology of the riot is not enough to understand the dynamics of the camp before and

after the riot. A true analysis of the riot takes into account all viewpoints, and challenges the

stereotypes of "pro-American" and "pro-Japanese" by trying to understand the very real fears,

thoughts, and anxieties of the internees. The mindset of the internees derived from their past

experiences, their thoughts about the future, and their frustrations at the present. For those who were a

part of the group of resisters, Uyeno's arrest was seen as suspicious given the timing of the sugar

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[95] While one group went to the police station, the other group went to the hospital to find Tayama. The group arrived between 6:25-6:45pm (accounts vary), and Dr. Gate called for assistance but no one was dispatched. However, Tayama was hiding under a bed in one of the hospital wards, so the group did not find him. "The Manzanar Riot, [see also: NARA Reel 75, Folders 21 and 23]," 13-15.

[96] Ibid, 12.

[97] David J. McFadden, "Report on the Disturbance and Riot at the Manzanar War Relocation Project," December 14, 1942, Documents from Harry Ueno Re: Manzanar 1942-1943, Japanese American National Library, San Francisco, CA, 16.

[98] Ibid, 16.

investigation. They also respected him as a member of the community for his desire to protect the interests of mess hall workers instead of supporting the Work Corps. For those who supported the government, the actions of the resisters were seen as unruly and disgraceful. They had fears about the perceived "pro-Japan" messages and rhetoric that went along with such demonstrations, which could have been rooted in the need to gain acceptance from the U.S. at large. Perhaps these mindsets were more common in one subgroup over another, but they were certainly *not* restricted to certain groups. In many cases, internees operated outside of the stereotypes that were attributed to them, adding a new dimension to the conflict in the camps.

Aftermath of the Manzanar Riot: Fear and Rumors

In the wake of the Manzanar Riot, tensions remained prominent in the camp and acts of defiance remained present in the minds of some internees. Many individuals refused to work after the riot took place, as is described in a letter from December 21, 1942:

> "Monday, today, every one was supposed to go back to work. But they only worked half day. The furnel [sic] was held for the two fellows who died of bullets two weeks ago. They couldn't hold it within camp because there wasn't anyplace where such a big group could gather and since Lone Pine or Independence didn't care to have the Japanese population in their city, (town) the people had to go out to the woods and have it. They took about ten trucks with the families and three rep. from each block."[99]

As opposed to going to work, the internees chose to honor those who died in the riot, despite the possible consequences.[100] Their efforts to find an area outside of the camp to hold the funeral services also reflected their determination to make accommodations amidst discriminatory conditions and the

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[99] Letter, December 21, 1942, Documents from Harry Ueno Re: Manzanar 1942-1943, Japanese American National Library, San Francisco, CA, 8.

[100] On Monday, December 21, internees were required to go to work but when they decided to go to the funeral instead, the WRA administrators fired the internee administration workers, post office workers, and warehouse workers. This disrupted the lives of internees even more because they had to walk a mile or more to get their mail, and those who got fired had to deal with the emotional repercussions of losing their jobs. Ibid, 8.

oppressive nature of camp life. The author explains that "the Japanese population didn't care to go to work," for honoring the rioters who died for their beliefs was more important to them. For many internees, the loyalty that they had to the members of their community was far more important than any sort of connection to the U.S. and the WRA.

In the days immediately after the riot, school closures reflected the tension and fear that proliferated in the camps. However, it is crucial to emphasize that these closures were not issued by the administration by any means. McFadden's report stated that "Elementary schools were closed because of the failure of the students to attend," demonstrating a clear choice on the part of the students' parents to keep them home from school.[101] Parents could have acted this way out of fear, but it could have also been an intentional form of resistance against the WRA, or both. Regardless of which motives different internees had, the closure of the schools reveals the impact that the riot had on all elements of the population. Young children were affected by the riot through the experiences of their parents, and there was a clear struggle for internees to move forward. Accounts of the riot that demonize a small, antagonistic, "pro-Japanese" minority are severely limiting in that they fail to acknowledge the tangible effects that resulted from the event itself. By focusing on one group as opposed to looking at the riot more broadly, an inaccurate picture of post-riot Manzanar is constructed–one that suggests that no major changes occurred after the riot and that the population reverted to an otherwise identical pre-riot environment.

Along with school closures, there were also many rumors that took hold of the internee population in the period following the riot. These rumors elucidate the broad and longstanding effects of the riot, which further invalidates the official dismissal of its significance. Some rumors were published in Project Report 77, released in January 1943. Prominently, the rumor that Manzanar would be evacuated took hold of multiple blocks: 14, 16, 24, and 27. Internees thought that blocks 1-15

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[101] McFadden, "Report on the Disturbance and Riot at the Manzanar War Relocation Project," 10.

would be evacuated, and looked to the army for an answer to their concerns.[102] The administration argued that without definitive answers to this evacuation question, internees would not be motivated to work and farm. Some rumors centered around more practical topics, such as shoe repairs and clothing allowances. Interestingly, there were accusations that Poston had better clothing allowances than Manzanar did, demonstrating that the internees were very aware of their position in the internment camps and were fairly knowledgeable of the events in other camps as well.[103]

A rumor related to the riot involved Reverend Oda, who also served as a block manager of Block 28. The residents of block 28 were consumed with the idea that he was an FBI or government informant, due to the fact that he did not attend several block manager meetings after the so-called "disturbance" had occurred.[104] The Manzanar Peace Committee, which was created in the wake of the riot, investigated the matter and concluded that the rumors were false. Internees from each block created the Peace Committee after the riot ended, looking to ensure harmony in the wake of the resistance. Seigoro Murakami, a judo instructor and Japanese language instructor led the Peace Committee, and consulted with Project Director Merritt. [105] The formation of the Peace Committee and their investigation of the rumors did not quell the uneasiness in the camp. The fear of informants within the camp reveals how the riot and the other instances of conflict were not spurred on by a crazed minority. Some rumors became so widespread that the Peace Committee felt the need to address them, proving the existence of a broader population in the camps that resented those who

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[102] "Project Report No. 77," January 30, 1943, Reel 76, RG210: Records of the War Relocation Authority, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington D.C, 1. Archival documents demonstrate that rumors existed in the camps, but it is unclear how much they impacted the course of events. Other sources that discuss rumor are: Unrau, *Historic Resource Study/Special History Study, vol. 2, The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry during World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center*, 504-505. Adams, "Notes on Manzanar Disturbances 1942," 3. Other historians have explored rumors and their impact on society throughout history. Some examples include: Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Patricia A. Turner, *I Heard It through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).
[103] "Project Report No. 77," 3.
[104] "Manzanar Peace Committee: Block #28 and Rev. Oda," January 10, 1943, Reel 76, RG210: Records of the War Relocation Authority, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington D.C, 1.
[105] Unrau, *Historic Resource Study/Special History Study, vol. 2, The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry during World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center*, 537.

collaborated with the government. The beating of Tayama and the events of the riot only heightened internees' awareness of such individuals, and impacted their day to day lives.

As is seen through these rumors and school closures, uncertainty and fear proliferated in the camp after the riot. Internees continually displayed mistrust for one another, and feared being reported to the FBI or the WRA by informants. They also resented the administration for not being able to provide adequate answers to their grievances. While the Manzanar Riot was certainly an expression of some internees' disdain for the conditions in the camp and the internment process as a whole, it did not lead to any resolution of the tensions that were embedded within camp life. In fact, it only heightened these tensions and created a sense of greater instability due to the violence and deaths that occurred. Overall, the Manzanar Riot did not usher in resolution and peace–there were plenty of struggles that persisted into the new year and for the remainder of the internment period, coloring the internee experience.

Conclusion: Understanding Motivations Behind Resistance

Regardless of the messages that were sent by the government and publications within the internment camps themselves, the transition to internment camp life was nothing short of complicated. The WRA's claim that internees would overcome the challenges of camp life within the first few months and usher in a new spirit in 1943 were not accurate representations of the tensions within the internee population and the administration. Internees' actions reflected their past experiences, their current interpretations of camp life, and their fears about the future. While life in the camps was by no means pleasant, internees also harbored concerns about what life would look like upon release from the camps.

One topic of discussion was wages outside of the camps, which were believed to be better than those within the camps themselves. However, Saburo Kido, who had received leave clearance, wrote a

letter to Elmer Yamamoto, presumably a friend who was still in the camp.[106] He explained the

"difficulty in earning enuf to live in Salt Lake…[and stated] 'If you think it is easy to get 200-$300 a

month you are greatly mistaken."[107] He reflected on the rumors that he had heard while still

incarcerated, which suggested that there were high wages outside of the camps; the highest wage for a

Japanese individual in Salt Lake was $150 a month, which was not sufficient given high costs of

living. He went on to say that "'those who have wild dreams about high wages should remain in

camp,'" implying that for some, camp life was obviously distasteful but provided a certain set of

expectations, unlike the outside world.[108]

It was in this ever-changing, unpredictable environment that conflict took place in the camps.

The camps themselves might have been isolated, but the minds of the internees did not operate in a

state of separation from the rest of the world. Major events of resistance such as the Poston Strike and

the Manzanar Riot were not the only instances of resistance in the camps, but truly understanding these

events uncovers how divisions manifested themselves. Part of this process involves looking outside of

traditional stereotypes associated with Issei, Nisei, and Kibei. Assuming that all Kibei and Issei were

disloyal, or that all Nisei were loyal distorts the rioters and strikers' motivations, as well as those of

FBI and WRA collaborators.

Setting aside stereotypes allows practical reasons for resistance to come to light. Those who

participated in the strike and the riot did not do so merely because they were "pro-Japanese" or had

extreme hatred for America. People involved in these events had a variety of different perspectives and

motivations. In Poston, some internees looked to gain respect for the Japanese community by aligning

themselves with the government, some experienced anger at Poston's location on an Indian

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[106] Saburo Kido became the President of the JACL in 1940, and was crucial in advancing the JACL's narrative of cooperation and the idea that all Japanese Americans possessed a deep devotion to their American citizenship. For more on Kido, see Densho Encyclopedia Contributors, "Saburo Kido," Densho Encyclopedia, last modified October 8, 2020, accessed November 3, 2022, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Saburo_Kido.
[107] Tsuchiyama, "Sociological Journal," 7.
[108] Ibid, 7.

reservation, and others were driven by their resentment towards the WRA. In regards to Manzanar, the rioters operated with the knowledge of Uyeno's background in the Kitchen Workers' Union, and many distrusted the administration as well as FBI informants. There were many other considerations that inspired populations in the camps to act, but regardless of what they were, none of them were exclusive to one subgroup over another.

Internment life centered around conflict, tension, and division, profoundly affecting the ways in which internees acted with one another and with the WRA. Exploring the true motivations behind the Poston Strike and the Manzanar Riot reveal the complex nature of the internee population. Resisters did not belong to one group and did not reflect "pro-Japanese" values in every instance. Instead, the internees that chose to fight back recognized the injustice in their situation and looked to remedy it by making their voices heard. They could belong to the Issei, Kibei, or Nisei subgroups–no subgroup was solely responsible. JACL supporters and government informants understood the undemocratic nature of internment, but they looked for acceptance through government cooperation. The strike and riot directly challenged the conventional (accepted) ideas of "disloyalty" and "loyalty," and a closer analysis creates a more accurate understanding of who took action and why.

Conclusion: Restoring Division, Embracing Ambiguity

In February 1942, under the rationale of "military necessity," the U.S. government mandated the internment of 120,000 individuals of Japanese descent. The concept of "military necessity" suggested that there was no possible way to determine the loyalty of Japanese descended people due to their close racial ties to the enemy. These deeply racialized ideals about the Japanese population were part of a long history of anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast, amplified by social, economic, and cultural considerations. Many Americans saw the Japanese population as a major economic threat, taking away jobs and income from hardworking Americans. Additionally, knowledge of the Japanese language and prolonged exposure to Japanese cultural practices called one's loyalties into question and augmented the perceived need for internment.

Despite the efforts of those that labeled the government's behavior as extreme, internment became a reality with the passage of Executive Order 9066. One of the most notable voices in the arguments against internment was the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Claiming to represent the entirety of the Japanese American community, the JACL attempted to dissuade the government from viewing internment as the only solution to the so-called wartime "Japanese problem." However, the JACL's strategy involved the alienation of the Issei and Kibei, as well as distancing the Nisei from Japanese culture and everyday life. In essence, the JACL aligned itself with what the U.S. government deemed acceptable while simultaneously arguing against internment, even if it meant creating a divide between the Nisei and the rest of the Japanese community. Ultimately, the JACL pledged its full cooperation to the government and promised to abide by its directives, even if internment was decided upon.

Beginning in the pre-war era and persisting into the internment period, stereotypes regarding the Issei, Kibei, and Nisei were solidified. In their administration of the camps, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) tended to view Issei and Kibei as suspicious or "disloyal" due to their cultural ties to Japan. On the other hand, the Nisei and the JACL were often labelled as "loyal" due to their

citizenship status and the JACL's willingness to cooperate with the government. In order to expose the limiting nature of these labels, I analyze the Poston Strike (Nov. 1942) and the Manzanar Riot (Dec. 1942). The U.S. government and the media vilified these acts of resistance as the product of an irrational "pro-Axis" minority, suggesting that only extremists demonstrated discontent about life in the camps. In reality, many internees of all subgroups (Issei, Nisei, and Kibei) participated in the strike and the riot, reflecting the inaccuracy of the stereotypical labels that the government assigned to each subgroup. The government uncritically applied the labels of "disloyalty" and "loyalty" to all internees, leading to a great deal of misunderstanding in the camps. In this way, internment camp life was one marked by division, conflict, and dissent. While the Poston Strike and the Manzanar Riot are often recognized as violent outliers in an otherwise peaceful experience, internment was a constant series of power struggles between the internees and the government along with internal fracturing within the Japanese community.

After the dissemination of the loyalty questionnaire and the creation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the pervasiveness of the subgroup labels persisted. The government leveraged the segregated army unit as a way to prove its non-discriminatory stance, publicly acknowledging the accomplishments and capabilities of the unit. When viewed against earlier portrayals of the Poston Strike and the Manzanar riot as "pro-Axis," the oversimplification of the internment experience is evident. By suggesting that the large majority of internees did not show disdain for the government and the WRA not only minimizes the traumatic experiences of forced removal, but it obscures the constantly tumultuous internment era. The government effectively erased the narratives of dissenting individuals for the purpose of upholding the image of patriotic Nisei willing to sacrifice themselves for their country.

In other words, the strict application of the terms "disloyal" and "loyal" resulted in false portrayals about internment life, taking away the agency of those who chose to resist the government. Historians and social scientists in the post-war era have reproduced these silences in internment

history, adopting the perspective that the WRA and the JACL cultivated in the internment years. My analysis adds to the contributions of revisionist historians, exploring the complexity of the internment camp experience and challenging the idea that certain subgroups were "loyal" or "disloyal."

In many ways, the silences of the wartime era have pervaded the legacy of Japanese American internment. The contributions of Japanese Americans who agreed with the JACL's ideology of cooperation and who also supported idealistic portrayals of the Nisei community dominated the narrative, just as they did in the wartime context. The JACL continued to emphasize the successes of the Japanese community and their ability to assimilate into American society, resembling their rhetoric in the pre-internment era as a way to defend themselves. A 1966 *New York Times* article articulated a similar message, asserting that "the history of Japanese Americans…challenges every such generalization about ethnic minorities…barely more than 30 years after the end of the wartime camps, this is a minority that has risen above even prejudiced criticism."[109] The timing of this article is noteworthy because almost thirty years after internment, Japanese Americans were being elevated as a minority success story. Not only did this erase their own history, but it minimized the struggles of other minority groups.

It is undeniable that there have been recent efforts to uncover more about acts of resistance in the internment era, but there are still blind spots when it comes to telling the stories of dissenters. A prominent example is the 1999 film *Rabbit in the Moon*, directed by Emiko Omori.[110] Omori produced the film with the intention of exposing dissenting narratives, delving deeper into the Poston Strike and the Manzanar Riot by incorporating testimonies from former internees. The film Rabbit in the Moon is effective in challenging the idea that "incidents" in the internment camps were not isolated outbursts; they were connected to one another through the shared grievances of the resisters. However, the film

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[109] William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese American Style," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), January 9, 1966, 180, accessed November 6, 2022, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1966/01/09/356013502.html?pageNumber=180.
[110] *Rabbit in the Moon*, directed by Emiko Omori, Wabi-Sabi, 1999.

fails to tease out the greater implications of the characterizations of loyal and disloyal, indirectly enforcing the division in the Japanese community that it advocates against.

In its discussion of the loyalty questionnaire, the film effectively explores the uneasiness of the internees when it came to answering questions twenty-seven and twenty-eight. One of the interviewees, Frank Emi, emphasized that saying "No" to the questions would require the Issei to "forswear allegiance to Japan…[which] would have left them without a country."[111] As discussed in Chapter Three, this fear of becoming stateless persons is often minimized in WRA accounts of the questionnaire, especially in suggesting that the revision of question twenty-eight put an end to all of the uncertainties within the internees' minds. This point of view is far too simplistic, which the film effectively challenges through the firsthand accounts of internees. At the same time that the film sheds more light onto the realities of the internment experience, it also emphasizes the WRA/JACL perspective in the way it outlines the different groups in the camps. The film highlights that the camps consisted of "disloyal" and "loyal" groups, labeling the JACL and Nisei as "loyal" while the "disloyal" internees consisted largely of Issei and Kibei. Although this view is helpful to an extent, it further cements the notion that there were only two groups in the camps, attributing labels to the Issei, Kibei, and Nisei without further consideration. Building on the interventions made by the film and other recent reinterpretations of the internment experiences and narrative, my thesis has directly challenged the strict labels that have been used to describe the wartime Japanese American history and thus demonstrates the centrality of dissents, divisions, and conflicts to their internment experiences.

In considering the continual erasure of many aspects and nuances of the Japanese American experience, it is clear that the exclusion of dissenting voices is not merely a matter of the past. These silences dominated the wartime period but have since been reproduced by the media, organizations such as the JACL, and even the government itself. The divisions that arose between the internees and

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[111] *Rabbit in the Moon*, 00:43:59-00:44:06.

more specifically amongst the Nisei did not fade away after the end of internment. Instead, these differences have persisted, but are now rooted in questions of how Japanese Americans should be portrayed in American society and how members of the community should see themselves in relation to the United States. Understanding the complexity of internee perspectives and challenging the limiting nature of governmental narratives not only brings the stories of the past to the forefront, but illuminates the present.

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        Second row: Setsugo Sakamoto, Y. Kawasaki, Thomas Masuda, Associate Project
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        Kushiyama, John Terakawa, Mack Kadotani, M. Okamoto, M. Hara, and K.
        Kubota. Fourth row: Hanachi Takataya, John Matsuda and James Yahiro. Overall
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        all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast Defense Areas. The
        family was sent to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, where they still
        reside. Kei left the center to take post graduate work in economics and finance at the
        University of Nebraska while he awaited his call to active duty. He is now assigned to an
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The Reverend Jitsuo Morikawa from Poston is the first Japanese American to be made a
         Pastor of the Baptist Church in Chicago. He is shown here being installed by Reverend Eric L.
         Titus, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of this city. Reverend Morikawa was installed as
         Assistant Pastor of the Church, which does not have a Japanese American congregation. Before
         installation, Reverend Morikawa was associated with the Chicago Federation of Churches.
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A Spirit of Revolution:
The Story of Lt. Colonel John Laurens

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Abstract: Though he has become a figure all but forgotten or merely glossed over, John Laurens (1754-1782) was the purest form of an early American hero, a pioneer for proto-abolitionism in the South, and a queer historical figure. His complex character and legacy is deserving of recognition and remembering. In this article, I intend to do just that by giving a brief historical summary of his life and person.

The heat is sticky, clinging to clean chins and neckties, to battered shirts and blue coats. The cicadas sing in the Pennsylvanian sun, and a new pair of boots take a step into the mud.

There was a fresh face in Washington's camp: handsome, passionate, and fresh off the boat from London, John Laurens was a young man beaming with the urge for freedom. Only 22, he now found himself at the Continental Army's encampment in Germantown on August 8th, 1777.[1] After much debate with his concerned father, Henry Laurens (now current President of the Continental Congress), John had secured a spot as a temporary aide-de-camp to General Washington himself. It would not be surprising if he was met with jealous glares and furrowed brows as he strutted up to the officers' headquarters, never having seen war nor trained in any such talents.[2] Who exactly did this idealistic rich boy think he was marching up to the Commander-in-Chief's inner circle? Whatever qualms may have risen would be forgotten, within little time Laurens would prove himself as a courageous, intelligent, and distinguished officer within the army. The Marquis de Lafayette would comment on his reckless bravery in the Battle of Brandywine and would commend Laurens on his valor the following month in the Battle of Germantown.[3] Yet, John's claim to fame would stem from his fervent proto-abolitionism and his continuous fight to integrate black men into the army in exchange for their freedom. He was in many ways an embodiment of patriotic zeal and an almost naive believer in freedom.

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[1] Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution: With a New Preface by the Author*, Book, Whole (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015),73.

[2] This is in direct reference to the aides Laurens would be closest with: Alexander Hamilton and the Marquis De Lafayette. Though there is no evidence supporting any specific reaction to Laurens' arrival and place within the army, in comparison to Hamilton who worked his way up the ladder, and Lafayette, who had been trained in military tactics and was a bridge between Washington and the French, John was merely a nobody with a father who was a somebody.

[3] Lafayette Letters ; Lafayette to Henry Laurens, October 18, 1777, in *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Stanley J. Idzerda (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1977), 124.

[4] From George Washington to William Gordon, March 8, 1785.

Though John's military career would be short, his impact on his "family" within the army as well as the American Revolution itself was irrefutable. "No man possessed more of the amor patria," Washington would later use to describe him, "he had not a fault that I ever could discover, unless intrepidity bordering upon rashness, could come under that denomination; & to this, he was excited by the purest motives."[4] Though he has become a figure all but forgotten or merely glossed over, Laurens was the purest form of an early American hero, a pioneer for proto-abolitionism in the South, and a queer historical figure; in consequence, his complex character and legacy is deserving of recognition and remembering.

In this paper, I intend to retell Laurens' story and combat previous concepts of historiography regarding his legacy. I will mainly draw upon and argue against the only major biography on Laurens, written by Gregory D. Massey in 2015. Using a variety of primary sources, mostly letters, and first-hand accounts, I intend on understanding John Laurens as a more complete character and as a queer man. While Massey and other past historians fail to recognize any homosexual undertones (or in turn, believe them), I argue that the presence of them is not only evidence but is important in and of itself. While the title and concept of sexuality is a modern invention, same-sex attraction is a natural part of human life, existence, and love. If we allow ourselves as historians to understand love in the past as undefined and nonbinary, we may better understand characters like Laurens. With this open concept of love and attraction in mind, I will use it to further understand his passions, choices, and person. John was a man fueled by his emotions, honor, and boyish wish to change the world, a true spirit of revolution and a man of heart. This is his story.

I.   Early Life

Henry Laurens was the richest man in the American colonies. He and his bride sat comfortably upon 20,000 acres of land, a plantation the size of a small kingdom populated with the Master, Mistress, and 227 slaves.[4] Though Henry would later question the morality of his trade, there was far too much blood on his hands to repent.

John Laurens was born on October 28, 1754. After a series of miscarriages and stillborns, Eleanor and Henry Laurens were relieved to finally be gifted with a second son. Soon after came little Eleanor in 1755, and before the birth of the fourth child, the eldest, Henry, died in 1758. John assumed the role of eldest, and the following year his second sister, Martha, was born. The Laurens family would continue to change, little Eleanor passed away at age 12 in 1764, while Henry Jr. (Harry) was born in 1763, followed by James (mostly referred to as "Jemmy") in 1765. Finally, in 1770 Mrs. Laurens died during the birth of the youngest child, Mary Eleanor ("Polly") Laurens.[5] Simply said, by age 15, John was no stranger to loss.

This sets up a very particular situation for John, one that will in many ways shape his late teenage years and adulthood. With the passing of his mother, John was the next authority figure in the household after his father. He, especially in later years, served as a "surrogate father" to his younger siblings. The fragility of life was also made extremely clear to him, and most prevalently to his father. Throughout the rest of John's life, Henry would play the overbearing and overcautious father.

On top of this sense of responsibility, he also grew up in a very particular world. He would be raised while the horrors of slavery were right at his doorstep. He would see the

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[4] Jack N. Rakove, *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America*, Book, Whole (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 204-207.
[5] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 9-11; 21-22.

hundreds of enslaved black men and women his father owned, see the back-breaking labor they would do, and the brutality they went through. He was to inherit this one day, but John had no interest in such.

In September of 1771, John and his brothers were sent to Europe to pursue higher education. Henry, cautious of the tensions growing between the crown and the colonies whisked his sons off to Geneva for their studies, putting them under the care of Jean Antoine Chais.[6] Here, his sons were able to receive better schooling than in the Americas, while also remaining "safe" from the hostilities that were arising back home. He wished for neutrality, avidly reassuring John to focus on finishing his studies.[7] The unconventionality of this situation shouldn't be overlooked, few Americans were regarded worthy of mingling with European gentlemen, much less able to study abroad underneath such tutors.

As Europe moved away from the concepts of slavery, John learned anti-slavery ideology, such that would never be muttered back in South Carolina. Geneva was a land free from the "internal enemy" of slavery, and truly allowed John the ability to push against the institution he'd grown up alongside. Who is to say how, exactly, these ideas came to resonate with the eldest son of North America's most infamous slave trader? Perhaps the crack of the whip would echo in John's ears, maybe he would remember the times he saw men falling over in exhaustion, the cries of mothers as their sons were taken away. European elites could exhaust the reasons proving the immorality of slavery, but John had actually seen it. There is no way to know exactly what brought along this anti-slavery fascination, and Massey, in turn, doesn't suggest any reason

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[6] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution,* 29
[7] Henry Laurens, Philip M. Hamer, and South Carolina Historical Society, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 1st ed., vol. 9, Book, Whole (Columbia: Published for the South Carolina Historical Society by the University of South Carolina Press, 1968). See letters regarding J.Laurens from 1773-1774.

other than John's desire to make something of a hero out of himself.[8] With little record of the impact of slavery on Laurens' childhood, and few remaining documents regarding why Laurens chose such a path, the answer is left up to speculation. Whatever the reason, there was still a fire lit inside Laurens' belly.

Francis Kinloch arrived in Geneva in early 1774, a fellow South Carolinian and a graduate of Eton College, he and John would immediately become attached at the hip. Charismatic, handsome, and intelligent, John had no qualms with making friends beforehand, but Kinloch was special. Francis was just as charming and quick-witted as Laurens, and a companion who was unafraid to wrestle with John on political arguments and literature. They had found their equals in each other and held one another in the highest confidence. The two were inseparable, the liking they took to one another was an affection John had never expressed to any non-family member previously. Though some may convince themselves that their relationship was merely that of friends, more evidence points towards a deeper, romantic relationship between the two.

When it comes to understanding same-sex relationships in the 18th century, they must be viewed in a manner that is different from modern ideas of sexuality or romance. Sexuality as a concept- heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, etc. - was not yet conceived by this time. As Massey argues, the notions of what may be considered homosexual in the modern mind would not be so in the past.[9] Yet at the same time, this exact reasoning applies to any connotations of what we define as "heterosexuality"; why do affectionate words exchanged between the opposite sexes insinuate flirting or romance, while the same language used between

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[8] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution,* 30-34.
[9] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution,* 81.

the same sex is merely platonic? The hypocrisy of such a mindset is baffling, especially

considering the commonality of same-sex relationships. and we must break apart the idea that

attraction to the opposite sex is a default. This inability to see texts from outside a

heteronormative viewpoint is many great historians' weaknesses.

John Laurens had never shown any interest towards women, despite Massey's evidence-

less interjections regarding such.[10] While there could arguably have been girls who had flirted or

entertained feelings for John, there is no record of him exercising it back. Instead, Laurens had

chosen to surround himself with other men and his greatest bonds were with that of the same

sex.[11] While language between friends may seem overly affectionate to those of the modern day,

this is not a viable excuse to disregard any deeper emotions that may lie beyond this familiar

tone. Excusing all affectionate language to "that's just how it was back then" is a poor means of

disregarding any non-heteronormative discussion and possible narratives. Furthermore,

historians end up forgetting that history is not an art of "straight until proven gay", but rather

something that is proved by evidence weighted against evidence.

Along with John's habitual preference to surround himself with men, the affections

within the Laurens-Kinloch letters would also provide a basis for understanding their

relationship. Most notably, the tone difference between Laurens' writings to others versus those

to Kinloch was drastically different. As someone so infamous for his hurried and short letters, it

would seem John was never at a loss for words when writing to Kinloch. Even after he had

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[10] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution,* 40. Massey tends to add "women" in many cases alongside his notes of John's frequent interaction and preferred company with men. For example: "John never had difficulty attracting women and men"; "Women played important roles in his life, but he reserved his primary emotional commitments for other men". At times, he forces the inclusion of women into the narrative, and provides little or none to elaborate on any women who were important to his life.

[11] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution, 40.* Massey even agrees, writing that "he continually centered his life around homosocial attachments to other men". Furthermore, Laurens throughout his lifetime shows no interest in the opposite sex, the letters that remain and the events of his lifetime have him only writing and confiding affectionately in other men.

begged his father to allow him to stay in Geneva, to which Henry refused, John would write to

his dear Kinloch with eagerness to return to his side.[12] The two shared a fondness in political

discourse, and would often debate the morality of the war stirring back home. While John burned

with passion for the revolution, Kinloch remained far more reserved about the idea of separation.

Yet despite the vastly different opinions they shared, the affections they held remained steadfast,

as John would note:

> "You and I may differ my Dear Kinloch in our political Sentiments but I shall always
> love you from the Knowledge I have of your Heart."[13]

Though letters and records have all but been lost or never written down, what does remain

known about the Kinloch-Laurens relationship is the clear homoerotic undertones of their

narrative. These same trends and tones would be repeated in Laurens's later romantic

relationships.

We will never know the true nature of John's affections or what his sexuality was- though

he is more likely queer than not- nor is it a defining factor of his character. Yet it is still part of

his story, part of his person, and should not be forgotten or left out of his narrative.

By 1775, John and his brothers had been safely enrolled in institutions in London, as well

as placed in the care of/acquainted with Henry's English family and friends. John had now

finally taken up the study of law as well as the full responsibility as the "man" (to quote Henry

directly) of the household now that Henry Laurens had returned to South Carolina.[14] By then, the

Laurens brothers would find themselves often in the company of the Manning family, William

Manning serving as a guardian and advisor of sorts to John.

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[12] John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, August 23, 1774, Charleston Museum Collection of Revolutionary War Letters, Lowcountry Digital Library, The Charleston Museum Archives. https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:64131.
[13] John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, April 12, 1776.
[14] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 46. Ch3, fn 1.

Yet in September, disaster struck. John went off to arrange schooling options for little

Jemmy, only to be met upon his return by Mr. Manning's clerk, caught in a fit of panic.[15] Jemmy

had fallen, cracking open his skull in an attempt to climb up to John's window. Panicked, John

rushed to his brother's bedside and stayed with him there until his death on the 5th. Jemmy's

death had shaken John in a manner not seen before, and the guilt of which weighed on Laurens

for the rest of his own life. John was a mess, and only after a few weeks was he able to write to

his father:

> "I could only answer with my tears, that day and night the succeeding day, and 'till his
> death the succeeding night, I was constantly with him… The last night convulsions so
> gentle as scarce to be perceived; or pass under that name_ came on and lasted 'till he
> expired. I will not increase your Regret, as is usual upon these occasions by making the
> panegyrick of the dead… Let me conjure you then my Dear Father, not to abandon
> yourself to Grief as if all your Hopes were buried here_ Suffer not one moment to be
> spent in useless moans for the Dead, which might be employed to the Service of the
> Living. You have great and important Duties to perform upon the Earth, your family, your
> country looks to you with Confidence. Some tears must fall, would heaven that I could
> receive them in my bosom. Your Friends will be uneasy_ Your Country will want a
> Support when in most need of one_ and the most unhappy of Sons will be your truly
> affectionate and Dutiful… John Laurens."[16]

The story and tone of this letter are nothing short of heartbreaking, and John's attempts to

console his father while he, himself, is mourning is all too hard to bear. Despite his acquaintance

with death, we can't forget that John was only a young man at this time, barely 21 years of age.

Not to mention, John had practically raised Jemmy. He had been given great household

responsibilities since he was young, and the weight of his brother's death (which he attributed to

his own negligence) was a blow that crushed his heart and spat on his pride. He had failed his

father who he had always strived to impress.

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[15] John Laurens to Henry Laurens, October 4, 1775, in Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 1st ed., vol. 10, 451-454. In the footnotes, it is believed John sent multiple letters, starting the 9th of September.
[16] John Laurens to Henry Laurens, October 4, 1775, in *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, vol 10, 451-454.

After Jemmy had passed, in an odd way, Laurens became far more reckless than he had been before. Certainly, not having the responsibility of taking care of his young brother anymore may have enabled such behavior, and Harry was already secured in safe hands, but John's passions now turned from a flame to a wildfire.

All the while, John and Francis never failed to write to one another. As the American Revolution began to brew back home, the two were enthralled in debates regarding the prospects of monarchism and republicanism. While John became a fervent advocate for the patriots and republicanism, Francis was far more timid and his sentiments ultimately were loyalist in nature. Though these sentiments had been discussed between the two before in their time in Geneva, by April of 1776, the wedge had grown too wide for agreement.[17] Most notably, it was during this time that John actually expressed his anti-slavery views and made note of the hypocrisy of his hometown:

> "I think we Americans at least in the Southern Colonies, cannot contend with a good Grace, for Liberty, until we shall have enfranchised our Slaves_ how can we whose Jealousy has been alarm'd more at the Name of Oppression sometimes than at the Reality, reconcile to our Spirited Assertions of the Rights of Mankind, the galling abject of Slavery of our Negroes."[18]

This was huge. It is without a doubt that others were thinking the same thing, but to be penned by the very son (arguably the favorite) of Henry Laurens? The weight it held was, for lack of better terminology, revolutionary. Those who knew John may not have found much surprise in his opinions regarding slavery, but as historians, here we see the gears taking motion.

Kinloch's response two weeks later was another turning point for John. It is in many ways the young man's first "breakup", for it is the main catalyst for the falling out between the

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[17] John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, April 12, 1776.
[18] John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, April 12, 1776.

two. At first, the sentiments are gentle, Francis assures that Laurens can be open in his opinions

with him, for "we hold too fast by one anothers hearts, my dear Laurens, to be afraid of exposing

our several opinions to each other".[19] Shortly after, however, Kinloch goes on to list the many

reasons he finds John's suggestion for independence absolutely ridiculous. What is most jarring,

however, is that despite Laurens' faith in his "humanity and love of justice", Kinloch writes:

> "For my part though I would rather not exist than be the slave of a despot, yet is the
> height of my wishes to live the subject of a monarch_ In a democracy you are condemned
> to a hateful mediocrity, and the desire of excelling in any respect, though perhaps not
> really so is always looked upon as shocking the spirit of the constitution._ to be
> confounded in a heap of butchers, bakers, blacksmiths etc., is dreadful for a man of any
> education, or feeling…"[20]

While it's unsurprising that a man of Kinloch's wealth and status would have relatively negative

views on working-class people, this clearly rubbed John the wrong way, as he professes in his

response. John had just told him his intentions to free not just his white brethren but his black

brethren as well, it would be absurd to believe Laurens would go along with Kinloch's insults.

Meanwhile, his inability to sense any of the King's wrongdoings to the American people was yet

another jab at John's passions. The close-minded and rude sentiments Francis expressed were not

something Laurens would take lightly.

To make matters even worse, Kinloch closes the letter off by stating "Be certain that I

never shall forget you".[21] The undertones of this line *sting*. He may as well have told him

"goodbye" after he brutally insulted his ideas in the most ignorant of manners. John was furious.

So furious, in fact, that Laurens would not respond until June. And when he did respond,

every ounce of anger and discontent translated itself onto the parchment. John skips the

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[19] Francis Kinloch to John Laurens, April 28, 1776.
[20] Francis Kinloch to John Laurens, April 28, 1776.
[21] Francis Kinloch to John Laurens, April 28, 1776.

pleasantries, simply starting with: "My ambition, Kinloch, is to live under a Republican

government". No "dear", no "Francis", but a letter that starts simply with "*my* ambitions".

Following that, Laurens goes line through line of Kinloch's previous letter absolutely tearing it

apart. The pure, unbridled, fury expressed throughout the letter encapsulates John's sincerity in

revolution and his clear change in affection for Kinloch. He tops it all off with the line: "To your

unfinished sentence I will add, the Hands of a King ought to be tied_ that he may do no

Mischief_ but a better way would be to have no King at all", it's safe to say, the quote speaks for

itself.[22] Then, John signs his name, and never writes to Kinloch again.[23]

Around the time the heated debates were going on between Laurens and Kinloch, John

had found himself in a predicament. Almost out of nowhere, he had gotten the daughter of

William Manning, Martha, pregnant. No records of the two sharing any interest in one another

remain, and the timing of his daughter's birth roughly nine months after his argument with his

"dear friend" is quite curious. Either way, the events that unfolded were quite a shock. Feeling a

sense of guilt and duty to the poor girl, Laurens decides to marry her and they elope in October

of 1776. He expresses these sentiments regarding his new wife, to his Uncle James:

> I should inform you of an important change in my circumstances. Pity has obliged me to
> marry but a consideration of the duty which I owe to my country made me choose a
> clandestine celebration, lest the father should insist upon my stay in this country as a
> condition of the marriage the matter has proceeded too far to be longer concealed, and I
> have this morning disclosed the affair to Mr. Manning in plain terms reserving to myself
> the right of fulfilling the more important engagements to my country. It may be
> convenient on some accounts that the matter should be kept secret till you hear next from
> me, & you will oblige me by keeping it so.[24]

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[22] John Laurens to Francis Kinloch, June 16, 1776.

[23] At least, he doesn't for a while. In actuality, they correspond again later, and actually run in to each other during the war. By then, Kinloch has had a change of heart and is enlisted in the Continental Army.

[24] John Laurens to James Laurens, in Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution, 68.*

Martha was an accident, a mistake made in a fit of rage or rebound, or by the coaxing of William

Manning. Even Massey, suggests the latter as a possibility, and though I doubt Laurens actually

wished to engage in flirtations with her, he probably felt an obligation to go along with the status

quo. It's clear, here, that Laurens' sense of duty and honor proceeds any romance or affections he

may hold. Men were expected to marry and have children as proof of masculinity, and perhaps

this circumstance was better than any other Henry may force upon him later.[25] It's undeniable that

John's true love was never with Martha, but with his home country. He would do anything to

fight for the revolution, and it wasn't long until he managed to abandon his new wife and unborn

child. Though a passionate soldier and a dedicated patriot, Laurens was a horrible husband and

an even worse father.

Almost six years after he had first left his home, the eager young man arrived in

Charleston in April 1777. Beaming with enthusiasm, he was ready to be the great hero he had

always dreamed of. Everyone was going to know his name.

II.   Alexander Hamilton and the Fall of 1777

The Battle of Brandywine was Laurens' first time on the battlefield, yet he fought with

such vigor that one would have thought him used to the horrors of war. In the words of the

Marquis De Lafayette, "It was not his fault he was not killed or wounded. He did everything that

was necessary to procure one or t'other".[26] And in many ways, that was a sufficient embodiment

of Laurens' spirit: his recklessness and bravery was both his Achilles' heel and greatest strength.

A few months later, in the Battle of Germantown, Laurens' reckless behavior would earn

him a spot as one of the main figures in the attack. On October 4th, after only an hour of

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[25] Ava Chamberlain, ed. Thomas A. Foster, *The New England Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (2007): 348–50.
[26] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 75.

fighting, the rebel army was forced to a stalemate having discovered a band of over 100 redcoats shut up in and firing out of the Benjamin Chew house. In controlling the large stone building, the British had effectively found a means of shooting down the rebels, giving the Americans little to work with. The opportunity for surrender was shot down (literally; the man holding the white flag was fatally wounded) and drastic measures had to be taken. So, the Chevalier Du Plessis proposed a plan: he and an already wounded Laurens were to smoke the enemy out, and set the front door of the house ablaze.[27] Though matters didn't go quite as planned, both exercised valor and a willingness to take necessary risks in the pursuit of liberty. John Laurens' potential was easily recognizable, and with it, he turned heads.

The most important eyes he caught were of a man just as fiery, bold, ambitious, and reckless as himself. Though he had come from anything but John's circumstances, Alexander Hamilton would make himself one of the most important people in Laurens' life. The two shared a bond that not only rivaled the one John had shared with Kinloch but far surpassed it.

Just like any same-sex duo in the 18th century, the relationship between Hamilton and Laurens has been long debated. As early as 1976, historian Jonathan Katz presented the Hamilton-Laurens letters as examples of homosexuality in American history.[28] Though historians still struggle to come to an agreement, the statement of a romantic relationship between the two is not unheard of. Taking the speculations of Laurens having already been in a homosexual relationship in the past, as well as Hamilton's infamously flirtatious personality: the likelihood along with the evidence is quite incriminating.

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[27] Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 76-77.
[28] Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A. : A Documentary*, 1st Harper colophon, Book, Whole (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

Perhaps the reason some historians cannot see their relationship as anything more than platonic has to do with Hamilton's reputation as a womanizer. Yet, I find that a weak excuse. Quick-witted, sharp-tongued, and quite the romantic, if anything Hamilton's personality makes him seem more inclined to flirt with anyone, including men. Granted, John wasn't just any man, but that's precisely why his interest may have been piqued. Besides, according to one of Hamilton's major biographers, Ron Chernow, Hamilton would have not been a stranger to homosexuality, having grown up in St. Croix.[29] Many "sodomites" as they had been labeled, had been exiled to his homeland and he had grown up in a backwater town where rules regarding such were far freer than in the American colonies.

Once more, the kinship between the two aides-de-camp was uncanny. They both shared a fervent dedication to the revolution, as well as a strong desire for justice. Handsome, intelligent, and of similar minds: they gravitated to one another and were inseparable. They would become quite the power duo, both incredibly influential in Washington's circle as well as the revolution itself. The bond they shared as well as the men themselves were already unordinary, their story should not be treated as any less so.

While John Laurens didn't write enough, Alexander Hamilton wrote far too much. In this plethora of love letters, we're able to see through words, Hamilton's true affection for Laurens. Though this was undoubtedly a time of tender friendships and flowery language, the strength of the emotions shown in Hamilton's writing makes it difficult for even contemporaries not to speculate something more. In fact, Alexander's son, John Hamilton, after his father's death in 1804, would find the box in which Hamilton neatly kept these letters for decades. Not only in shock at the survival of the letters and contents of the box, but upon reading them, John

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[29] Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton,* (Penguin Press 2004), 94-95.

Hamilton reportedly crossed out lines and actively censored phrases in fear of them harming his father's legacy.[30] In an omitted page from his biography on his father, he writes: "In the intercourse of these martial youths, who have been styled 'the Knights of the Revolution,' there was a deep fondness of friendship, which approached the tenderness of *feminine attachment*."[31] The romantic undertones (if they can even be referred to as "undertones") are clearly not a modern viewer's mistake, but one that even then can be mistaken for "feminine attachment" or romantic heterosexual love. Therefore, any arguments regarding the commonality of such affectionate phrases become nearly void, for the words shared between the two officers were loving beyond the normality of the time.

The most famous and blatant example of such tenderness can be seen in a letter dated April 1779, in which Hamilton writes:

> Cold in my professions, warm in my Friendships, I wish, my dear Laurens, it might be in my power, by action rather than words, to convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you that 'till you bade us Adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you. Indeed, my friend, it was not well done. You know the opinion I entertain of mankind, and how much it is my desire to preserve myself free from particular attachments, and to keep my happiness independent on the caprice of others. You should not have taken advantage of my sensibility to steal into my affections without my consent. But as you have done it and as we are generally indulgent to those we love, I shall not scruple to pardon the fraud you have committed, on condition that for my sake, if not for your own, you will always continue to merit the partiality, which you have so artfully instilled into me.[32]

Historians struggle to take the language at anything but face value, but the evidence is too glaring to overlook. Even if the phrase "I love you" was regarded as brotherly, the inclination to prove via actions rather than words makes the reasoning more difficult. In essence, "by actions"

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[30] Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 95.

[31] Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 95, fn. 47.

[32] Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, April 1779 in Alexander Hamilton, Harold C. Syrett, and Jacob Ernest Cooke, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 11, Book, Whole (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 34-38.

directly refers to his longing to see Laurens in person once more, however, what does showing

love entail at this time? In the case of brotherly love, I assume it could be interpreted as being in

his company or supporting him in work matters. That much is known, but it doesn't make it

inherently platonic. Can that not be done in words? In the case of romantic love, however, the

desire to convince him through action adds a layer of this being a blatant innuendo to physical

affection. While Hamilton can reassure Laurens over and over of his fondness, only actions seem

to be the most sufficient and endearing. Furthermore, what also catches the eye, is Hamilton's

admitted distrust of others, and Laurens' ability to steal past these barriers. This allows us not

only an insight into Hamilton's personality with others, but the intensity of the bond they shared,

so much so Laurens was able to affect his happiness and do so "without my [Hamilton's]

consent". Finally, and most recurring throughout the letter and their relationship, is Hamilton's

struggle to *convince* Laurens of his affection. This, in turn, suggests a side of John that didn't

truly know where Hamilton stood in their relationship or refuses to fully accept it. Now, if there

was a disinterest, Laurens would not have replied in affection nor would such sentiments carry

for so long. However, what is most likely is the fact Laurens felt either undeserving or insecure

of Hamilton's love. In a latter portion of the letter, Hamilton sarcastically asks John to "find him

a wife" before he admits he actually has no interest in marriage. (He also requests Laurens give

an accurate description of his "*size*" and "length of his nose" to which he "never spared him of

pictures".[33]) This, also, is prompted by Hamilton finding out about John's wife and daughter,

whom Laurens had reportedly never told him about prior. Nevertheless, the topic of marriage

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[33] Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, April 1779. The last quotation is actually speculated, for John C. Hamilton crossed out the phrase following "mind you do justice to the length of my nose and don't forget, that I <- - ->". Upon closer inspection to the document itself using technologies, some historians and individual scholars assume the last five words of the sentence to say "never spared you of pictures". This is not confirmed, but arguments given are convincing and images of said letter are provided.

became a frequent matter in the rest of their letters, but never in too enthusiastic a means. In one

such instance, Hamilton would later write, "... I have still a part for the public and another for

you; so your impatience to have me married is misplaced; a strange cure by the way, as if after

matrimony I was to be less devoted [to you] than I am now."[34] This phrase suggests that John had

been encouraging his "dear boy" (a term he had used to address Hamilton) towards matrimony,

not out of disgust but as a *strange cure*. It is here where many begin to see Laurens as a self-

loathing homosexual, and while it bears some fruit, it is hard to say if John genuinely disliked

himself for it. Nevertheless, Laurens held this idea that marriage was a social necessity, and had

hoped to save Hamilton from loving him, instead. Again, this was not uncommon for

homosexual men at the time, at it places Laurens amongst a common belief: duty before

attraction. This also relates back to his own marriage, proving there was no love between the

Laurenses other than a social necessity. Perhaps John's attitude stemmed from a place of regret,

he probably believed he didn't deserve any affection from Hamilton, especially after how poorly

things went with Kinloch. And, while Laurens was so ingrained in societal responsibilities and

honor due to his background, Hamilton had been used to a world that had not been so strict, and

thus was less inclined to conform. Simply said, he probably had less of a problem with it than

Laurens.

Interpretations can be made and speculated and never known, but Hamilton was not

frivolous with his wording. He chose his words wisely or at least wrote from the heart. It feels

foolish to explain or prove the tenderness in his words, considering how blatantly affectionate

they were. With respect to other interpretations, I am hesitant and meticulous in proving all

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[34] Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, September 16, 1780.
[36] Jack Rakove, *Revolutionaries*, 221.

possibilities of said argument, but in fact, there is no denying the romantic bond between Laurens and Hamilton.

III.   Valley Forge and the Duel

Winter quarters at Valley Forge allowed for an extended time off the battlefield. However, it was anything but relaxing and the horrors of the Continental Army's shape allowed John and others to contemplate the war effort. While others were dismayed, Laurens looked towards a solution. So, unable to pick up the sword, Laurens turned to the pen. Here, in the midst of starvation, sickness, and ragged conditions, Laurens would write his radical proposal "to augment the Continental forces from an untried Source."[36] In 1775, Lord Dunmore had tried to rattle Southern plantation owners by promising black slaves freedom if they enlisted in the British Army. Now, John would do the same. Just as he, himself, had found freedom in revolution, he hoped his black brethren could do the same. This would be his life's work and truest passion, and with little time he was calculating benefits to the American cause as well as the abolitionist one.

Now, black soldiers were already a part of the Continental Army, mostly freedmen from the North. However, John was committed to bringing this sentiment down to his homeland in the South, but what planter would agree to it? His means of convincing them were simple, he would lead by example while those who agreed would be reimbursed by Congress for their enslaved. That same winter, John wrote to his father asking for his inheritance early and in the form of "able-bodied men slaves" instead of "leaving me a fortune".[35] His boldness was admirable, and

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[35] John Laurens to Henry Laurens, January 14th, 1778, in William Simms and John Laurens, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the Years 1777-8, Now First Printed Form Original Letters to His Father, Henry Laurens, President of Congress*, *Sabin Americana 1500-1926*, Book, Whole (New York: n.p, 1867).
[38] Rakove, *Revolutuionaries*, 223. [39] Rakove, *Revolutionaries*, 226.

though Henry as well as Washington didn't believe his plan would grow to fruition, Laurens took

his father's hesitation as a challenge.

Father and son would write to one another in earnest, both combatting the other in their

opinions regarding John's proposal, slavery as an institution, as well as the very people

themselves. While Henry put the blame of slavery back on the shoulders of the British, and only

feared for his own salvation, John was adamant in arguing for the humanity of those enslaved.

While others blamed race for African slaves' intellect, position, etc., Laurens argued that they

were "a trampled people" who were "debased by Servitude" and forced into "perpetual

humiliation". In his usual revolutionary mindset, race made and played no factor in John's idea

of freedom for each enslaved person "has so much human left in them, as to be capable of

aspiring to the rights of men".[38] To John's credit, these thoughts were beyond most of his

countrymen, and though his passion bordered on naivety, his point was just. Henry would

attribute this all to his son's inexperience and age, pushing it aside as an "eccentric scheme"

while also questioning if John had even "consulted your [his] General" on the matter.

Meanwhile, while John put together his plan, he and the rest of Washington's staff were

still busy with other matters. After a variety of humiliating defeats during the Philadelphia

Campaign, Washington's reputation was suffering. The army was in horrible shape, and he had

yet to get another win. Congress was concerned. At the same time, General Horatio Gates as well

as Benedict Arnold had led troops to victory up north in Saratoga. Rumors would spread, and the

Commander-in-Chief faced ridicule from Congress and mutiny from within. As people sang

Gates' victory, they only heightened the images of Washington's defeats. Gates' ego would only

be bloated, and soon disrespect for the commander was whispered amongst his own generals.

This so-called "Conway Cabal" (named after General Conway, whose mutinous words slipped

onto Washington's desk) was an irrefutable time of unease in Washington's command, to which

Laurens and Hamilton, would be key figures in tackling. This, in turn, was another side to the

war, and the loyal efforts of the Lt. Colonels shouldn't be overlooked. Tirelessly, they petitioned

to congress and worked to uphold their Commander's honor and reputation. Laurens would be

key in holding his father's ear, and in the end, any insubordination was disputed.

However, Laurens was not yet finished dealing with disloyal Generals. In June of 1778,

General Charles Lee disobeyed his orders in the Battle of Monmouth, and in cowardice,

prematurely attempted to retreat the field despite his purpose to hold the British until

Washington's arrival. Luckily, the backup managed to catch Lee as he fled, and the army was

ordered back onto the field. In battle, John proceeded with his usual reckless behavior and he,

along with the rest of the troops, notably fought bravely. Though counted as a British victory,

Monmouth was successful in boosting morale throughout the Rebel Army. A few days later, John

would write to his father about how he and Baron Von Steuben avoided capture, while also

specifically leaving out any mention of his wounds and his horse being shot from under him.[39]

Nevertheless, Charles Lee's conduct was still an issue. In July, Lee was court-martialed

for cowardice, and John would assist Hamilton in prosecuting him. Matters would only heat up

after Lee was convicted, and aghast, the General tried to appeal to Congress. In an attempt to

defend himself, Lee openly criticized Washington while in private conversation he slandered his

character. Congress sided with the aides, and once more Lee humiliated himself, but not without

angering Laurens first. Unlike the defensive approach taken during the Conway Cabal, Laurens

challenged Lee to a duel. With Hamilton serving as his second, John wounded the General in the

leg within the first round. An almost instantaneous victory, Laurens left the confrontation

unscathed.

IV.   War in the South

After spending a little less than two years in service directly under Washington, Laurens believed it time he finalized his "black project". In March of 1779, the Commander in Chief gave him his approval to join the war down south and pursue his project. A bittersweet farewell, John bid his lover and "family" at headquarters "adieu" and headed down to Philadelphia.

First, he had to secure Congress' approval. Surprisingly, Henry agreed to assist his son in this matter, while Hamilton had sent along a letter of support. He presented this plan and Hamilton's letter to John Jay, who now succeeded Henry as president, as well as to a committee of southerners whom Henry had put together to deal with the pressing problems in the Carolinas. For weeks, Laurens petitioned and debate raged on. Despite the growing threat of enslaved people deflecting to British lines, southern delegates remained opposed to the idea of arming and freeing enslaved blacks- even for their own cause. Yet, by some miracle, John managed to strike a compromise and get his plan approved, under the main condition that he speak to and get the authorization of the "governing powers" of South Carolina and Georgia.[36]

At this point, it would have seemed John had succeeded. Yet, at the same time, he was of the realization that most everyone expected (and/or wished) for him to fail. His own father, as well as the father figure he saw in Washington, commended his resolve but saw no possibility in his success. Even Congress had pitied and smiled at his naivety, whilst giving him a near-impossible task. In the end, the only person who continued to support him with honesty was Hamilton. The young man wasted no opportunities to remind Laurens of his merit and assure him of his place in his heart. Nevertheless, John journeyed on to South Carolina.

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[36] Rakove, *Revolutionaries*, 232.

Back in his home state, he would take up his plan with Governor Rutledge, who was unsurprisingly against it. Again, he had nearly just dealt with Charles Town's collapse, and with a vulnerable and unstable city, Rutledge could not begin to allow the main industry of the south to suffer. In all his efforts, once more Laurens was shut down. His father attempted to reassure him but only ended up saying how he "long foresaw and foretold" the opposition he was bound to encounter. In essence, he admitted the futility of such a project.

Despite being offered to serve with Benjamin Franklin as an envoy to France, John continued to press on with his plan and military career. In one last attempt, General Lincoln assisted Laurens and attempted to sway Rutledge once more. Reluctant, the South Carolinians instead agreed to allow a mere 1000 enslaved blacks to serve within the army as artillerymen. John retorted, demanding these men, small a number as it was, be "enfranchised at the expiration of their term of service."[37] Congress denied, and the plan fell through.

In April 1780, Charles Town was attacked once more. John saw battle for 6 weeks in his hometown, and though the rebels managed to hold the British back for a while, by May they were forced to surrender. Laurens was taken as a prisoner of war and instead stayed in Philadelphia on parole until an officer of equal status was exchanged for him. Ironically, Francis Kinloch had also reportedly been taken prisoner at Charles Town. Despite their past arguments, Kinloch ended up fighting for the Americans in the South and was even promoted to Captain. Though there is no confirmation, it would not have been surprising if Laurens and Kinloch came across each other again. Though they hadn't written to one another in ages, to imagine Laurens' shock at seeing his old friend/lover amongst the prisoners, is somewhat amusing.

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[37] Rakove, *Revolutionaries*, 238.

Within this time Hamilton would make an effort to write to John of his engagement to the wealthy Elizabeth Schuyler, daughter of General Philip Schuyler. Both in comedic disinterest as well as a presumably genuine one, Alexander Hamilton described his wife-to-be as "a good-hearted girl" but "not a genius, she has good sense enough to be agreeable, and though not a beauty, she has fine black eyes."[38] Though John had presumably encouraged Hamilton to marry, it could not have been a pleasant thing to hear of it becoming reality. He did not reply; and though a prisoner of war, he was prohibited from fighting, not from writing: he had full capability and time to do so. His silence was deliberate. Yet Hamilton paid no mind to his silence and writes to Laurens again, this being when he admits that "despite Schuyler's black eyes, I have still a part for the public and another for you…"; he also takes the courtesy to invite Laurens not only to the wedding but "to be witness to the *final consummation*". Laurens makes up an excuse not to attend the wedding and doesn't go. It seems he had no interest in watching Hamilton get married.

After 6 months of idleness, John was finally exchanged in November and was released back into the army just in time to partake in the final major battle of the war.

V.   Aftermath

The Battle of Yorktown would be the last time Laurens would see and fight alongside his "family" under Washington. He and Hamilton would fight side by side in the war's conclusive battle, and John would serve as one of the head negotiators of the peace treaty afterward.

With the war practically won, John still longed for battle and he returned under General Nathaniel Greene to the South. While his brothers-in-arms were preparing to settle down and look towards their futures, Laurens remained fighting skirmishes in the backcountry. He

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[38] Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, June 30, 1780.

continued to write Hamilton, who by now found himself preoccupied with his wife and unborn child. In an odd manner, as Laurens' letters began to grow more affectionate and more frequent, Hamilton's became less so. Yet, the final letter Hamilton wrote to him disrupted the pattern, in eager encouragement and gentle affection, he urges John to "place down the sword, and put on the toga". He expresses his wish to build this new nation by his side, signing it with the simple phrase: "yours forever". John most likely died before he ever got the letter.

In 1782, John Laurens led a small skirmish at Combahee River, in South Carolina. A notably pointless engagement, one far too reckless for even Laurens' personality. Yet, in a failed attack, John led his troop to battle prematurely and in an instant was shot through the chest. He died shortly after. His recklessness truly was his Achilles heel, and thinking of Lafayette's words regarding Laurens' conduct in Brandywine almost stings.

It was the most expected but unexpected ending to such a vibrant life, it's almost comedic. Here was the man who was wounded in almost every battle he partook in, but still managed to survive, dead in Combahee. It feels wrong, strange, and fitting all in one. In pain, we try to reason with it and understand the oddity of the situation. Nevertheless, facts are facts. John Laurens was dead.

John's death would rattle those around him. Hamilton would be rendered speechless, Henry would mourn, Washington and Greene would hang their heads in sorrow, and the Revolution lost one of its purest sons. Hamilton's abolitionism would die with John, and Laurens' dream for the freedom of enslaved men would in many ways perish.

I then ask the question, what would have happened if Laurens had lived? Personally, it often comes to mind. I like to think congress would have been different, that John would have insisted on abolitionism. It may not have come to pass, but his voice and thoughts were

powerful. At the very least, he would have freed a few hundred enslaved men and women, had he inherited them from his father. I also would hope he'd have still maintained his boyish enthusiasm, for, with it, I think he could have led the country down a purer path. Yet there is no way to know, and speculations are merely speculations.

John Laurens was a complex and fascinating man, and what he managed to do in his short life was nothing short of miraculous. He was the embodiment of an early American hero, a young man so fervent in the righteous ideals of freedom, he bordered upon rashness and naivety. His roots as a pioneer for proto-abolitionism in the South, as well as being a queer historical figure is just as revolutionary as the cause he upheld. These factors are essential not just in the scope of his era, but in the modern age and our current understanding of the American Revolution. Through Laurens, the concepts of early American anti-slavery movements can be better understood, whilst he also serves as a form of kinship for queer individuals to regard the past. In conclusion, the goodness of Laurens' ideals and the complexity of his person should not be overlooked, and his legacy is deserving of recognition and remembering. The least we can do is allow him the ability to live on in our memories. His story matters.

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The Black American Revolution:
The American Revolution as Experienced by African Americans

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Abstract: This paper focuses on how the American Revolution mobilized the enslaved and free Black population in a way that constitutes a "Black American Revolution." In particular, the enslaved population engaged in multiple efforts for freedom, ranging from fighting in the Revolutionary War to writing petitions to state legislatures. First, I present how the "slavery metaphor" propagated by white Loyalists indicates the inherent differences in how the white and Black populations experienced the Revolution. There is an overall discussion of the various methods the enslaved used in their attempts to gain freedom: military service, slave petitions, freedom suits, and escape. I also examine the surge of free Black communities as a result of the Revolution, helped by white abolitionist allies. Additionally, the impact the Revolution had on slavery as an institution is assessed in both the North and South. Finally, the overall success of the Black American Revolution is determined.

On August 23rd, 1776, nearing the Battle of Long Island between American and British troops, General George Washington inspirationally ordered his Continental Army, "Remember officers and soldiers, that you are free men, fighting for the blessings of Liberty — that slavery will be your portion, and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit yourselves like men."[1] Washington's army faced defeat in this particular battle, but nonetheless this indicates something quite clear about the American Revolution: liberty was one of its leading ideals and goals, one of such importance that it remains a part of the ideals of the nation. But this statement and similar ones made in Revolutionary America say more than just what is plainly stated due to the usage of the word "slavery." By mentioning slavery, Washington was telling his army that if they lose this battle, they and America's future generations will become "slaves." While the colonists on the side of American independence used words like "slavery" to describe their subjugation under the British, half a million non-metaphorical slaves were in the colonies belonging to many of the men saying the same rhetoric, George Washington included.

The glaring contradiction runs clear: the same individuals who wanted freedom from Britain were denying the freedom of those they had enslaved. This is not to say that all of the founding fathers necessarily enjoyed the institution of slavery. In fact, Washington himself had gradually begun to indicate support for abolition in his private remarks. Even still, they were all dependent on it in some capacity. Slavery was deeply ingrained in Colonial American life, so much so that it had a considerable impact on social classes and the economy, especially in the South. In the mid-18th century, there was a "transformation of the southern colonies from societies with slaves into slave societies," while slave labor's economic importance decreased in

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[1] George Washington, General Orders. August 23rd, 1776. New York. *National Archives.*

the northern colonies.[2] At this time, the system was not necessarily racially based but was seen as

another form of servitude similar to indentured servants. However, nearing the end of the 18th

century, the system turned into a "coherent racist doctrine," in which southerners perpetuated

racist myths about Black people in order to proclaim their superiority over them.[3] The start of the

revolution brought to light its contradictory ideals, and some colonists were afraid of being

subject to chattel and/or political slavery by the British, despite their own practice of it. As a

result, the revolution itself would come to influence this shift from a form of servitude into a

racially based slavery system, as southerners used the myth of a racial hierarchy to try and justify

these contradictions.

The usage of the slavery metaphor by white Patriots itself exemplifies the stark difference

between the white and Black populations in Revolutionary-era America. The American

Revolution, therefore, was "split" into two – one revolution experienced by the white colonists,

and another experienced by the people they enslaved. Slavery was the reality for African

Americans, so they were seeking *emancipation* rather than simply independence. Clearly, the

Black side of the revolution was not a fight against political slavery, but the chattel slavery they

had endured for more than a hundred years by this point. As a result, although both groups may

have had the goal of "freedom," what this meant was widely different between them. For the

Patriots, it meant being able to represent themselves under their own independent government

and country. For the enslaved, it was freedom from the fundamental stripping of their

personhood. They believed that freedom was one's birthright, while white Americans evaded the

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[2] Duncan J. MacLeod, "Toward Caste," *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1983), 229.

[3] Ibid., 231.

question of natural rights by seeing Black people as an outgroup removed from the overall body.[4]

Most of the ideals of the American Revolution are made well known through the publication of

Common Sense by Thomas Paine in 1776. Paine, a strong proponent of the Patriot cause, wanted

"immediate independence, a union of thirteen states, and republican governments for those

states."[5] Further, the impact of the revolution is well-known and studied, as it led to the

establishment of the new American government and the country's successful independence. The

way that the revolution impacted the white population, especially white men with property, came

through in concrete ways as they held political power. However, this was of course not the case

for the Black population. While the Patriots successfully gained independence, slaves were still

fighting for emancipation through serving in the military on both sides of the Revolutionary War,

writing petitions, engaging in freedom suits, and through the growing abolitionist movement –

all of which constitutes a separate "Black American Revolution," in which the Black population

experienced the American Revolution fundamentally different than the white population.

This paper will be focused on primary source documents from various sources, most

significantly from the enslaved through one autobiography and multiple petitions and freedom

suits from 1765 to 1800. There will also be writings from white Patriots to demonstrate their

reaction to an increase in anti-slavery rhetoric as well as their usage of the slavery metaphor in

Revolutionary America. Changes in state laws regarding slaves will be discussed as they

experienced multiple changes throughout the revolution, especially in the northern colonies.

Therefore, although the paper is not focused on the North, sources and examples from northern

colonies will receive significantly more attention. Additionally, the paper will be organized

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[4] Benjamin Quarles, "The Revolutionary War as a Black Declaration of Independence," *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1983), 293.
[5] Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 157.

thematically. First, it will focus on the methods of the enslaved population to gain freedom, then

the increase in the free Black population and abolitionism, and then finally the consequences

overall in the North and South, respectively, and the ultimate success of the revolution for Black

people.

There has been a shift in the way historians study the revolution, especially when it

comes to the groups involved and who the revolution benefited the most. Earlier historians

studying the American Revolution did so with romanticism and oftentimes were focused on the

founding fathers. Additionally, historians prior to the 1900s were more concerned with the

political and military aspects of the revolution. Franklin Jameson's "American Revolution

Considered As a Social Movement" in 1925 not only caused a shift to studying the results of the

revolution rather than its origins, but he also claimed that, "the strength of the revolutionary

party lay most largely in the plain people, as distinguished from the aristocracy."[6] There was

even more of a shift in the mid-1960s with Jesse Lemisch's "The American Revolution Seen

From the Bottom Up" in which he questioned what the "ordinary folk" were doing "while the

elites were thinking great thoughts."[7] This shift allowed for more discussion amongst historians

for other groups within the population that had not received an equal amount of scholarly

attention. This included African Americans and therefore the study of how "many African

Americans took all the talk about freedom as a call to action of their own."[8] In the 1970s,

Edmund S. Morgan argued in "American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial

Virginia" that "the rise of liberty and equality in this country was accompanied by the rise of

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[6] John Franklin Jameson, *American Revolution Considered As a Social Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 18.
[7] John E. Selby, "Revolutionary America: The Historiography," *OAH Magazine of History* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 5-7. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25162978
[8] Ibid., 7.

slavery" which he called "the central paradox in American history."[9] Further, more historians like

Ira Berlin and Benjamin Quarles posed the idea of a revolution that was separate from the whole

that specifically impacted Black people.[10] Ultimately, the shift from studying the revolution

based on its leaders to studying the involvement of ordinary people made way for the

acknowledgment of other groups. These groups, including Black Americans, had their own

motivations and involvement that was separate from the general white population's.

The usage of slavery as a metaphor is a prime indication of how differently the white and

Black populations experienced the revolution. In the 1760s, John Dickinson wrote in *Letters*

from a Farmer, "Those who are taxed without their own consent, given by themselves or their

representatives, are slaves. We are taxed without our own consent given by ourselves, or our

representatives. We are therefore—I speak it with grief—I speak it with indignation—we are

slaves."[11] This rhetoric was not unique during the revolution; in fact, using the word "slavery"

was quite common amongst the Patriots to describe the American colonies under British rule.

This is especially true after the passing of the Stamp Act of 1765, which had "forced North

Americans to make an evaluation of their relationship with Britain."[12] This also was not an ironic

usage of the word. The word "slavery" was used because white colonists could compare their

situation to an institution that was already present in their society. The metaphor implies that

there was a common understanding of what exactly it meant to be a "slave" to another power. As

Patricia Bradley argues, the slavery metaphor indicates that referencing slavery "brought to the

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[9] Alfred F. Young and Gregory Nobles, *Whose American Revolution Was It?: Historians Interpret the Founding* (NYU Press, 2011), 57.
[10] Ibid., 99.
[11] John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer, in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. Almon, 1768), 74-76.
[12] F. Nwabueze Okoye, "Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (Jan. 1980): 4.

political meaning a colonial context beyond hyperbole."[13] The metaphor's usage in written

publications, for example, was a propaganda tool to motivate white colonists in their rebellion

against the British. Because slavery existed in the country in its literal form, using the metaphor

"heightened the perceived threat and thus advanced the patriots' cause."[14]

On the other hand, it also made said cause more vulnerable to those pointing out its

contradictory nature. The slavery metaphor emboldened the patriots to declare independence, but

it also influenced some abolitionist sentiments amongst those who criticized its usage. For

example, in 1774, abolitionist preacher Nathaniel Niles said in a sermon, "Let us either cease to

enslave our fellow-men, or else let us cease to complain of those that would enslave us."[15]

Similar abolitionists would mimic this rhetoric by pointing out how the patriots complained of

slavery while actively practicing it. Regardless, however, Dickinson's pamphlet and the

metaphor in general were popular during the Revolutionary era. *Letters from a Farmer* had

received more attention than previous political writing and was one of the most popular until

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.[16]

Although the slavery metaphor is more often seen as being in reference to political

slavery, through the belief that Britain had complete political control over the colonies, it is also

referencing chattel slavery. This is seen through the usage of phrases such as "cruel bondage,"

and "absolute slavery."[17] Using these phrases while also practicing slavery was not necessarily a

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[13] Patricia Bradley, *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 5.

[14] Peter A. Dorsey, "To 'Corroborate Our Own Claims': Public Positioning and the Slavery Metaphor in Revolutionary America", *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (September 2003): 353-386. https://www.jstor.org/stable/30041981

[15] Nathaniel Niles, "Two Discourses on Liberty," (Sermon, Newburyport, MA, June 5, 1774), Evans Early American Imprint Collection, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N10656.0001.001.

[16] Carl F. Kaestle, "The Public Reaction to John Dickinson's Farmer's Letters," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 78, no. 2 (1968): 326.

[17] Okoye, "Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries," 5.

matter of a lack of self-awareness. Slave owners did not see the "slavery" they experienced under

the British and the chattel slavery of Africans as being equivalent. Instead, they feared that the

two would eventually *become* equivalent if America continued to be ruled by Britain. As George

Washington would write in a letter in 1774, "The crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights,

or submit to every imposition that can be heaped upon us; till custom and use will make us as

tame and abject slaves as the Blacks we rule over."[18] This fear directly positions the slavery

metaphor as the dividing line between a white Patriot version and an enslaved version of the

American Revolution. Their positions were fundamentally different, and so too were their

understandings of what the revolution could potentially bring.

Because there are these two "versions," Black people had different methods in

comparison to the Patriot population. Although, one method technically shared between them

was serving in the army during the Revolutionary War. Slaves served on both the Patriot and

Loyalist sides with varying success. Britain had made some movements towards the abolition of

slavery, and although this did not happen to its full extent until the 1830s, this did incite hope in

slaves and fear in white colonists.[19] In particular, when Britain allowed slaves to fight in the

British army, there was a fear amongst slave owners that arming slaves would lead to an armed

slave revolt. As a result of these fears, George Washington banned all Black men, both free and

enslaved, from joining the Continental Army in 1775.[20] In response, the Royal Governor of

Virginia, Lord Dunmore, saw this as an opportunity to bring more people to the side of the

British. He issued a proclamation that same year in which he stated, "I do hereby further declare

all indentured servants, negroes, or others, free that are able and willing to bear arms" for the

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[18] George Washington, letter to Bryan Fairfax, August 24th, 1774.
[19] Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 5.
[20] Ibid., 63.

British.[21] An estimated 800 to 1000 slaves fled from their masters' homes directly after Dunmore's Proclamation and hundreds would continue to do so throughout the war. Dunmore formed the Royal Ethiopian Regiment, consisting of an estimated 300 escaped slaves. Inscribed on their uniforms were the words "Liberty to Slaves."[22]

Virginians, feeling angry and betrayed by the Royal Governor, responded with their own ordinance that outlined the punishment for slaves found fighting for the British. It stated that Virginia would have "full power and authority to transport such slave, or slaves, to any of the foreign West India islands" to be sold, and if transportation was not possible, then the slave would be either brought back to their owner or "dealt with according to an act of assembly for punishing slaves committing capital offences."[23] Of course, Dunmore's Royal Ethiopian Regiment was not the only instance of slaves joining the British, as many would escape their masters to join or even tail behind British troops. Boston King, a slave who fought on the side of the British due to a similar promise of freedom, details his successful escape in his memoir in which he says they "received me readily, and I began to feel the happiness of liberty, of which I knew nothing before."[24] King expresses how he and other slaves hoped that the British would have compassion on them, especially as many were desperate for freedom after having dealt with particularly cruel and violent masters. When the war was over, King describes how he was brought to Nova Scotia as a free man with his wife. He resettled in Sierra Leone, West Africa in 1792. When he was given an opportunity to go to a school in England, he expressed, "Many of

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[21] John Murray, "A Proclamation," *Virginia Gazette*, November 25th, 1775.

[22] Gilbert, 22.

[23] Virginia General Assembly. *An ordinance for establishing a mode of punishment for the enemies to America in this colony,* December 1775 - Act VII, *The Statutes at Large* 9 (2015): 101, 106.

[24] Boston King, "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, March-June 1798," in *I Belong to South Carolina: South Carolina Slave Narratives*, ed. Susanna Ashton (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 22.

these white people, instead of being enemies and oppressors of us poor Blacks, are our friends,

and deliverers from slavery."[25] According to the *Book of Negroes*, a document written by the

Commander-in-Chief for the British forces, around 3,000 slaves were brought to Nova Scotia

and then later to Sierra Leone, just as King had been.[26] The promise of freedom mobilized many

to fight in the war, and even when they did not, many used the opportunity to escape and follow

behind British forces.

Although there were generally more slaves that fought on the side of the Loyalists, some

did also find success by fighting on the side of the Patriots. Washington lifted his ban on Black

men in his Continental Army in 1778, not only due to the lack of manpower, but upon realizing

the advantage Black recruitment gave to the British troops.[27] Afterward, the First Rhode Island

Regiment was created soon after the Rhode Island Resolution for Negro Recruitment of 1778,

which declared that any slave that fought under Colonel Christopher Greene would be

emancipated.[28] When this regiment was eventually disbanded in 1783, its members were allowed

freedom, although they were not immediately paid monetarily for their service. Rhode Island

would then pass a gradual emancipation law that same year.[29] Similar Black regiments were

formed in colonies like Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. In fact, Massachusetts

would have an all-Black regiment named the Bucks of America that was also led by a Black

man, Colonel George Middleton. Similar to Rhode Island, Massachusetts would outlaw slavery

in the 1780s, indicating that Black military service on the side of the Patriots did have an

influence on enacting emancipation laws. The involvement of Black troops and leaders like

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[25] King, "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King," 38.
[26] Graham Russell Gao Hodges and Alan Edward Brown, eds. "Introduction," *The Book of Negroes: African Americans in Exile after the American Revolution* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021), 11-47. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1zm2thw.5
[27] Gilbert, 63.
[28] Ibid., 99.
[29] Ibid., 105.

Middleton "helped advance the revolution that led to the abolition of slavery in the North."[30] Not everyone who served on either side was necessarily able to escape, nor did emancipation laws automatically mean that Black people were now treated as equals. Even still, this was one of the methods many underwent as a means for emancipation.

Another method used by the enslaved to attempt emancipation was in the form of slave petitions, and although these petitions were not as successful as other methods, they do demonstrate how slaves demanded legislative action regarding their emancipation. Slave petitions oftentimes directly referenced the revolution in the hope that the same principles of freedom and liberty would apply to them. One of the earliest examples of a slave petition is from January 1773, in which a slave named Felix wrote to the Massachusetts Legislature on behalf of the "many slaves, living in the town of Boston, and other towns in the province." He says that the slaves are not "vicious," but instead "discreet, sober, honest, and industrious" as well as "virtuous and religious."[31] He goes on further to say, "Our greatest unhappiness is not our fault; and this gives us great encouragement to pray and hope for such relief as is consistent with your wisdom, justice, and goodness."[32] Although this petition did not succeed in freeing the slaves of Boston, it did spark a debate about abolition amongst the state legislature. Due to the legislature's inaction, on April 20th of that same year, Felix would be joined by three other slaves in another petition where they directly reference the Patriot's claim that the British were enslaving them. They stated, "We expect great things from men who have made such a noble stand against the designs of their fellow-men to enslave them. We cannot but wish and hope Sir, that you will have the same grand object, we mean civil and religious liberty, in view in your

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[30] Gilbert, 111.
[31] Felix, letter to MA Legislature, January 6th, 1773.
[32] Ibid.

next session."[33] The mentioning of revolutionary-era rhetoric in slave petitions further indicates that the revolution itself was a direct motivator for these types of attempted actions. Additionally, slaves were aware of the rhetoric made by the Patriots and used it to their advantage by appealing to the ideals of the revolution. Even when these slave petitions were not always successful in their primary goals, they did exemplify the mobilization of the enslaved to demand such legislative action.

Additionally, the revolution caused an increase in manumission and "freedom suits." Specific examples of this increase occurred in Virginia, where slaves sued for their freedom based upon new state laws with some success. In 1782, Virginia passed a manumission law that allowed slave owners to free their slaves without needing permission from the General Assembly. This law also required former slaves to carry a document with them that stated they had been freed. It also, indirectly, had the effect of making it legally possible for slaves to purchase themselves by entering into agreements with their owners where the slave would pay their owner to be manumitted.[34] In freedom suits, a slave could claim freedom by saying that they were a descendant of a free woman, even if their father was a slave. These claims were based on Virginia laws in which children were either enslaved or free depending on the mother's status.[35] This was the case for Phene Phillips in 1796, when she claimed freedom because her mother had been manumitted prior to giving birth to her, therefore making her free as well. The case was tried in 1800 and the verdict declared that Phene "is a free woman and not a slave."[36]

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[33] Bestes, Peter et al., letter to MA Legislature, April 20th, 1773.

[34] Michael L. Nicholls, "'The squint of freedom': African-American freedom suits in post-revolutionary Virginia," *Slavery and Abolition* 20, no. 2 (Taylor & Francis Online, 2008): 47, https://doi.org/10.1080/01440399908575277.

[35] Loren Schweninger, *Appealing for Liberty: Freedom Suits in the South* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 43.

[36] Nicholls, "'The squint of freedom': African-American freedom suits in post-revolutionary Virginia," 50.

Following the verdict, Phene's two siblings and later Phene's eldest son would similarly sue for freedom, illustrating how freedom suits oftentimes established precedents across a generation. Her son was also successful and declared free in 1806. However, the success of freedom suit attempts decreased towards the 1800s, as there were fears over the growing free Black population in Virginia and other states with similar manumission laws. Even still, the ability of slaves to undergo judicial action strengthened their resolve in fighting for emancipation.

As a result of the growing free Black population from these methods, the revolution also caused the formation of free Black communities and leaders. This mirrors how the revolution brought a sense of a shared identity and the emergence of prominent Revolutionary leaders for white colonists. Many freedmen became part of the abolitionist movement and church leaders, such as the preachers Harry Hosier, Peter Spence, Absalom Jones, and Richard Allen. In particular, Richard Allen would be one of the founders of the Free African Society in 1786 Philadelphia, which was meant to help slaves who had become recently free through mutual aid. Allen would also be the founder of the first Black school in Philadelphia in 1797 and the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church denomination in 1816.[37] Black churches were especially significant to the creation of a free Black community. The formation of independent Black churches and their mutual aid programs, as well as simply using the word "African" while naming these secular organizations indicates "a sense of racial identity and pride" that emerged.[38] Similar Black communities formed in places like Baltimore, Charleston, and New York City.[39] Specifically in New York City, the free Black population rose from 3,332 in 1800 to 7,470 by

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[37] Huggins, 57.
[38] Quarles, "The Revolutionary War as a Black Declaration of Independence," 297.
[39] Gary B. Nash, "African Americans in the Early Republic," *OAH Magazine of History* 14, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 13.

1810, while the slave population decreased from around 2,500 to 1,446.[40] This increase was both

in part due to a New York manumission law in 1799, but also due to the migration of newly freed

Black people from the surrounding states. Overall, there was an increase in Black communities

during the Revolutionary Era due to an increase in free Black people.

The emergence of Black communal institutions also meant that those still in slavery

could see a bigger opportunity to escape by fleeing to these newly formed communities. For

example, Ona Judge, a personal slave for Martha Washington, fled the presidential house in

Virginia in 1796 with the help of the free Black community in Philadelphia. In an 1845 interview

with an abolitionist newspaper, she explicitly states, "I had friends among the colored people of

Philadelphia, had my things carried there beforehand, and left Washington's house while they

were eating dinner."[41] Although they attempted to get her back, she lived the rest of her life

outside of slavery as a fugitive slave. She would be followed nine months later by Hercules,

Washington's head cook, who also escaped to the Black community in Philadelphia. Hercules's

escape was especially significant because he had "enjoyed a special status in the executive

mansion" and Washington believed that this "should have immunized him against the fever for

freedom."[42] These two slaves are just a small example of slaves fleeing to free Black

communities after they had emerged towards the end of the revolution. Just as the white colonists

had their own significant figures and leaders of the revolution, the enslaved witnessed the

emergence of free Black leaders and churches that served as communal institutions. This method

of escape would only increase in the 1800s with the emergence of the Underground Railroad,

considering free Black people were at the forefront of helping slaves escape. Richard Allen's

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[40] Shane White,"'We Dwell in Safety and Pursue Our Honest Callings': Free Blacks in New York City, 1783-1810," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 2 (Sept. 1988): 448.

[41] Rev. T.H. Adams, "Washington's Runaway Slave, and How Portsmouth Freed Her," *The Granite Freeman*, 1845.

[42] Huggins, 63.

church is just one example of a Black church that sheltered escaped slaves in the church's

basement.[43] Ultimately, the increase in free Black communities and churches meant that slaves

had help in their pursuit of freedom.

When it comes to the white population, the revolution created a self-awareness regarding

the hypocrisy of slavery. Therefore, the revolution contributed to the growing number of white

abolitionists. Anti-slavery rhetoric existed prior, but the events of the revolution exacerbated the

anti-slavery movement. The rise of abolitionism amongst the white population is seen especially

in the Quakers, who were a key group in support of abolitionism. They freed their slaves and

worked toward legislation that would lead to full abolition.[44] Quakers would oftentimes help

Black people directly. As Samuel Ringgold Ward remarked in his autobiography about his

parents' escape from slavery, "They therefore did as the few who then escaped mostly did–aim

for a Free State, and settle among Quakers. This honoured sect, unlike any other in the world, in

this respect, was regarded as the slave's friend."[45] A notable Quaker and abolitionist was

Anthony Benezet, who opened the Friends School for Black People in 1770 Philadelphia and

would be one of the founders of the Free African Society alongside Richard Allen.[46] Further, he

created the Pennsylvania Abolition Society in 1775, which was not only the first abolition

society in America but the majority of its membership was made up of Quakers like himself as

well as free Black people.[47] Benezet wrote in 1783 that he can "with truth and sincerity declare"

that "the notion entertained by some that the Blacks are inferior to the whites in their capacities

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[43] Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, *Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 134.
[44] Schweninger, 38.
[45] Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labours in the United States, Canada, & England* (Paternoster Row: John Snow, 1855), 22.
[46] Brycchan Carey and Geoffery Plank, *Quakers and Abolition* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2014), 107-108.
[47] Carey and Plank, *Quakers and Abolition,* 113.

is a vulgar prejudice."[48] This too, combined with free Black communities, would help slaves escape to freedom, as Quakers would later also be involved in the Underground Railroad. For example, in counties in Pennsylvania like Delaware, Chester, and Lancaster, "the areas of greatest reported Underground Railroad activity had both significant African American and a significant Quaker presence."[49] Ultimately, white abolitionists did have a part to play in how slaves escaped and in the continued effort for full abolition.

The increase in anti-slavery rhetoric would lead to the abolition efforts in the northern colonies, but they were in the form of gradual emancipation as opposed to overarching immediate change. As a result of the slavery metaphor, through which white colonists interpreted "the imperial conflict as an attempt by Britain to make them slaves", northern colonists understood that this made the chattel slavery they themselves practiced an issue. The acknowledgment of this contradiction influenced them to abolish slavery.[50] Slavery was also not as profitable in the North as it was in the South, especially when the North experienced rapid industrialization in the early 1800s. However, more often states were passing "post-nati emancipation" laws in which "the children born to enslaved women would be free after a specified date."[51] This kind of gradual emancipation law was passed in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey in the years 1784 to 1804.[52] An outlier was Vermont, which allowed for the full abolishment of slavery in 1777. Nevertheless, as the children of slaves became free, it did mean that slaves "could envision a different future for their people,

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[48] David L. Crosby, *The Complete Antislavery Writings of Anthony Benezet, 1754-1783: An Annotated Critical Edition*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2014), 209.
[49] Carey and Plank, *Quakers and Abolition,* 125.
[50] MacLeod, "Toward Caste," 230.
[51] Ira Berlin, *The Long Emancipation: The Demise of Slavery in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 13-14.
[52] Ibid., 69.

if not for themselves."[53] Although slavery was not abolished everywhere nor was any restriction upon it immediate, the revolution did increase anti-slavery sentiments and furthered the cause towards abolitionism.

In the South, however, slavery was only weakened temporarily because of the revolution. Instead, slavery was left more strong afterward as the Southern economy became more dependent on slave labor. In the 1800s, southern society's slave owners became more "paternalistic" by justifying slavery as being for the betterment of the enslaved. They based this on the belief that slaves were inferior and needed the "help" of white slave owners through food and housing, posing slavery as a domestic institution. The South's reservations about abolishing slavery only increased through this paternalistic justification. The shift of viewing slavery through a paternalistic lens was a reaction to how the revolution and slavery were incompatible, considering paternalism was "aimed at rendering slaveholding consistent with existing republican and emerging humanitarian ideals."[54] Even further, the "cotton revolution" of the early to mid-1800s following the invention of the cotton gin furthered the South's economic dependence on slavery.[55] The cotton gin, invented in 1793, caused cotton to be produced more efficiently and made it more profitable. The increase in cotton production also caused an increase in the necessity of slave labor, as the slave population rose to the millions by 1860. In this way, the revolution did exemplify that slavery was incompatible with the country's ideals, but the South continued to justify its dependence on it.

If the American Revolution is split between a white and a Black revolution, then the success of both sides was also fundamentally different. The white side of the revolution was

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[53] Berlin, *The Long Emancipation*, 71.
[54] Lacy Ford, "Reconfiguring the Old South: 'Solving' the Problem of Slavery, 1787-1838", *Journal of American History* 95, no. 1 (June 2008): 109. https://doi.org/10.2307/25095466
[55] Ibid.

notably successful, with the foundation of the new government and constitution. On the other hand, the Black side of the revolution was significantly more complex. Many had gained freedom and full abolition eventually occurred in the North, but the revolution did not officially bring an end to slavery. As a result, historians like Benjamin Quarles refer to Black peoples' hope for equality during the revolution as a "dream deferred" rather than a dream fully realized.[56] However, it did plant the seed for the abolitionist movement that did not end when the revolution did. The revolution caused some white colonists to truly question the institution of slavery, especially with their acknowledgment that it was directly contradictory to the revolution's ideals. But, as Quarles argues, these white colonists were outnumbered by those who "subscribed to an equation of equality that excluded nonwhites," in which non white people were outside of the sociopolitical community to which the tenets of freedom applied.[57] Even still, the revolution did not necessarily "end" for the enslaved and free Black people alike. Black people continued to fight for abolition, for example in a 1799 petition signed by 74 free Black people in Philadelphia in which they say they want Congress to "exert every means in your power to undo the heavy burdens, and prepare way for the oppressed to go free, that every yoke may be broken."[58] This petition was overwhelmingly rejected by a vote of 85 to 1, signifying that this fight was not going to end anytime soon. The revolution was successful in mobilizing Black individuals into fighting for a common goal, just as it did for the Patriots, but their attempt did not immediately reach the same success. Rather, "to them the full worth of the American Revolution lay ahead."[59]

What we know of as the American Revolution does not take into account how different the revolution was for the Black population. Slaves attempted multiple methods to gain

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[56] Quarles, "The Revolutionary War as a Black Declaration of Independence," 293.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Absalom Jones et al., petition to the President, Senate, and House of Representatives, 1799.
[59] Quarles, "The Revolutionary War as a Black Declaration of Independence," 301.

emancipation and found some significant success as well as significant loss. The abolitionist movement would only continue to grow after the revolution, as well as the emergence of free Black communities and prominent Black leaders. Although slavery was abolished in the northern colonies, this "Black American Revolution" was ultimately less successful in bringing about emancipation in the short term. Even still, it did still plant the seed for full abolition years later. The ideals of freedom and equality that are associated with the American Revolution ultimately did not leave the minds of African Americans.

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With Liberty and Justice For All?
The U.S. Internment of Japanese Peruvians During World War II

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Abstract: After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States committed to a policy of interning more than 120,000 Japanese Americans. While Japanese American detention remains the most researched instance of wartime internment, the U.S. incarceration of Japanese Peruvians merits equal attention. The political forces behind Japanese Peruvian internment transcended the more common explanations that haunt so much of literature today. Racism and hysteria played their respective roles in this history of wartime internment, but as the war progressed, other reasons for Japanese internment emerged. On January 4, 1942, the Japanese began interning American civilians in the Philippines. Days later, the U.S. State Department decided to hold Japanese Peruvians hostage for the purpose of aiding American repatriation. America used hostage-taking as a political instrument of war, facilitating the return of more than 3,000 American citizens. Such retaliation, however, came at the human cost of interning more than 1,000 Japanese Peruvians without charge in places like Crystal City, Texas.

Introduction

"I had felt that America was an ideal country," Seiichi Higashide—a shopkeeper and community leader of Ica, Peru—thought to himself as he and his family boarded a U.S. ship for an unnamed camp in Panama. So "[w]hy then," Higashide wondered, "had that country moved to take such unacceptable measures?"[1] It was January 1944, and few Americans knew then (or even know now) that the wartime internment policies of the United States extended beyond its own borders. To ensure hemispheric security and facilitate Allied victory, U.S. officials spearheaded a program to remove so-called "enemy aliens" from Latin American countries and intern them in the United States. The majority of Latin Americans interned on U.S. soil consisted of ethnic Japanese, and among those internees, the Japanese Peruvians merit particular attention. Of the twelve Latin American countries that cooperated with the United States in turning over their citizens and residents of Japanese ancestry, Peru provided more than 1,700 of the 2,118 Japanese Latin Americans interned by the war's end.[2]

So why exactly did the U.S. government feel compelled to deport and intern Japanese Peruvians during World War II? While racism and wartime hysteria played their respective roles in this history of internment, their continued emphasis has had the effect of eclipsing the other reasons that influenced decision makers in deporting and interning Japanese Peruvians: the need for hostages. On January 4, 1942, the Japanese began interning American civilians in the Philippines. Twenty days later, the U.S. State Department began holding Japanese Peruvians

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[1] Seiichi Higashide, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 143.

[2] C. Harvey Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru: 1873-1973* (Albuquerque: New Mexico, 1975), 87-8. According to the United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, the 12 countries that contributed to the U.S. program of deportation and internment included Bolivia, Columbia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru. See, for further information on Latin American countries involved, United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1997), 307.

hostage for the purpose of prisoner exchanges. This research differs from the important

scholarship already undertaken by historians in its focused analysis of the Philippines. The inner

workings of Japanese internment in the Philippines played a role in the U.S. detention of

Japanese Peruvians. Although America's usage of hostages facilitated the return of more than

3,000 American citizens (many of whom were interned by the Japanese in Manila), it did so at

the human cost of detaining more than 1,000 Japanese Peruvians without charge in places like

Crystal City, Texas.

On the shelves of internment literature, many books attributed the internment of Japanese

Peruvians to long-standing racism, casting western governments as xenophobic and Asian

immigrants as victims. While true to an extent, the motives behind internment varied. To gain

votes and stifle civil unrest, Peruvian officials cooperated with American directives in deporting

their Japanese. The State Department's Special Division hoped to ensure hemispheric security

vis-à-vis the detention of Japanese Peruvians in the United States. And when military officials

received concerning reports about Japan's treatment of American internees in the Philippines, the

U.S. responded in part, interning Japanese Peruvians as hostages and exchanging them for

imprisoned Americans. Although little is known about the individual experiences of Japanese

Peruvians interned in the United States, the chronicled experiences of three men—Yoshitaro

Amano, Seiichi Higashide, and Isamu "Art" Shibayama—shed light on this relatively obscure

moment in history.

Between Two Worlds: The Japanese Experience in Peru, 1890-1940

Before elaborating on the story of internment, it may be helpful to explain how the

Japanese came to Peru in the late 19th century. Recognizing the opportunity for economic and

commercial cooperation with Japan, Peru established diplomatic relations with the emerging

Asian empire in August 1873. Considerable developments in Japanese immigration to Peru,

however, did not occur until the late 1890s.[3] Sparked by economic troubles in Japan and labor

needs in Peru's rubber and sugar industries, the first Japanese came as contract laborers in 1899.

Despite years of labor exploitation and exposure to disease, Japanese Peruvians eventually

carved a foothold for themselves. While the number of Japanese living in Peru reached 5,158 in

1909, the population nearly tripled to 15,207 by 1927.[4] Unlike their predecessors, migrants

arriving during the late 1920s were craftsmen and artisans, frequently with ties to already

successful Japanese Peruvians in the port cities of Callao and Lima.[5]

For many native Peruvians, Japanese industry threatened Peruvian opportunity. As

Foreign Minister Alberto Ulloa Sotomayor explained in his book *Derecho Internacional Público*,

"The increase of Japanese immigration and the activity developed by [said] immigrants have

created social unrest…because their conditions and methods of working have produced

pernicious competition for the Peruvian workers and businessmen."[6] This sentiment not only

spelled out the industrious working habits of Japanese immigrants. It also stamped average

Peruvian laborers as second-class workers, providing fertile ground for resentment towards

Japanese immigrants. To limit their economic productivity and break the so-called Japanese

"monopoly" on retail, the Peruvian government in 1932 required every business to employ a

non-Asian Peruvian workforce of at least 80 percent.[7] With the annulment of the Japanese-

Peruvian Commerce Treaty in 1934, the Peruvian government regulated all Japanese textile

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[3] Daniel M. Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 20.

[4] Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru*, 29-37.

[5] João Frederico Normano and Antonello Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America: An Introductory Survey With Special Reference to Peru* (New York: AMS Press, 1943), 76.

[6] United States, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, 82 Cong., 2 sess., "Hearings before the President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization" (Washington, 1952), 1926 (emphasis added).

[7] Ayumi Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru: History of Immigration, Settlement, and Racialization," *Latin American Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2004): 87.

imports, and by 1936, it issued additional restrictions on Japanese businesses making it illegal for them to transfer ownership.[8]

The success of Japanese immigrants led to their racialization, which in turn accelerated discrimination. In addition to viewing the Japanese in Peru as pernicious competition, Peruvians perceived the Japanese community's insularity as proof of their continued loyalty to their native country. During their period of growth, Japanese immigrants established civic organizations and Japanese language schools, which provided spaces where they could preserve their language and culture. At the same time, a growing number of native Peruvians felt the social development of Japanese immigrants made them less likely to assimilate. They saw the Japanese community's tendency to keep to themselves—a tendency not altogether voluntary—as a dangerous separation from the rest of Peruvian society. In their survey of the Japanese in South America, João Frederico Normano and Antonello Gerbi suggested the typical Peruvian's opinion of the Japanese thus: While he may respect and even admire individual Japanese, "he regards with misgivings such a standoffish…people who do not speak Castilian, do not profess the Catholic faith, do not attempt to participate in the social and intellectual life of the country, and send their money away."[9] Again, the Japanese in Peru did not always self-segregate by choice. Language barriers and general anti-Asian prejudice worsened the already poor relationship between Japanese laborers and their Peruvian counterparts.

The Peruvian press also echoed misgivings about the Japanese community. Around 1937, a newspaper in Lima raised concerns about their dual loyalty, announcing how it was "the government of Japan that organize[d] Japanese activity in Peru."[10] This anxiety over Japan's

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[8] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 87.
[9] Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America*, 122.
[10] Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru*, 69.

increasing militarism set the tone for frequent suspicion and distrust. Indeed, a growing number of Peruvians concluded that if Japan's economic desires prompted the invasion of East Asia, the pattern would be repeated in Peru. To counter this "Japanese invasion," the Peruvian government established immigration quotas and suspended naturalization proceedings for Japanese Peruvians in the late 1930s. Moreover, in 1937, the government annulled all registrations of "alien" offspring born in Peru, and prohibited Japanese born in Peru from claiming birthright citizenship.[11] Whether unaware or undeterred by these difficult circumstances, Seiichi Higashide still found a way to join the flow of Japanese immigrants seeking better opportunity in Peru.

Born into poverty in Hokkaido, Higashide aspired to become a self-made man. Witnessing the cruel mistreatment of workers on an irrigation project in his village, Higashide concluded that more promising opportunities awaited him beyond the borders of northern Japan. At the age of twenty-one, Higashide immigrated to Peru because of the country's large Japanese community. However, in the small town of Ica, Higashide found himself in what he referred to as a "small, closed world of Japanese immigrants in South America…even more narrow than the society [he] had left!"[12] At the same time, Higashide suffered from racial hostility, recalling how "whenever one stepped out of the Japanese community, insulting epithets would be hurled at our faces [the Japanese]…even young children would casually shout at us '*chino macaco*' [Chinese slave]."[13] While he recognized it as a crude term used in large part by uneducated Peruvians, Higashide also believed that it signified systemic acceptance of racism.

Despite said attitudes, it must be noted that racial intolerance was not one-sided. Regarding marriage, Higashide observed that most first-generation immigrants harbored a strong

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[11] Edward N. Barnhart, "Japanese Internees from Peru," *Pacific Historical Review* 31, no. 2 (1962): 169-70.
[12] Seiichi Higashide, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 7.
[13] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 111.

prejudice against Peruvians. According to him, many immigrants either considered themselves to

be racially superior or feared that their children would have to cut themselves off from the

Japanese community as a result of marrying an ethnic Peruvian.[14] Whatever the reason,

immigrants like Higashide gradually discarded their sojourner mentality and attempted to

become assimilated émigré. Almost five years after arriving in Ica, Higashide married Angelica

Yoshinaga, a second-generation Japanese Peruvian. Together, they raised five children. Despite

their efforts to fully integrate, Higashide and his family still worried about xenophobic

vigilantism.

On May 13, 1940, around ten Japanese Peruvians died in a violent riot near Lima and

Callao after false reports circulated about arms being found in Japanese-owned haciendas.

Enraged by rumors of the Japanese concealing deadly firearms, some elements of the Peruvian

populace vandalized Japanese shops and bazaars. "Although the looting continued in broad

daylight," Higashide noted, "the police made no move to make arrests or even restrain the

mob."[15] Some non-Asian Peruvians protected the Japanese and their businesses from destruction.

Tomas Hayashi, a Japanese Peruvian and former internee, recounted how his father's non-Asian

Peruvian employees helped prevent the rioters from utterly destroying their family business.[16] In

the riot's aftermath, claims for damages amounted to around two million soles (more than five

hundred thousand dollars in 1940).[17]

In addition to xenophobic vigilantism, the Japanese in Peru faced frequent accusations of

espionage and sabotage due to their perceived fanatical devotion to the Japanese Emperor.

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[14] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 76.
[15] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 108.
[16] Tomas Hayashi, interviewed by Casey Peek, *Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story*, dir. Casey Peek, Progressive Films, 2003, YouTube, 00:07:35-00:08:05.
[17] Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America*, 79-80.

Indeed, Higashide conceded, "[w]e had all been indoctrinated to absolute submission to the Chrysanthemum Insignia [the imperial seal of Japan]."[18] But not all Japanese were ready to sacrifice themselves for their fatherland. In fact, military conscription—which powered much of Japan's expanding military—prompted many Japanese to leave. Higashide himself admitted to concerns of serving in Japan's aggressive military. No matter how eager most Japanese were to establish homes in South America, most Peruvians questioned the Japanese and their loyalty.

Narratives of Japanese spies and saboteurs flourished during the 1940s. Representative of the genre, true crime author Alan Hynd asserted in *Betrayal from the East: The Inside Story of Japanese Spies in America* that the presence of fishing boats crewed by "yellow Aryan friends" off the coast of South America confirmed Japan's spy activity.[19] Hynd's book even included an account of Yoshitaro Amano, a Japanese entrepreneur who was captured in Panama and whose fishing boat was seized. Amano also figured prominently in Richard Rowan's *Secret Agents Against America*.[20] Although Amano's wealth and education made him a prime suspect of Japanese espionage, his ship attracted the most suspicion. Rowan speculated that Amano's "tuna clipper" had the capacity to carry marine mines in its forward, and a torpedo tube in its aft.[21] Joining Rowan in this trend of speculation, the U.S. government relied on information that either turned out to be inconsistent at best, or completely false at worst. Nevertheless, the U.S. government's dependence on speculative reports contributed to the chargeless internment of Japanese Peruvians during World War II.

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[18] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 62.

[19] Alan Hynd, *Betrayal from the East: The Inside Story of Japanese Spies in America* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1943), 139.

[20] Richard W. Rowan, *Secret Agents Against America* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1939), 230.

[21] Rowan, "Sketch of the 'Tuna Clipper' *Amano Maru,*" in *Secret Agents Against America*, 231.

Before America's entry into World War II, Peru adopted national policies advocating for the "whitening" of society. The country's legal restrictions on immigration and citizenship exacerbated anti-Asian sentiment, firmly setting in place the prejudices that motivated Japanese Peruvian internment. Given that many Peruvians saw Japanese diligence and tenacity as dangerous, the Peruvian government decided to cooperate with the United States when the latter argued that imprisoning Japanese civilians would strengthen hemispheric security against Japanese military aggression.

In the Name of Hemispheric Security: **The State Department's Special Division and Wartime Internment**

Just as the Peruvian government paid attention to the growing number of Japanese in Peru, the U.S. government gradually took notice of Japanese communities in Latin America. To protect America's economic interests and improve its foreign relations with South America, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the "Good Neighbor Policy." The diplomatic unity resulting from this policy positioned the United States as the leader in protecting the hemisphere's citizenry. Thus, when war broke out in September 1939, the United States concerned itself with the potential threat of Axis nationals in the Western Hemisphere. On September 23, 1939, foreign ministers from North and South America met in Panama to discuss the steps to be taken following the outbreak of war in Europe. They officially agreed to "suppress violations of neutrality and subversive activities by nationals of belligerent countries or others seeking to promote the interest of belligerent powers in the territory and jurisdiction of

any or all of the American Republics."[22] After this meeting, Roosevelt ordered J. Edgar Hoover's

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to collect intelligence in the Western Hemisphere.[23]

Originally, Roosevelt assigned FBI agents to investigate and foil Germany's covert

operations in Central and South America, until the large Japanese populations in Brazil and Peru

attracted the attention of legal attachés. Although Hoover used operatives in the United States

and abroad to gather intelligence on suspected Japanese espionage, not all officials agreed with

his tactics. Edward Ennis, Director of the Alien Enemy Control Unit in the Department of Justice

(DOJ), disputed the FBI's authority to operate beyond American borders, and cautioned U.S.

Attorney General Francis Biddle of this. As Ennis recalled, "often, there were arguments as to

just where his [Hoover's] authority ended and the authority of other officials in the Department

of Justice began."[24] Despite clashes between the DOJ and FBI on jurisdiction, the conflict did

little to rein in Director Hoover and his agents. As a proponent of result over process, Hoover felt

he did not have to justify any of his actions to the DOJ.[25] So, when the FBI began investigating

Japanese communities in Latin America, the State Department's Special Division became more

fervid in enforcing a repatriation program.

By the fall of 1940, the State Department became more concerned with the growing

diplomatic crisis between Japan and the United States. In October that year, the State Department

received alarming reports from its representatives in Shanghai, Peking, and Japan that the

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[22] The Secretary of State (Cordell Hull) to Ambassador in Brazil (Jefferson Caffrey), September 4, 1939, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1939, Vol. V*, 17.

[23] John K. Emmerson, *The Japanese Thread: A Life in the U.S. Foreign Service* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978), 127.

[24] Edward J. Ennis, interviewed by Miriam Feingold, December 20, 1972, Earl Warren Oral History Project, University of California, Berkeley, (October 17, 2005), 6.

[25] Arnold Krammer, *Undue Process: The Untold Story of America's Germain Alien Internees* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 4.

situation in Asia "may explode at any instant."[26] State Department officials saw Japan as ready to take advantage of the war in Europe, waiting to extend its control and proclaim a "new order" in greater East Asia.[27] Writing to Secretary Hull, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew cautioned that general war might erupt soon and advised the government to facilitate the repatriation of American civilians.[28] Officials were concerned by the possibility of Japan interning American civilians if war broke out between the U.S. and Japan. Thus began the Special Division's efforts to coordinate an evacuation policy for Americans in the Far East.

On November 20, 1940, Consul General Frank Lockhart informed Secretary Hull of the Special Division's success in soliciting shipping companies to evacuate American citizens in Asia. That same month, Lockhart reported that 1,151 Americans left Shanghai.[29] Despite this momentary victory, American diplomats found themselves divided between conflicting courses of action. When overseas officials notified the State Department that Thailand was on the verge of Japanese occupation in February 1941, Roosevelt's administration agreed to dispatch a warning to American civilians in both China and Japan to return to the United States. In an effort to avoid sensational publicity, however, Secretary Hull instructed Ambassador Andrew Grew in Tokyo to "immediately and *quietly*" forward the government's suggestion that Americans withdraw to the United States.[30] Communications between the American government and its nationals in Asia amounted to quiet advice, a policy with which the Special Division disagreed.

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[26] Breckenridge Long, *The War Diary of Breckenridge Long: Selections from the Years 1939-1944*, ed. Fred L. Israel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 133.

[27] Scott D. Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 896.

[28] The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State (Hull), October 6, 1940, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1940, Vol. 1V, Far East*, 932.

[29] The Consul General at Shanghai (Lockhart) to the Secretary of State (Hull), November 20, 1940, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1940, The Far East, Vol. IV*, 953.

[30] The Secretary of State (Hull) to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew), February 11, 1941, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, The Far East, Vol. V*, 400 (emphasis added).

Frustrated by the reluctance of his colleagues in the Far East to issue *adamant* warnings, Chief of

the Special Division Joseph Green pleaded with Secretary Hull: "Unless there are overwhelming

political considerations of which SD [Special Division] is not aware," Green explained, "[the]

SD is of the opinion that an unequivocal warning should be issued to American citizens residing

in the Far East."[31] In the end, the Special Division followed the department's recommendation of

subtly urging American civilians to return to the United States, so as not to tip off or provoke the

Japanese government. Meanwhile, the Japanese in Latin America received no warning from their

government that detention was imminent.

The American military expressed deep concern for the security of Panama and its crucial

canal. The Panama Canal was central not just to the United States in defending its interests in the

region. Belligerent nations across the Western Hemisphere relied on the Canal for their security,

since it acted as the only secure maritime link between the Atlantic and Pacific. While American

Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, Commander of the Western Defense Command, stressed the

presence of a Japanese threat and appealed to President Roosevelt to intern all Japanese and Axis

nationals on the West Coast, opinions within the DOJ diverged from DeWitt's assessment. As

Ennis said, "[DeWitt] was honestly, though *mistakenly* as it turned out, concerned that the

Japanese fleet…might break loose a task force and attack the Panama Canal or the West Coast of

the United States."[32] Although the DOJ never found evidence of the Japanese contemplating an

invasion of Panama, within days of the Pearl Harbor attack, the first detention of Japanese Latin

Americans occurred in Panama. Five days after Pearl Harbor, Panamanian authorities rounded up

all Japanese men, women, and children for internment, along with male German and Italian

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[31] Memorandum by the Chief of the Special Division (Green) to the Secretary of State (Hull), December 6, 1941, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, The Far East, Vol. V,* 449.
[32] Ennis, interviewed by Feingold, 7.

Panamanians.[33] Although Panamanian officials later abandoned the planned internment on

Panamanian soil, instead turning their internees over to the United States, the imprisonment of

Japanese Panamanians served as a model for the U.S. internment of all suspicious Latin

Americans, including Japanese Peruvians.

Concerned about Axis influences in Latin America, the U.S. government encouraged

other countries in the Western Hemisphere to consider interning or repatriating their enemy

aliens. In January 1942, a month after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, foreign ministers

from North and South America met for a third time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to form the

Emergency Advisory Committee for Political Defense. Composed of seven representatives from

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the United States, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela, the committee

recommended the local detention of Axis nationals in each republic. Furthermore, if any

republic lacked the resources to do so, the committee urged the transfer of Axis nationals to other

American republics. But as historian P. Scott Corbett points out, "the most obvious 'other'

republic was the United States."[34]

Believing that the majority of Latin American countries could not be trusted to monitor

and detain "dangerous" Axis nationals, Undersecretary Welles prodded other State Department

officials to act quickly. Assistant Secretary Breckenridge Long concurred in a memorandum to

Attorney General Biddle, "[I]f these persons are not taken now, the South American

governments may neither surrender nor detain them at all."[35] Congruent with a national identity

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[33] Letter from U.S. Ambassador to Panama (Wilson) to Undersecretary of State Benjamin Sumner Welles, December 12, 1941, in Lika C. Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten: The U.S. Internment of Japanese Peruvians During World War II," *Asian Law Journal* 9 (2002): 168.

[34] C. Harvey Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate: The Peruvian Japanese and the United States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 17-18; P. Scott Corbett, *Quiet Passages: The Exchange of Civilians Between the United States and Japan During the Second World War* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1987), 142.

[35] Memorandum from Chief of Alien Enemy Control Unit (Ennis) to the U.S. Attorney General (Biddle), March 15, 1942, in Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 169.

swayed by ideas of exceptionalism, some policies, such as its exclusionary immigration acts,

viewed the Japanese as racially inferior. In addition, however, Japanese Peruvian internees

represented a commodity. An internal government memo stated that "*inherently harmless* Axis

nationals may be used to the greatest possible extent. We could repatriate them, we could intern

them, or we could hold them in escrow for *bargaining* purposes."[36] Regardless of their suspected

danger or citizenship, the United States considered Japanese Peruvians as potential hostages

suitable to trade for American civilians detained in Axis controlled regions of Asia, including the

Philippines.

Besides overt racism and paranoia, security concerns—justified or not—led to the

wartime detention of Japanese immigrants without credible evidence or specific charges of fifth-

column activities. Thousands of Japanese Peruvians swept up by the fervor of wartime

internment faced various injustices, but the perceived importance of hostage-taking merits a

closer look into the Japanese internment of American civilians in the Philippines. In its attempt

to realize repatriation and secure fairer treatment of interned American citizens, the Special

Division entangled itself in the deportation and internment of Japanese Latin Americans.

Most Benevolent Conquerors: Japanese Internment of American Civilians in the Philippines, 1942

Though motivated in part by racial prejudice and ideas of national security, the American

government's actions also occurred in response to similar internment programs by the Japanese.

Days after General Douglas MacArthur abandoned Manila, American civilians and Filipino

nationals stood together, gazes fixed northward as Japanese troops marched into the capitol on

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[36] Memorandum, "Regarding the Activities of the United States Government in Removing from other American republics Dangerous Subversive Aliens," November 3, 1942, RG 59, Subject Files, Box 180, Records of the Special War Problems Division, *National Archives,* in Esther Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens: The Interned Latin American Japanese Civilians during World War II," PhD diss., (Youngstown State University, 2008), 51 (emphasis added).

January 2, 1942.[37] Two days later, the first American, British, and French civilian nationals were ordered to report to the University of Santo Tomás, which the Japanese had turned into an internment camp. In a matter of months, the camp held around 2,250 American civilians, the largest number of civilians imprisoned by the Japanese in World War II.[38] Japan's desire to spend as little as possible meant that the camp experience was characterized by filth, disease, malnutrition, and overcrowding. Upon receiving disturbing reports of American internees in the Philippines suffering cruel treatment by the Japanese, General MacArthur informed the War Department that the Japanese subjected American internees to "extremely harsh and rigid measures," marked by special humiliation designed "to discredit the white races."[39] Upon hearing this, as well as General MacArthur's recommendation that the American government act "immediately and aggressively" through proper diplomatic means, the U.S. State Department released the following statement on February 2, 1942:

> "If assurances cannot be given by the Japanese government that these principles will be applied to the treatment of American nationals, not only on Japanese occupied territory in the Philippines but throughout Japan and Japanese occupied territories, it may be necessary for this government to reconsider its policy of according to Japanese nationals on its territory the most liberal treatment consistent with the national safety."[40]

While the government went as far as interning its own citizens of Japanese ancestry (the Nisei), extraditing Japanese Americans was entirely out of the question.[41] To find enough

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[37] James Scott, *Rampage: MacArthur, Yamashita, and the Battle of Manila* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 61.

[38] Rupert Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp: Life and Liberation at Santo Tomás, Manila, in World War II* (Jefferson: MacFarland & Company, 2014), 1-2.

[39] General Douglas MacArthur to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, February 5, 1942, Box 2495, RG 59, in Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 48.

[40] U.S. Department of State to Japanese Government, Box 2495, RG 59, in Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 49 (emphasis added).

[41] According to the census of 1940, around 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry resided within the territorial limits of the United States, and of these, some 80,000 were *Nisei* (American-born citizens of Japanese ancestry) and 40,000 were *Issei* (foreign-born Japanese, ineligible for naturalization). See, for further information on the population of the Japanese in America, Sydney D. Bailey, "The Problem of the Japanese Americans," *India Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1946): 366.

Japanese to exchange for American civilian internees, the U.S. government began to intern

Japanese Peruvians. The conditions suffered by American internees in the Philippines help

explain some decisions made by American officials regarding Japanese Peruvians.

Located in a busy part of Manila, the sixty-acre camp had a few large buildings. To the

right of the Main Building, adorned with saints on cornices, stood the three-story Education

Building, which housed male internees and most of the Japanese garrison. Behind the Main

Building was a "long one-story structure" called the Annex, which held mothers as well as young

children. Still, most internees slept in the Main Building.[42] In addition to gender-based

segregation, the Japanese attempted to separate internees by nationality. But with thousands

pouring in and accommodations in short supply, they soon abandoned the policy of gendered

segregation.

Life at Santo Tomás was complex, with the internment experience defined by

cooperation and resistance. Japanese commandants accepted a plan prepared by interned

Americans to establish an interim government within the camp. Thirty-six-year-old American

insurance executive Earl Carroll was ordered to take charge of said interim government.[43] Within

a few weeks, Carroll built a provisional bureaucracy within the camp designed to serve a

population of over 3,000 internees, 70 percent of whom were American nationals.[44] As such,

Santo Tomás became "a miniature city," administered by various representatives and agencies.[45]

To foster community within the framework of regulation, the camp's all-male administration

created a host of leadership positions and organizations, from room monitors carrying out nightly

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[42] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 20.
[43] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 28.
[44] James Mace Ward, "Legitimate Collaboration: The Administration of Santo Tomás Internment Camp and Its Histories, 1942–2003," *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (2008): 162.
[45] Santo Tomás Internment Camp, *Internews*, January 24, 1942.

roll calls to disciplinary members acting as the camp's civilian police.[46] No matter how often they defended the internees' interests against Japanese restrictions, Carroll's nine-member Executive Committee inevitably made difficult decisions. Opposing some Japanese demands while acquiescing to others turned out to be the camp's version of "collaboration."

While a tale of fortitude and ingenuity, the story of American internment at Santo Tomás was also one of "legitimate collaboration," according to historian James Mace Ward. While collaboration comes across as a weighty charge, often synonymous with treason, Ward recasted collaboration as legitimate, hoping to capture the complex *quid pro quo* interactions between a suzerain power and the population it dominated. As much as collaboration blurred the lines between right and wrong, loyal and disloyal, American and un-American, internee leaders had little choice but to be middlemen. To increase their autonomy from Japanese interference, interned officials conceded to some Japanese demands in exchange for certain privileges. For example, when the Japanese threatened to revoke the internees' privilege of accepting outside food through the front gate, since they made Santo Tomás look more like a "picnic ground than a prison camp," the camp's central committee chose to tighten discipline preemptively.[47] Effective immediately, Carroll and his colleagues ordered the front gate to be covered with *sawali* (woven bamboo fiber) to block visual contact between the internees and outside world. Twice a day, visitors filed in front of the gate and placed their packages onto tables manned by Japanese inspectors checking for forbidden items, from liquor and flashlights to knitting instructions and radios.[48] The packages were then taken to the designated internee.[49] And in probable response to

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[46] Ward, "Legitimate Collaboration," 162.
[47] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 92.
[48] Cates, *The Drainpipe Diary*, 302. Some women's knitting instructions, as Cates recalled, were confiscated by Japanese sentries since it looked like secret code to them.
[49] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 92.

the Japanese Army's reputation for rape, like that at Nanking, the committee forbade women

from wearing shorts. To ensure compliance, the committee put in place a "morality patrol." In

addition to regulating female attire, the morality patrol took the initiative to check incoming

packages for contraband and outside information, which were sometimes smuggled in through

bread loaves or pieces of beef. While the morality patrol tried to allay all Japanese fears of

internee revolt and subversion, the camp's internees reportedly heaped "considerable abuse" onto

the patrol. By mid-March 1942, the patrol's chief urged internees to appreciate their well-

intentioned mission:

> "[We] do not consider [ourselves] policemen or guards. We look upon ourselves as
> 'aides.' We…are the middlemen who forward [Japanese] regulations…and assist in their
> interpretation so that probable infractions will not result in greater restriction upon the
> camp as a whole."[50]

Regardless of intent, Wilkinson asked himself an intriguing question: In order to live, "[w]ere we

collaborating with the enemy?"[51] Another survivor of the Santo Tomás Internment Camp, Irene

Hecht, argued to the contrary.

Instead of "legitimate collaboration," a charge that still carries the implication of treason,

Hecht suggested that internment went through four stages of development: denial, "lemonade

from lemons" (making the best of a situation), making do, and struggling for survival.[52] The first

phase, denial, lasted from the beginning of American internment in the Philippines to the Bataan

Death March in April 1942. As a keen nine-year-old during this period, Hecht observed two

behaviors on the part of adults around her. Some Americans reacted in disbelief to internment.

Public outrage, according to Hecht, could be summarized by the following diatribe: "How could

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[50] Santo Tomás Internment Camp, *Internews*, March 14, 1942.
[51] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 92.
[52] Irene Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" *Pacific Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (2012): 602.

we be ordered around by these 'yellow monkeys.' This defied both logic and etiquette!"[53]

Complaints then concluded with assertions that General MacArthur would return in two weeks

and put the Japanese in their place. The other reaction Hecht witnessed was a desperate attempt

to return to "normality." For example, one of Hecht's female neighbors in the camp asserted

normality in an elaborate night-time routine. "She applied various magical creams to her face,"

Hecht recalled, "and wrapped her hair in an elaborate—frankly ugly—bandana to keep her

permanent [wave] in order."[54] Indeed, whenever Hecht's neighbor set off with her three days'

supply of food and bedding, one of her necessities had been her make-up case.

Initially, living spaces in the classrooms-turned-dormitories averaged around 30 square

feet per person, "a third more than a single bed."[55] It did not matter that every cubic inch of

space had been taken up—people continued to pour in. "All the women and children, ages

ranging from eleven months to seventy-nine years, were tired and nervous," Tressa R. Cates, an

American nurse at the Sternberg General Army Hospital in Manila, explained, "and I, who had

been a want-to-be-alone Garbo from the time I could toddle, was in the midst of all this

confusion and noise!"[56] In addition to scarce living space and privacy, noises at night became

incessant. Tired of waiting for liberation, three Australian internees tried to escape Santo Tomás

on February 12, 1942. Two days later, however, they were recaptured and executed by the

dreaded *Kempeitai* (Japanese secret police) at Manila's North Cemetery.[57]

Sometime after the fall of Bataan in April 1942, Japanese commandants assembled

internees at Santo Tomás to view newsreels of the Death March. Hecht recounted how the photos

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[53] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 605.
[54] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 605.
[55] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 27.
[56] Cates, *The Drainpipe Diary*, 17.
[57] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 133.

shown to them emphasized the miserable state of American prisoners: "Dehydrated, starved, staggering, they collapsed across the screen."[58] Japanese sentries wanted internees to give up the idea of being rescued. From Hecht's point-of-view, this was a turning point in the attitudes and behaviors of the internees. They understood that they needed to make the best of an unfortunate situation. When thirty-odd Army nurses from Bataan arrived at Santo Tomás, the camp soon established a regular hospital, but one lacking medicines and medical equipment. The camp also organized "abbreviated" schooling for children. Japanese commandants limited the subjects taught to English and mathematics, and despite such restricted schooling, internees tried to create a viable world for themselves.[59]

The health of most internees remained stable throughout 1942. However, signs of malnutrition began to appear by June 1943. In accordance with Japanese orders, the internees largely fed and provided for themselves, from bed mattresses to medicines. Initially, Filipino merchants and families outside the camp supplied fruits and vegetables to the internees. But when the Japanese closed down the camp's supply line to reduce smuggled notes and goods, starvation cases increased rapidly. As a nurse at the camp hospital, Cates saw the worst of malnutrition and disease. On June 8, 1943, Cates witnessed a number of children and adults experiencing impetigo and other skin diseases caused by nervousness, filth, and malnutrition.[60] She recalled how hospitals in the United States practiced strict isolation whenever a case of impetigo was discovered. Of course, such isolation at Santo Tomás was out of the question. With food scarce and supplementary sources cut off, internees had to make do with the worsening circumstances.

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[58] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 607.
[59] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 608.
[60] Cates, *The Drainpipe Diary*, 278.

By September 1944, Hecht wrote about the camp's starvation diet: "[S]kipping a meal

was not just an inconvenience, but a serious deprivation."[61] At this time, the camp's stock of

food had shrunk to a dozen stored eggs, six or eight ounces of salt pork, a few cans of meat, and

a few pounds of rice—all of which had to support thousands of internees. Cates wrote about the

types of so-called "scarecrows" in the camp. "Men and women who looked like skeletons,"

Cates noted, "walked around on pipe-stem legs…with folds of baggy skin that had lost all

elasticity and life. Drawn faces with eyes fixed on the ground." The second type of "scarecrows"

were usually over fifty, and according to Cates, "their faces were large and edematous,…their

abdomens distended, and they hobbled around on grotesquely swollen legs. These people would

soon be in their graves."[62] While difficult to imagine, the Japanese treated Filipinos outside the

camp much worse. Filipino refugees witnessed the Japanese committing orgies of abuse,

mutilating young men, taking so-called "comfort women," and bayoneting newborn babies in

front of their Filipino parents.[63] Even in Manila, Hecht noticed how coffins would be carted past

the camp every morning: "There would be a rickety cart, with a shambling, bony horse and

equally bony driver, head covered in a battered straw hat, his skinny legs sticking out from his

short pants. On the cart was a box. I had no difficulty in concluding that the box was a coffin."[64]

Seeing the image of death in its many forms helped Hecht realize the danger they were all in.

From that day forward, she vowed to never take one step that was not necessary for survival.

Rather than join her friends in jumping rope, hopscotch, or tree climbing, Hecht watched from

afar. Yet shortly after, her friends also stopped playing games as their bodies became too weak to

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[61] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 609.
[62] Cates, *The Drainpipe Diary*, 389.
[63] Wilkinson, *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, 167.
[64] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 611.

engage in such boisterous activity.[65] By the war's end, 390 internees had died at Santo Tomás, a death rate of approximately ten percent.[66]

Due to the negative meaning of collaboration, legitimate or otherwise, it would be more accurate to perceive the Santo Tomás experience as a study in survival. Internees' survival predicated on their ability to negotiate with the Japanese and solve day-to-day problems effectively. If Santo Tomás was the story of a human community held in place against its will, so too was the U.S. internment of Japanese Peruvians. Any similarities, however, were lost on some American officials. To ensure better treatment for American internees in the Philippines, General MacArthur informed the State Department that it could use Japanese nationals as a "lever under the threat of reciprocal retaliatory measures to force decent treatment for [American] interned men and women."[67] Again, deporting nonconsenting Japanese Americans was out of the question. Moreover, the United States had already agreed to intervene in the transfer and internment of Axis nationals from Latin America *vis-à-vis* the Emergency Advisory Committee. To rectify those two problems, Secretary Hull urged President Roosevelt in 1942 to "remove all the Japanese from these American Republic countries for internment in the United States."[68] Thus began the U.S. internment of Japanese Peruvians, a program designed to increase American bargaining power and intended to improve conditions for Allied citizenry interned by the Japanese.

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[65] Hecht, "An Inmate's Response to James Mace Ward's 'Legitimate Collaboration,'" 611.

[66] James McCall, *Santo Tomás Internment Camp: STIC in Verse and Reverse, STIC-toons and STIC-tistics* (Lincoln: Woodruff Printing, 1945), 66, 146.

[67] General Douglas MacArthur to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, February 5, 1942, Box 2495, RG 59, in Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 48.

[68] Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 146. Corbett cites a letter from Secretary Hull to President Roosevelt (1942), pleading for more ships to be available to transport Japanese Peruvian deportees.

All's Fair in Love and War?: Inter-American Relations and the Wartime Program of Deportation

While Peru hoped to rid itself of an unwanted minority, the importation of Japanese internees provided the U.S. government with valuable bartering currency in civilian exchanges. When it became apparent that Japan held a larger than expected number of Americans and other Allied nationals in its prison camps, the U.S. government feared it would not have enough Japanese detainees to exchange for these American civilians. To rectify this issue, some U.S. officials called for the wholesale extradition of Japanese Peruvians. A May 1942 memorandum recommended as much, calling for Peru to deport all their persons of Japanese descent to the United States, _regardless_ of their citizenship status.[69] However, when a lack of American ships, space, personnel, and resources prevented this kind of wholesale extradition, the legality of the program fell into question.

J. Daniel Hanley of the State Department's Foreign Activity Correlation section insisted in a memo that the department should decide "whether an effort should be made to influence Peru to _breach_ international law."[70] Initially, Peru's deportation program targeted Japanese consular and diplomatic officials as well as leading businessmen. John K. Emmerson, the Third Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Lima, established the following criteria for selecting deportees: Axis nationals in Peru had to occupy a position of leadership or exercise influence within the community.[71] Emmerson attempted to single out Japanese leaders in the community to catch "potential subversives" in Peru.[72] However, unable to find _any_ credible evidence of subversion

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[69] Memorandum from R. Henry Norweb to Director J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. (May 8, 1942), Japanese Activities Along the West Coast of South America, in Lika C. Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten: The U.S. Internment of Japanese Peruvians During World War II," _Asian Law Journal_ 9 (2002): 171.

[70] Memorandum from J. Daniel Hanley of the Foreign Activity Correlation Section of the U.S. State Department, September 8, 1942, Box 2499, RG 59, in Corbett, _Quiet Passages_, 147-8 (emphasis added).

[71] Emmerson, _The Japanese Thread_, 143.

[72] Emmerson, _The Japanese Thread_, 139.

or espionage contemplated by Peruvian Japanese, U.S. and Peruvian officials deported the

Japanese at random. With little to no protocol in place for selecting deportees, "the whim of

enforcing officials played a major part in the designation of the [so-called] undesirables."[73] This

fickle arrangement concerned the State Department as they did not want the United States to

become a dumping ground for unwanted Axis nationals. Director Ennis informed the Special

Division that the State Department hoped to *only* intern "dangerous aliens of enemy nationality,"

not harmless refugees. Although Ennis acknowledged that U.S. officials in Peru sometimes made

errors and acted in haste when marking individuals for deportation, the selection process had to

be diligent with getting rid of the "right" Japanese—those who presented a threat.[74] Even so,

American officials were more concerned with taking preventative measures in Peru than with

ensuring fair treatment of Japanese Peruvians, which explains why Attorney General Francis

Biddle concluded that such random errors "did not warrant the restriction of internment."[75]

While U.S. leaders scrambled to validate Japanese internment, the Peruvian government

hastened the expulsion process. Peruvian officials viewed the war as a serendipitous opportunity

to rid Peru of its "undesirable" Japanese. Soon after Pearl Harbor, Peruvian President Manuel

Prado concluded, "the deportation and internment in the United States of as many of the nation's

Japanese as possible was both politically popular and expedient."[76] In addition to being a

convenient means of expelling Peruvians' economic competition, Prado's government stood to

profit from cooperation with the United States. As a 1942 American newsreel reported, "the U.S.

lent Peru $25 million and signed a reciprocal trade agreement. Peru [would] receive American

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[73] C. Harvey Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru: 1873-1973* (Albuquerque: New Mexico, 1975), 85.
[74] Memorandum from Chief Edward Ennis to Chairman Albert Clattenburg, September 21, 1942, Box 2516, RG 59, in Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 149.
[75] Letter from U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, January 11, 1943, in Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 174.
[76] Daniel M. Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 159.

arms under a Lend Lease agreement."[77] President Prado's goal of securing political support and

economic aid from the United States was far from surprising. Prado wanted to see "the

substantial elimination of the Japanese colony in Peru," Norweb wrote, which would grant

individual Peruvians certain economic advantages.[78] To better guarantee their removal, however,

President Prado indicated that Peru would not readmit interned Japanese Peruvians at any time.

In contrast, Prado and other political officials took almost no action against the large German

community in Peru. Similar to other American republics, including the United States, Peru

boasted a bigger and better-established German population, with strong ties to the political elite.

Along with political ties, a significant enough number of prominent Peruvians lived in Germany,

which made Prado's administration think twice about deporting German residents.[79]

The Peruvian government pursued restrictive policies in accordance with the U.S.

mission for hemispheric security. Peruvian authorities imposed travel restrictions on the Japanese

and shut down their schools, newspapers, and civic organizations. At the suggestion of the U.S.

government, Prado further ordered the confiscation of phones from their homes. The Peruvian

government also canceled Japanese land leases and froze their assets.[80] Shortly after Pearl

Harbor, Peruvian officials placed 566 Japanese and their businesses on the dreaded "blacklist,"

which was used to round up and arrest "suspicious" Japanese, sometimes in nighttime raids

without any real proof of subversive activity. [81] Japanese teachers, organization leaders,

clergymen, and other high-profile members of the community transformed into scapegoats, and

the Peruvian government rendered them financially powerless.

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[77] Newsreel clip, *Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story*, dir. Casey Peek, Progressive Films, 2003, YouTube, 00:11:35-00:11:44.

[78] Letter from Ambassador of Peru (Norweb) to Undersecretary of State (Welles), July 20, 1942, in Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 171.

[79] Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate,* 20.

[80] Emmerson, *The Japanese Thread*, 137.

[81] Emmerson, *The Japanese Thread*, 138.

Racial strife in Peru, exacerbated by wartime restrictions, drove some Japanese Peruvians to offer themselves for deportations. The general prejudice and feared "blacklists" made it difficult for Japanese Peruvians to lead a normal life or earn a basic living. Towards the middle of the war, George H. Butler, First Secretary of the Embassy at Lima, reported to Secretary Hull about the turn of events: "At first the Japanese did not wish to leave Peru, but…now 'all of them' want to go to the United States," even though that meant indefinite confinement in a camp.[82] Art Shibayama, a native Peruvian, never perceived himself or his family as unwanted immigrants. He described his childhood in Lima as idyllic, spending summer vacations at his grandparents' seaside home in Callao. Despite his family's deep roots in Peru, nothing could save them from the country's intent to deport and intern as many Japanese as possible. Shibayama remembered how the Japanese men in Peru tried to evade capture:

> "Every time a U.S. transport came into the port of Callao, words got around and people, the head of families, went into hiding—my father included. When the [Peruvian] police came to our house several times looking for him…and not finding him, they took my mother and put her in jail. My sister was eleven at the time and went with her because she didn't want her mother to go by herself. As soon as my father found out about it, he came out, he gave himself up."[83]

In the end, Peruvian officials sent Shibayama's entire family to the United States for internment.

Some weeks after President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, resulting in the wartime internment of Japanese Americans, the United States turned to Japanese Peruvians to provide a steady pool of exchangeable prisoners. In late 1942, General George C. Marshall wired the Caribbean Defense Command: "The State Department wants immediate deportation from Peru of nine Japanese tailors recently okehed [sic] for deportation by the Peruvian government,"

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[82] Letter from First Secretary of the Lima Embassy (Butler) to Secretary of State (Hull), July 10, 1943, in Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 176.

[83] Art Shibayama, *Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story*, dir. Casey Peek, Progressive Films, 2003, YouTube, 00:11:50-00:12:31.

Marshall wrote. "These interned nationals [were] to be used in *exchange* for American civilian nationals now interned" by the Japanese.[84] Despite America's limited number of ships and space for internees, partial deportation was still accomplished through cooperation between the American and Peruvian governments. On April 5, 1942, the *S.S. Etolin* left Callao for San Francisco with 141 Peruvian-Japanese males on board, the first group of internees.[85] Eight days later, the *S.S. Acadia* followed, and deportations of Japanese Peruvians continued throughout the war. Japanese passengers on board these ships reported being under strict guard in tight, unventilated quarters below deck.[86] Little did they know that some would be taken to a temporary detention camp in Panama before being sent to the United States.

Behind Barbed Wire: The Internment and Deportation of Japanese Peruvians

In January 1944, Seiichi Higashide's success as a merchant and civic leader attracted the attention of Peruvian agents, who marked him for deportation to the United States. Like many of his countrymen, Higashide found himself in a vulnerable position. "Surrounded by American soldiers carrying rifles with fixed bayonets," Higashide recalled, "we were lined up four abreast and marched over to the gangway…M.P.s [the military police] were on all sides of us and it was clear that elaborate precautions had been taken. It was then that I truly came to understand that I was a prisoner of war."[87] While on board a U.S. freighter for Panama, Higashide came to know that the ship carried twenty-nine Japanese, five of whom were *naturalized* Peruvians, and two who were born in Peru.[88] Later that month, Higashide disembarked at an unnamed military installation in the Panama Canal, where he endured harsh conditions for nearly two months.

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[84] General Marshall to the Caribbean Defense Command, December 11, 1942, National Archives, Records of World War II, Army file AG 014.311, in Barnhart, "Japanese Internees from Peru," 171.

[85] Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate*, 25.

[86] Letter from Victor K. Tateishi, detainee of alien detention center, to the Ambassador of Spain, June 30, 1944, in Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 172.

[87] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 142.

[88] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 144.

Since the camp in Panama fell under the American military's jurisdiction, "everything,"

according to Higashide, "was handled in a military manner."[89] Under pain of punishment, camp

guards forced Japanese Peruvian inmates to salute the American flag and recite the Pledge of

Allegiance before sending them off to perform hard labor in the canal. Labor ranged from

transporting square timber and mixing gravel with cement to hacking away at underbrush and

digging holes in the ground.[90] Captured two years earlier on charges of suspected espionage,

Yoshitaro Amano described the perverse enjoyment that some American sentries took in issuing

orders to internees. In his memoir, forty-three-year-old Amano detailed an incident in which he

and nine other prisoners had to dig a hole measuring a certain number of feet. When informed

that the measurements were off by two inches, the internees had to refill the hole, stamp down

the dirt, and start again. These demanding conditions took their toll on the weakest detainees, and

according to Amano, some M.P.s mistreated the internees for entertainment: "They just wanted

to make us tired."[91] Another Japanese Peruvian detained in the Canal Zone shared testimony

reminiscent of Amano's experience in Balboa. One humid day in February 1942, American

soldiers ordered the internees to dig a latrine. While shoveling dirt, the internee thought he was

digging his own grave. When American guards instructed them to then fill the pit with buckets of

human waste, the older internees became too tired: "They could not run fast enough to please the

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[89] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 144.

[90] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 145. See, for more information on the hard labor that Japanese Peruvians had to perform, "Protest by Japanese Government against Cases of Ill-Treatment by the American Authorities of Japanese Held by the Authorities of the United States Government, 1944," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers V* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 958.

[91] Yoshitaro Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki (The Journal of My Incarceration)* (Tokyo: Japan Publishing and Distribution Co. (Nippon Shuppan Haikyu Kabushiki Kaisha), 1943), 23, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 46.

guards, they were poked and shoved by guards with bayonets."[92] Under these harsh conditions, the internees learned to accept orders.

At first, exhausting physical labor and meager living conditions made up the life of internment in Balboa. The makeshift camp housed detainees in assembled tents, surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by soldiers with machine guns.[93] Meals at the camp consisted of potatoes, beans, bread, and half a cup of cold coffee. Within days of arriving, Amano noticed the disparate treatment of Japanese internees and attributed this to the resentment of American draftees. This was heightened by the arrival of injured soldiers from Pearl Harbor to Gorgas Hospital in Panama City. "When [the] soldiers saw their own buddies wounded and in terrible shape," Amano reasoned, "their morale or their desire to fight increased…[T]heir reaction was, 'I hate the Japs,' and that came down on our heads. We got punished for Pearl Harbor then and there."[94] Hence, tensions escalated at the Balboa camp between American draftees and Japanese internees. As Amano put it, "They [the soldiers] stared at us [the Japanese] with hate in their eyes. All the bad jobs were assigned to us, much worse than those assigned to the Italian group. The Italians looked at us with pity because we had to work much harder."[95] However, after months of labor and uncertainty, conditions at Balboa gradually improved.

With greater food rations and reduced physical demands, Japanese internees began to search for entertainment. As a self-proclaimed lecturer by disposition and vocation, Amano took on the responsibility of entertaining internees by reciting stories from *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Over time, Amano realized that what Japanese internees really craved

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[92] Testimony of Grace Shimizu, in "Treatment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent, European Americans, and Jewish Refugees During World War II," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, First Session, March 19, 2009.

[93] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 22, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 45.

[94] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 23, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 45.

[95] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 23, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 46.

was news about the war. While working as an interpreter at a nearby military hospital, Amano

developed relationships with local Panamanian laborers. In a matter of weeks, Amano called in a

favor from one of the local workers there, asking for issues of the *Estrella* and *Panama*

American. The local worker obliged and smuggled the newspapers into the camp for Amano to

read to the internees in Japanese.[96] The daily news roundup became a highly anticipated event

among the internees, who began to bet on the distance of Japan's advancement. Using

information gleaned from Western news sources, Amano gave embellished reports on the

cunning superiority of the Japanese in Bataan and Corregidor. With regard to the Japanese

sinking of the *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales*, two British battleships, Amano bragged about the

Imperial Army's might: "[F]or Germany, it took two years to bomb England, but Japan

accomplished this destruction in 80 minutes." Moreover, Amano looked down on America's

failure to anticipate attacks from the Japanese military, who "came down from the jungles like a

strong wind."[97] The camp guards could not understand Amano when he was giving his nightly

reports, and if they demanded to know what he was saying, Amano replied that he was preaching

the Holy Gospel. After picking out words like "Singapore" and "Manila," the soldiers became

deeply suspicious of his zealous lectures. Privy to their suspicions, Amano wondered if someone

could be killed over such a thing as reporting the news. Regardless, Amano continued his nightly

reports. As he put it, "People wanted the news so badly. At the time, the decision was easy, but

looking back, it was *foolhardy*."[98]

Amano's suspect activities and defiant attitude made him a target for military

questioning. When two guards called on and escorted him to a tent for questioning, Amano

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[96] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 38, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 61.
[97] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 42, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 63.
[98] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 38, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 62 (emphasis added).

expected the worst. "I thought of a spy movie, where the guy gets shot. I thought of that and shuddered," Amano recalled later.[99] He described the head interrogator as an M.P. named "Sibbly," a sergeant and nisei translator. In his memoir *Waga Toraware No Ki* (*The Journal of My Incarceration*), Amano paraphrased Sibbly's questions:

> "You must have known when the war was going to start. What was your position in Japan?…We have evidence. Why did you go to the bank the day before [Pearl Harbor] to withdraw money?…Where was the money? How did you spend it? Why did you take it out?…We started searching your house. We couldn't find anything suspicious.''[100]

After Sibbly asked a number of questions, many of which Amano referred to as "stupid," the guards escorted him back to his cot. According to Amano, Sibbly issued special orders thereafter for sentries to shoot Amano if he ever came within ten feet of the surrounding wire gate.[101] Amano was able to evade said situation, however, since the military sent him to Fort Sill for indefinite internment.

In early May 1942, Amano and other Japanese internees passed through Texas by train and arrived at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Upon their arrival, Amano described the camp facility as being composed of 192 tents and 13 barracks, "lined up like *Go* game pieces" on several acres of open land, surrounded by a ten-foot-high barbed wire fence.[102] Conditions at Fort Sill fared better, in some ways, than at Balboa. Officers at Fort Sill supplied the internees with good food, served on clean porcelain dishes. They also did not force internees to perform hours of hard labor. Finally, Amano "felt proud to be promoted from animal to human."[103] With time for leisurely pursuits, the internees entertained themselves in the form of talent shows, featuring traditional Japanese acts such as *shigin* (poetry) and *shakuhaji* (flute performances).

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[99] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 27, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 47.
[100] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 29, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 48.
[101] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 32, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 49.
[102] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 68, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 65.
[103] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 70, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 65.

These standing-room-only shows provided internees with a brief respite from the fear and

worry of indefinite incarceration, but reality soon kicked in with the deaths of three Japanese

internees. On May 1, 1942, Ochi Yakuji was the first prisoner to die at Fort Sill due to

untreatable tongue cancer. "[Everyone] knew tongue cancer killed him, but so did American

indifference," charged Amano.[104] As he recalled, the doctors only came to Ochi's tent to

determine if he was dead or alive; they did not treat him properly. The next casualty, Kanesaburo

Oshima, died ten days later. One of seven internees killed by American M.P.s during the war,

Oshima died trying to escape from the camp. According to the FBI, Oshima went to the camp

perimeter and attempted to climb over the double-layered fence. A soldier spotted Oshima from

a nearby watchtower, and drew out his pistol. When internees pleaded with the soldier to not

shoot Oshima due to his mental instability, the guard lowered his gun. Another guard, however,

used a machine gun and shot Oshima. The internee's body then collapsed to the ground.

Following an autopsy, medics concluded that one shot entered the base of his spine, and another

penetrated the back of his head.[105] The third camp death of Shimoda Itsuji occurred shortly after.

Although the cause of his death was ruled unknown, Amano believed that Itsuji died under

suspicious circumstances, since military officers refused internees' requests to visit the body.

Instead, some camp administrators brought flowers and delivered condolences to the deceased,

which Amano derided as too little, too late. "We needed kindness while we were alive. If they

had showed any compassion first, there would be no need to bury bodies out here," Amano

opined.[106] In good faith, camp officials permitted the detainees to conduct funeral services for the

deceased.

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[104] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 74, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 67.
[105] Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgment Without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment During World War II* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2003), 191.
[106] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 75-76, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 68.

Unbeknownst to the American M.P.s, the funerals galvanized Japanese Peruvians to express their outrage and contempt. During a eulogy, Japanese internee "A" denounced the United States' claim to moral superiority. According to Amano, "A" insisted that Japan did not kill civilians without a just motive, compared to American soldiers who casually gun down mentally ill internees. These eulogies, delivered in Japanese, provided internees with a platform to indirectly express their frustration and resentment. Few prisoners protested directly to the camp's administration, but some were willing to speak up. As Amano recalled, the military court martialed the soldier accused of shooting Oshima. Ten Japanese internees were called as witnesses, one of whom, Shindo Tamezo, testified that the soldier disregarded requests to hold fire. When the accused denied hearing any such requests, Tamezo called him a liar, noting how the other sentry in the watchtower heard and heeded the request.[107] Even so, nothing the internees arguably did warranted a death sentence. According to the Geneva Convention of 1929, to which American and Japanese internees were subject to, an attempted escape only carried a penalty of confinement for up to thirty days.[108] Upon learning this, an officer yanked the defendant's stripes from his military uniform. However, the court later acquitted the soldier of all counts.[109]

On May 28, 1942, orders arrived to transfer the Japanese internees, including Amano, to Camp Livingston in Louisiana. Near the city of Alexandria, Camp Livingston differed from Fort Sill, especially in terms of living conditions. To the relief of Japanese internees, soldiers guarding the camp's watchtowers were not armed with machine guns. The barracks also proved to be far more comfortable than the leaky tents at Fort Sill. As life became more pleasant, some

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[107] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 77, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 69.

[108] Japan and the United States agreed to apply the 1929 Geneva Convention to their respective internees. Kashima, *Judgment Without Trial*, 191.

[109] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 77, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 69.

internees filled their days with *mahjong* and *Go*. Others indulged in their open access to daily newspapers, such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. But this period of stability was short-lived for Amano. In June, Amano and four other Japanese were listed for diplomatic repatriation.

On June 18, 1942, Amano and other Japanese internees boarded the Swedish-American liner *Gripsholm*. According to Amano, the ship carried 1,065 civilians, including Japanese ambassadors Kichisaburo Nomura and Saburo Kurusu. On July 2, the ship stopped in Rio de Janeiro to pick up 383 Japanese nationals from Peru and Brazil.[110] As the *Gripsholm* neared Lourenco Marques, Mozambique—site of the first civilian exchange with 2,500 Americans aboard the *Conte Verde* and *Asama Maru*—Amano's sense of nationalism replaced his taste for resistance. Amano described the scene as follows:

> "On the morning of [July] 22nd, all of us anxiously awaited the arrival of our *Asama Maru* and *Conte Verde* and a chance to see them proudly sail into the bay. It was a magnificent sight. The Hinomaru [the Japanese national flag] and a white cross were painted on the sides of the ships. High on the masts fluttered the Hinomaru and the sight of it against the tropical blue sky nearly blinded me. We breathlessly watched in anticipation. When the two ships drew alongside the *Gripsholm*, there arose a loud 'banzai!' At that moment, the power of Imperial Japan seemed overwhelming."[111]

Filled with national pride, Amano boarded the *Conte Verde* for Singapore, which was then occupied by Japan. His arrival in Singapore signaled the end of his American internment, but Amano continued to write about the superiority of his homeland until the end of the war.[112]

The second and final exchange between Japan and the United States occurred in 1943.

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[110] Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 75.

[111] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 131, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 76. For more information on the internees held and exchanged by the Japanese, see Greg Leck, *Captives of Empire: The Japanese Internment of Allied Civilians in China 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: Shandy Press, 2006).

[112] Amano, *Waga Toraware No Ki*, 132, in Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 76.

With 737 Japanese Latin Americans aboard, mostly diplomats, businesspeople, and bankers, the

Gripsholm sailed into the neutral port of Goa on the southwestern coast of India, on October 16,

1943.[113] The Japanese *Teia Maru* waited with 1,516 passengers on board, mostly American and

Canadian internees from the Philippines.[114] Soon after this successful exchange, diplomatic

negotiations between Japan and the United States broke down. Although the cause remains

unknown, Corbett suggests that the Japanese placed greater importance on civilian exchanges

with the British. By January 1944, Allied forces had captured some 331 Japanese pearl divers in

the Pacific, who were interned by the Australian government. Following General MacArthur's

advice, the Australian government consistently refused to repatriate the Japanese pearl divers, on

the grounds that they possessed "vital military information" on the territorial waters of

Australia.[115] Surprisingly or not, MacArthur's views held significant sway over the Australian

government. Even when the British government asked Australia for the pearl divers release and

repatriation, the Australian government refused to do so unless MacArthur agreed.[116] Regardless

of the information the pearl divers might have had, the Japanese still expressed their preference

for a civilian exchange with the British before a third exchange with the Americans. Ultimately,

America's hesitancy to capitulate to Japan's demands contributed to the empire's growing

unwillingness to negotiate with the U.S. Special Division.

Although civilian exchanges halted after that, the deportation of Japanese Peruvians

continued, as in the case of Seiichi Higashide. Before transporting Higashide and his family to

the United States, U.S. officials confiscated their passports and ordered consulates to not issue

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[113] Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 93.
[114] Tomi Kaizawa Knaefler, *Our House Divided: Seven Japanese American Families in World War II* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 49.
[115] Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 100.
[116] Corbett, *Quiet Passages*, 101.

them any visas or other paperwork. Upon their arrival, the Immigration and Naturalization

Service (INS) ruled their entry as illegal because they lacked proper paperwork.[117] By a process

of America's own making, Higashide and his family became "alien enemies." Most Japanese

Peruvians were housed in three internment camps, all located in Texas: Kenedy, Seagoville, and

Crystal City.[118] Initially, Higashide was interned at the all-male camp in Kenedy, whereas his

family ended up in the family internment camp at Crystal City. Higashide described the men at

Camp Kenedy as primarily young native Peruvians. Single and high-spirited, these Japanese

Peruvians hoped to return to Peru, not Japan. Their pattern of resistance, in contrast to the

Japanese Latin Americans at Fort Sill, was more unconventional. "I do not know who conceived

it," Higashide recalled, "but at one point, it became popular among a group of internees to break

chinaware. Calling it a 'war of attrition,' they would deliberately drop dishes and cups on the

floor to shatter them after meals."[119] As absurd as it may sound, they reasoned that such actions

would decrease the enemy's material resources, thereby affecting America's ability to continue

the war. Growing irritated by their foolishness, Higashide warned them to stop. He tried to

appeal to the internees' sense of obligation to behave in a more civilized manner as

representatives of Japanese society. From that moment onward, the internees at Camp Kenedy

deemed Higashide as pro-American. His unpopularity, however, did not last long, as the INS

transferred him to Crystal City.

On July 2, 1943, Higashide reunited with his family at Crystal City, which offered its

residents a reasonably normal life. While material conditions varied, the camp generally

provided adequate provisions to survive, from the "cradle to [the] grave," as Higashide put it.[120]

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[117] Miyake, "Forsaken and Forgotten," 173.
[118] Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate*, 59.
[119] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 158.
[120] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 167.

Like Santo Tomás, the internees at Crystal City participated in a self-governing association,

composed of an elected general director and administrative officers. Children attended one of

three school systems—English, Japanese, or German—and interest groups were formed to

promote Japanese activities, such as tea ceremonies, flower arranging, and judo.[121] Higashide

marveled at the camp's wealth and resources. The internees at Crystal City also had access to the

news, and by 1945, Higashide believed that "anyone with clear eyes could see Japan's

impending defeat."[122] Nonetheless, a faction at the camp persisted in doubting American victory.

Confident in the invincibility of Japan's Imperial Army, this group denounced all news reports as

propaganda.[123] Higashide and his family were still interned in Crystal City when they learned of

Japan's final defeat.[124] Due to the national piety of the pro-Japanese faction, many of them

gladly went back to Japan in November and December of 1945. As Higashide explained:

> "They had received a thorough indoctrination in militaristic ideology in Japan and had
> been confined to a closed-off Japanese community in Peru…They rejected advice from
> parents and words of persuasion from their children and simply returned to Japan. There
> were a number of cases where parents and children were separated by differing beliefs.
> They, more than others, became true victims of the war."[125]

Like Higashide's family, Art Shibayama's family mostly managed to remain together through

deportation.

Shibayama's grandfather, a naturalized Peruvian citizen, was one of the first Japanese to

be interned by the U.S. and "repatriated" to Japan. Although the U.S. government used the word

"repatriation" when sending Japanese Peruvians to Japan, the term did not fit the situation. For

Japanese Peruvians who did not hold Japanese citizenship, "repatriation" should have referred to

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[121] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 170.
[122] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 172.
[123] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 172.
[124] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 173.
[125] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 173.

their return to Peru. For Japanese Peruvians who had never been to Japan, the voyage was not at

all a return, but rather a first-time visit. Unfortunately, Shibayama never saw his grandfather

again. Shibayama's family spent nearly two years at Crystal City's internment camp. Shibayama,

only thirteen-years-old then, recalled how his parents tried to keep their lives as normal as

possible. They never talked about protest or resistance, and whenever they addressed the

drudgery of camp life, they tended to say, "[T]here's nothing you can do about it…[I]t's just one

of those things."[126] The Shibayamas remained in Crystal City until 1946, two years before the

camp officially closed.

As the camps began to close, hundreds of internees—including the Higashides and

Shibayamas—fought deportation with the help of Wayne Collins, a fiery civil rights attorney

from Sacramento, California. Ultimately, Collins prevailed in federal court and secured an

agreement with the DOJ, allowing Japanese Peruvians to remain in the country on the condition

that they obtain employment. The Higashides and Shibayamas found work at a vegetable

processing plant in Cumberland County, New Jersey. There, employees worked twelve-hour

shifts for less than $3.00 a day.[127] Higashide, a previously successful merchant, found it difficult

to support his family of eight on the low wages he earned as an agricultural worker. He began to

wonder, "[H]ow did the U.S. government intend to compensate us [the Japanese Peruvians] for

our incalculable spiritual and material losses? How did it intend to make clear its responsibility

for taking such unjust and unreasonable actions?"[128] With no formal documentation of their entry

into the United States, the Higashides were essentially stateless. In 1952, Peru refused to readmit

Japanese Peruvian deportees. That same year, American immigration laws denied them

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[126] Art Shibayama, *Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story*, dir. Casey Peek, Progressive Films, 2003, YouTube, 00:14:10-00:16:34.
[127] Newman, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 82-83.
[128] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 179.

citizenship on the grounds of illegal entry. It took an act of Congress to recognize the legality of

Japanese Peruvians' entry into the United States. In 1954, "illegal entrants" from Central and

South America were officially given entry visas.[129] This freed Higashide and his family from the

lingering fear of deportation. After more than ten years of detention and hardship, the Higashides

became American citizens on August 25, 1958. While reciting the oaths of allegiance at the

Immigration and Naturalization Office in Chicago, Higashide became emotional. He recalled,

"The citizenship test had been only a minor obstacle, but as I looked back at the long and

difficult road we had traveled to be able to take that test, I was struck with deep emotions, and I

could not prevent tears from misting my eyes."[130] Although not absolute justice, the ability to

gain American citizenship ended the Higashides' period of indefinite uncertainty.

Whether under American or Japanese jurisdiction, internees struggled to live in

confinement. In January 1942, the Japanese rounded up American civilians in the Philippines for

internment. Twenty days later, the U.S. State Department agreed to take Japanese Peruvians

hostage for the purpose of facilitating American repatriation. The U.S. internment of Japanese

Peruvians aided the return of more than 3,000 American citizens—albeit, at the human cost of

holding more than 1,000 Japanese Peruvians without charge. Blocked by Peru and disinclined to

return to war-torn Japan, many Japanese Peruvians after the war were declared undocumented in

the United States. However, inspired by those who came before them, Japanese Peruvians

followed the time-honored American tradition of taking the U.S. government to court.

Conclusion

Former internees, including Higashide and Shibayama, expressed their profound

disappointment with the United States—a self-described city upon a hill. More so than other

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[129] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 223.
[130] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 224.

nations, Higashide expected the United States to consistently protect human rights. He felt

betrayed, however, by the U.S. Constitution and its inability to prevent wartime internment.

Likewise, Shibayama described his battle for justice as "a slap in the face."[131] The Civil Liberties

Act of 1988 provided $20,000 in redress to Japanese Americans interned during World War II.

While a triumph for Japanese American internees, the act excluded Japanese Latin Americans.

Only those who were U.S. citizens or permanent residents during the war were entitled to formal

apologies and monetary compensation. In response, Shibayama joined other surviving Japanese

Peruvians in a class action lawsuit against the U.S. government. Under the settlement reached in

1998, the court in *Mochizuki v. United States* (1998) ordered the DOJ to make reparations to the

Japanese Peruvians by means of an apology and payment of $5,000 each.[132] But because the

government's offer fell short of granting Japanese Peruvians reparations equal to that awarded to

Japanese Americans, Shibayama refused the offer and turned to international law to campaign

for equitable redress.[133]

  The U.S. internment of Japanese Peruvians deserves particular attention. It shows that

while anti-Asian sentiment contributed to both American and Peruvian actions, the most pressing

motivation was to facilitate the exchange of hostages for the purpose of protecting American

civilians—regardless of the cost to innocent outsiders. In contrast, the Peruvian government had

their own reasons for cooperating with the U.S. government in its deportation program. By the

time of World War II, Japanese industry presented an apparent threat to Peruvian opportunity. To

maintain popularity and reduce civil unrest, Peru's President Manuel Prado cooperated with

American officials and expelled as many Japanese as possible, regardless of their actual

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[131] Newton, "Sojourners, Spies and Citizens," 92.
[132] Mochizuki v. United States, 41 Fed. CL. 54 (1998).
[133] IACHR, Report No. 26/20, Case 12.545, Merits (PUBLICATION), Isamu "Art" Carlos Shibayama et al. v. United States, April 22, 2019.

citizenship. The motivations behind internment, however, differed from person to person, entity to entity. Before America entered the war, the Special Division sought to increase hemispheric security by means of Japanese Peruvian internment. As the war went on, other reasons emerged in support for their internment. After he received reports about the disturbing treatment of American internees at the hands of Japanese in the Philippines, General MacArthur expressed his grievances to the U.S. War Department. From there, the United States responded in part to the actions taken by the Japanese, interning and exchanging Japanese Peruvians for interned American civilians. Despite the breadth of literature on American internment in the Philippines, not much is known about the individual experiences of interned Japanese Peruvians in the United States. However, the eyewitness accounts of Yoshitaro Amano, Seiichi Higashide, and Art Shibayama offer valuable insight into the differing conditions of camp life. Yet, even in the best of conditions, it stands to reason that cooperating countries deprived Japanese Peruvians of their rights.

Rather than assess each person's guilt on a case-by-case basis, captors of Japanese Latin Americans viewed the internees as commodities suitable for human trade. Interned Japanese Peruvians were denied due process and equal protection as a consequence of total war. In that time of conflict, the government's primary function was to maintain order first and the law second. James Rowe, Assistant to Attorney General Biddle, admitted as much: "[T]he first requirement of the government was order. Law comes *after* order."[134] The internment of Japanese Peruvians should not be divorced from the rest of U.S. history. Like Allied victory, the United States paid a shocking price for the freedom of their interned citizens in the Far East.[135]

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[134] James Rowe, interviewed by Miriam Feingold, December 20, 1972, Earl Warren Oral History Project, University of California, Berkeley, (October 17, 2005), 38.

[135] William Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 3.

To facilitate the return of more than 3,000 American civilians, the U.S. government turned the

Japanese Peruvians into innocent casualties of war—a course at odds with a nation premised on

liberty and justice for all.

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"Now, What's One Story I Wanted to Tell You?": Oral History Exhibition Archives at the Chicago History Museum at the Turn of the 21st Century

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Abstract: Starting in the 1970s, American history museums have undergone a shift away from seeing themselves collections-focused historical societies acting as "temples to the past." In the face of broader political challenges—civil rights, increasingly multicultural urban audiences, and the "culture wars" of the 1980s, public historians have sought to reclaim their institutions' relevance by seeking to share their authority and mission with those "publics" they serve.

While secondary literature on public history has generally agreed that museums pulled off this shift—and museums themselves have touted successful exhibits and outreach—this essay uses a specific case study to complicate the narrative. The Chicago History Museum, a metropolitan history museum founded in 1856 as the Chicago Historical Society, turned to oral history as both a collecting and a community engagement practice in the 1990s and early 2000s. At a moment of museological transition, the museum sought to match its city's transition towards multiculturalism. This essay reads oral history archives created by the museum in a new light: within their material history as collections. I argue that the oral history archives of CHS's exhibition projects are valuable sources not just of the urban history the museum intended to capture but also the institutional history of public museums themselves. This method suggests new paths forward for understanding public history strategies and community history.

Introduction and historiography[1]

Starting in the 1970s, American history museums have undergone a museological shift from seeing themselves collections-focused historical societies acting as "temples to the past" to a newer, increasingly social mission. In the face of broader political challenges—civil rights, increasingly multicultural urban audiences, and the "culture wars" of the 1980s, public historians have sought to reclaim their institutions' relevance by seeking to share their authority and mission with those "publics" they serve.[2] While the American Association of Museums argued that "the values museums represent strike a responsive chord for people living in this time of enormous and accelerating change" in 1984, though, that public resonance did not come automatically.[3] Historians of museums write that museums had to fight against their own reputations as institutions founded to educate the public on their "authentic" and patriotic heritage—a reputation that audiences were increasingly distrusting.[4]

In this essay, I use an archive biography approach to offer a case study of one museum's strategy during this period of change. The Chicago History Museum, a metropolitan history museum founded in 1856 as the Chicago Historical Society, turned to oral history as both a collecting and a community engagement practice in the 1990s and early 2000s. As a museum at a moment of transition seeking to match a city at a moment of demographic transition towards

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[2] Catherine M. Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), 5.

[3] Commission on Museums for a New Century, "Museums for a New Century" (American Association of Museums, December 1983), 3.

[4] James B. Gardner, "Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public," *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (September 1, 2004): 11–21, https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2004.26.4.11.

multiethnicity and multiculturalism, this institution provides insight into the ways public history

as a field navigated new practices, to ambivalent success.

The Chicago Historical Society (CHS) was created in 1856 as a historical library and club

for an elite group of founders. As it has grown into its current incarnation, the Chicago History

Museum (CHM),[5] the museum has necessarily had to adapt to changing museological trends.

Through the latter half of the 20th century, CHS increasingly has focused in on urban history

rather than state and national; positioned itself as a community museum representing a broad,

diverse swathe of Chicago; and sought to create "blockbuster" exhibitions appealing to the

visitor- and member- based model of support that replaced a few wealthy donors.[6] From the

1980s through the 2000s, the museum's oral history work became a key part of this mission. At

the turn of the 21st century, the museum began conducting large-scale oral history projects as

part of its research process for new exhibitions. Starting in 1992, CHS collected oral histories in

four Chicago neighborhoods (Grand Boulevard/Bronzeville, Rogers Park, Pilsen, and East

Garfield Park) as part of the Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture project that later became the

Out of the Loop: Neighborhood Voices exhibition in 2001. In a contrast to the downtown

"Loop," these four neighborhoods reflected some of the most diverse community areas in the

city, including the historic South Side "Black metropolis" of Grand Boulevard/Bronzeville, one

of Chicago's most ethnically diverse North Side neighborhoods in Rogers Park, the historically

working-class and Latino West Side neighborhood of Pilsen, and the majority-Black West Side

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[5] The museum formally changed its name from the Chicago Historical Society (CHS) to the Chicago History Museum (CHM) in 2006. While nearly all oral history interviews covered in this paper were conducted before 2006 under the purview of CHS, the exhibits and project archives have had longer lifespans, which have extended into the institution's time as CHM. Throughout this paper, I refer to the institution as it was called at the time of a given record's creation or reuse.

[6] Catherine M. Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), 34.

neighborhood of East Garfield Park. Later, the museum formed a Teen Council of Chicago youth who spent three years interviewing narrators for the Teen Chicago exhibition that opened in 2004; the Teen Council members would also continue conducting interviews used in later, non-teen-focused exhibitions for CHM. These oral history projects generated manuscript collections now archived at CHM, including not only interview transcripts and recordings but also extensive supporting materials such as consent forms, prepared question lists, interviewer notes, and publicity materials.

For CHS, oral history was valuable both because of its product (historical knowledge and exhibits) and its process (interviewing and navigating relationships between the museum and Chicago communities). On the one hand, oral histories were key to the research process that recorded new aspects of urban history and fueled innovative new exhibits like Neighborhoods and Teen Chicago. These exhibits attracted new audiences to the museum, supporting CHS during a time of uncertainty in the museum field. On the other hand, committing to oral history projects in the first place signaled the museum's commitment to community partnerships and history. By highlighting Chicagoan community members as narrators of their personal stories, the museum actively negotiated its interpretive authority and sought to justify its role as a repository for diverse Chicago histories.

By examining these oral history collections holistically as an archival institution, I argue that the oral history archives of CHS's exhibition projects are valuable sources not just of the urban history the museum intended to capture during the turn of the 21st century, but also the institutional history of the public museum itself. I borrow the concept of "archival biography" from material historians, who have used it to understand the ways that the material culture of the archive is generated over time by the lived experience of people working on and being captured

by the archive.[7] These more focused biographies complicate institution-centered histories to

understanding archiving itself as a uncertain process. Records beyond and surrounding the

interviews themselves make visible a contested, trust-building process through which an elite

museum attempted to pivot towards community histories. They reveal a tension between the

medium of oral history and the medium of the archive, especially in how each tool of historical

knowledge makes claims to authority and authenticity. As CHS collected, mobilized, and

preserved oral histories, the archives captured ongoing museum negotiations about trust and

interpretation; examining the oral history archives as an institution complicates the success story

presented by the oral history-based exhibits.

The allure of the oral history archive

For CHS, turning to oral history was a strategic institutional decision, not a purely

academic and historiographical one. By the 1970s, trends in the museum field necessitated major

changes to CHS's direction. Funding was a major motivator. The Gilded Age Old Chicago

fortunes of industrial philanthropists and CHS founders like Potter Palmer and Robert

McCormick had passed to later generations who were less willing to direct their efforts towards

sustaining an elite historical club. Instead, CHS now had to rely on visitors and members as a

matter of institutional survival.[8] To distinguish itself from other museums, CHS increasingly

focused on Chicago's urban history, leveraging its access to the city and the specificity of the

niche in which it could produce new, publicized "blockbuster" exhibitions that would drive

ticketed attendance. It also had to appeal to a demographically shifting Chicago, as consultants

wrote in a 1983 study: "Chicago is now a black city… yet that fact of life is reflected neither in

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[7] John Randolph. "On the Biography of the Bakunin Family Archive." In *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 210.
[8] Lewis, 17.

the existing collections nor in present collecting strategies."[9] To attract increasingly diverse

Chicagoan communities as visitors and members and to limit the budgetary load of acquisitions,

CHS committed to creating exhibitions that reflected contemporary history and to collecting

strategically to support exhibition development in its 1984 Statement of Collecting Scope and

1989 Mission Statement.[10] This exhibition strategy was paired with a renewed emphasis on

outreach along three lines: increased publicity for exhibitions, expanded educational resources

and programs, and prioritized community engagement. Together, exhibitions and outreach built a

strategy to sustain CHS via more diverse attendance and engagement.

     At the same time, community history was on the rise museologically. Community public

history institutions, like the DuSable Museum founded on the South Side in 1961 by Margaret

Burroughs, created a rich legacy of Chicago racial history.[11] Grant institutions like the National

Endowment for the Humanities (established in 1965) and the Joyce Foundation in Chicago also

put increasing pressure on public history to follow academic history's move towards dealing

"directly with issues of pluralism" culturally, as the Joyce Foundation wrote in a 1992 call for

proposals for Chicago-area institutions.[12] These grants also became crucial to CHS solving its

funding problem. CHS framed its pivot towards community history as germane to its institutional

legacy of working for social change. As founded, CHS conceived of its goal as educating new

immigrants to Chicago and shaping the citizenry through history.[13] Despite the paternalistic slant

to this traditional institutional self-conception, the new 1980s mission that focused on

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[9] Lewis, 24.

[10] Lewis, 28.

[11] Tempestt Hazel, "Don't It Always Seem to Go: On the Loss and Capture of Black (Re)Collections," ed. Stephen D. Booth and Stacie Williams, *Loss/Capture* 1: The State of Black Cultural Archives, accessed February 24, 2023, https://losscaptureproject.cargo.site/Don-t-It-Always-Seem-to-Go-On-the-Loss-and-Capture-of-Black-re.

[12] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 104.

[13] Elena Gonzales, *Exhibitions for Social Justice*, Museum Meanings 25 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 35.

contemporary urban history retained the focus on a Chicago audience, now oriented towards

social *justice* specifically rather than social *change* more broadly.

Oral history projects seemed to fit well within the museum's new goals. They could be

collected locally by CHS staff; provide narrators and their networks a personal link to the

museum as an institution that would drive attendance and authority; and capture multicultural,

specific histories to support exhibits focusing on community history. During these decades, oral

history became increasingly valued for its sense of authenticity.[14] Narrators were privileged as

authorities on their own stories, told in their own voices, which aligned well with CHS's

strategic plan claiming that "the interpretation of history is too important to be left exclusively to

professional historians. CHS provides a physical and intellectual environment where everyone

who is interested in history… should have the opportunity to study the evidence of Chicago's

past and draw his or her own conclusions."[15] Technologically, the computer-driven laserdisc also

allowed oral histories to be brought into exhibitions in the 1980s through a reliable in-gallery

playback method that could also be made interactive, such as through a touch screen.[16] These

museological and historiographical trends would come together in an experimental new CHS

project, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture, in which the museum committed itself extensively

to oral history research and community engagement in its interpretive process.

Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture (1992–1999)

The Neighborhoods project's commitment to oral history ran deep, beginning with its

funding source. CHS had proposed the project as part of acquiring a 1992 Joyce Foundation

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[14] Carolyn Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 215.

[15] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 32.

[16] Selma Thomas, "Private Memory in a Public Space: Oral History and Museums," in *Oral History and Public Memories*, ed. Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, Critical Perspectives on the Past (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 89.

grant that committed CHS to collect new materials for the museum and archive focusing on a

multicultural, underrepresented group within museums, with the explicit collaboration of the

community group in the process of planning, implementation, and programming. Oral histories

and transcripts comprised interviews conducted in four neighborhoods (Douglas/Grand

Boulevard, Rogers Park/West Ridge, Pilsen/Little Village, and Near West Side/East Garfield

Park) as well as video- and audio-recorded community meetings during which committees of

community members and CHS staff made major interpretive decisions about the research and

exhibition. From the start, the research and oral history gathering was seen as crucial to the

project as a whole—in fact, the project had begun as primarily a documentation project but only

later, partway through the Douglas/Grand Boulevard planning, expanded into being primarily an

exhibition series.[17] Interactives, videos, and label text used the information gathered through this

oral history-based research process in the final exhibition.

The process of forming committees and gathering oral histories was carefully calculated

to align with the authority-sharing, progressive nature of the project. On the CHS staff side, the

museum made an effort to fill committees with non-curatorial staff (eg. designers and educators)

as well as curators who had traditionally held authority over exhibition planning; conducted

antiracism workshops and a brown-bag lunch series to equip staff with leadership and sensitivity

skills; and brought on outside academic advisor/coordinator Tracye Matthews, a Ph.D. candidate

in American history with experience in community organizing, to bolster the project's

organization.[18] On the resident side,[19] the museum worked to recruit committee members who

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[17] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 104.

[18] Lewis, 105.

[19] In this paper, I use "resident" and "community member" to refer generally to non-CHS-staff Chicagoans engaged in oral history projects. I use "committee member" and "narrator" to refer to specific roles in the process of oral history interviewing and exhibition development; "committee member" refers to those involved in the planning

were intended to attend community meetings that would cover all parts of the exhibition process, from suggesting initial themes to participating in oral history interviews to advertising the final exhibit.[20] The staff and residents combined into mixed committees for each of the four neighborhood projects, and many of the committee members became narrators of oral histories. A given oral history would start with a pre-written questionnaire of possible topics, then generate a recording and transcript along with release forms signed by the narrator (the resident who narrated their own life history), comments and note sheets written by the interviewer (CHS staff or students from Loyola University in Rogers Park)[21] immediately after the interview about the experience, and index sheets generated after transcription to create lists of topics covered, plus page numbers.[22] Overall, the process was intended to be highly participatory and highly documented.

Sharing interpretive authority was a major shift for CHS. Recording oral histories for the purposes of placing them in an exhibit confronted curators with the immediacy and authenticity of a real Chicago resident, talking about their own experience, shaped by their own interpretation and reflection.[23] This was compelling, but it also challenged curatorial staff. Decisionmaking committees had to make contact with organizations and individuals without previous relationships to CHS, coordinate meetings and interviews in neighborhoods CHS staff were

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process and community meetings, and "narrator" refers to someone interviewed for an oral history. Many committee members also became narrators of their own oral histories.

[20] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 107.

[21] Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture summary, 2002.0131.1, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society), ARCHIE.

[22] Ernest Gates checklist, November 5, 1997, 2002.131, Box 2, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

[23] Thomas, "Private Memory in a Public Space," 90.

unfamiliar with, abide by community members' recommendations for exhibit focus, and work within the constraints of what narrators were willing to discuss with museum interviewers.[24]

The museum worked extensively with community activists and academic urban historians to recruit oral history narrators and committee members, with varied rates of success. For example, CHS relied heavily on project coordinator Tracye Matthews and longtime staff archivist Archie Motley, who were both Black, in outreach with Douglas/Grand Boulevard organizations. Connecting with and utilizing the networks of "community gatekeepers" who were highly involved in grassroots organizations, such as Timuel D. Black, also became crucial—Black also became an oral history narrator for the project.[25] The outreach efforts enabled the oral history archive to be created in the first place—oral history requires narrators— but was still a fraught process. Where CHS had fewer connections, such as to the Orthodox Jewish, Jamaican, and Mexican communities in Rogers Park compared to the white communities, there were major gaps. Additionally, many narrators and community members were reluctant to fully share their experiences, limited by logistics (night jobs overlapped with scheduled meetings), language barriers (Latino participants cited feeling spoken over often), and discomfort with staff and other committee members.[26] CHS had to build trust before and during its oral history research process.

The manuscript collections capture this tension between the museum's outreach efforts and its critical historiographical efforts—between oral histories as unfiltered recollection and oral histories as public records. The production of oral histories relied on both narrators' and the

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[24] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 107.

[25] Timuel D. Black, a longtime resident of Bronzeville, was an African-American historian of Chicago and the US in his own right as well as an active participant in Black Chicagoan community organizer with ties to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Obama, among others. See Lewis, 106.

[26] Lewis, 109.

museum's willingness to "allow their private memories to become public history."[27] Prewritten

question lists for interviews included along transcripts in the archive expose the process of

historiographical interpretation that happened alongside simply recording historical facts.

Interviewers asked, "Why do you think people like Studs Terkel or the Chicago Historical

Society… are interested in interviewing you? What will you leave for posterity?"[28] and "What

message would you like the exhibition on the West Side opening at the Chicago Historical

Society on November 16, 1997 to convey to the public?",[29] pushing narrators not just to tell their

stories but to analyze them through the institutional lens of CHS. At the same time, CHS

interviewers left their own perspective in the archive via "interviewer's notes" sheets, at times

minimizing the value of narrators' history, such as one which argues, "I question the usefulness

of this tape for the CHS except for some isolated events, and even then, I would suggest some

verification. For me, though, it was a delightful and informative opportunity to sit and listen to a

woman that firmly believed that folks at the grass roots level could make a difference."[30] This

interviewer highlighted the personal perspective ("firm belief") of the narrator yet did not

acknowledge it as historically valuable. In the archive, the contrast between how narrators

historicized their stories and how CHS did—even within the same folder—creates a record of a

fraught process of authority sharing and history making.

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[27] Thomas, "Private Memory in a Public Space," 98.

[28] Studs Terkel was an oral historian and "guerilla journalist" widely known for his local radio program that aired oral histories with local Chicagoans. He worked closely with CHS, and today the oral history center bears his name, though he was not an interviewer for the Neighborhoods project. See Florence Scala interview, November 7, 1997, 2002.131, Box 2, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

[29] Florence Scala oral history questionnaire, November 7, 1997, 2002.131, Box 2, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

[30] Brenatta Howell Barrett interviewer's notes and word list, November 5, 1997, Box 2, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

In this contestation, CHS ultimately did not universally cede its interpretive authority. This is perhaps best highlighted by cases in which narrators discussed contemporary, controversial, "difficult histories." Asked by an interviewer, "We talked a little about the Black metropolis and… what kind of negative things made this neighborhood [Bronzeville/Grand Boulevard] possible?" narrator Timuel D. Black stated frankly, "That's racism you are talking about. You see, in that period of time, we knew, without anyone writing it into law, that if we came on the east side of Cottage Grove, you might get arrested."[31] But curators did not necessarily translate the archived oral histories, ostensibly key sources of research, into the exhibition. Douglas/Grand Boulevard curator Olivia Mahoney argued, "for the first go around of their history… I just didn't feel like we could get too in depth."[32] Topics including racism, gangs, and residents who made money in informal/illegal markets are captured in transcribed interviews, but this archival research did not make it to the exhibition.

CHS felt pressure to selectively use oral histories to celebrate multicultural neighborhoods in order to avoid losing the trust of narrators and community members ("*their* history"), but in doing so elided narrators' ability to interpret their own history. Selective mobilization of the archive points to a tension between oral history and archive as sites of historical meaning making: while proponents for oral history stressed its authenticity, that authenticity became trapped in archival structures and did not get publicly used. Archives' "strong documentary bias" treated oral histories as simply collections of facts and recollections that could be used to additively "augment written 'white' sources with recorded oral 'black' sources within old institutional frameworks" when the research phase ended and CHS staff took

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[31] Tim D. Black interview, February 1995, 2002.131, Box 1, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).
[32] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 110.

on more authority in the exhibit planning process.[33] The mismatch between what was archived and what was exhibited, therefore, pointed to a practice of regarding oral histories with the "status of sources… not really 'histories,' and they are consigned to archives"—narrators were not conceived of as oral *historians*, as their critical analysis of their neighborhoods was at times overwritten by CHS.[34] While the exhibit presented a rosier view of neighborhoods and the success story of the project, the material that was "consigned to archives" provides a more nuanced view.

The inexperience of CHS staff with community outreach and oral history, as well as the fragile trust of narrators, is also captured archivally by the consent forms filed alongside transcripts of interviews. These standardized forms are intended to constitute permission to record an interview and offer the narrator two options: granting CHS copyright and literary rights to their oral history for the Neighborhoods exhibition and future research center use, or retaining their own copyright to the recording and transcript. In many Neighborhoods cases, oral history interviews were fully conducted and transcribed but are rendered unreproducible and un-digitizable by their consent form status—over half the archived transcripts lack a signature, have neither of the two options checked, or even lack a consent form altogether.[35] In cases of incomplete forms, such as those with the narrators' names but not their signatures, consent forms may have been presented before an interview, and a narrator may have declined to sign after the interview based on how the conversation developed.[36] These testify to ways in which CHS project staff did not fully succeed at building trust with narrators. At the same time, the inclusion

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[33] Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving," 225.

[34] Hamilton, 215.

[35] Oral History Interview Release and Donation Form, 1997, 2002.131, Box 1, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

[36] Peter Alter (former CHM archivist and current director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History at CHM) in discussion with the author, February 2023.

of these consent-form–less transcripts in the archival collection underscores some of the

reasoning for the lack of trust: at CHS, the research center is closely integrated with the museum

such that oral history consent forms are treated as deeds of gift.[37] For records of an oral history

interview to be retained by the research center without a confirmed signed consent form is, in a

way, a violation of this trust, preserving these narrators' stories with dubious permission.

Therefore, both the exclusion of material from archival authority (via transcripts and

questionnaires) and the inclusion of material in archival structures (via consent forms)

demonstrate contested, incomplete processes of trust and authority between CHS and oral history

narrators.

In the final Neighborhoods exhibit, compromises made in this authority-sharing process

did become visible. Reviews commented that "there was no attention to chronology, even within

the individual stations… Ethnic succession and multicultural diversity were clearly represented

throughout, but sequence and context—touchstones for historians—were entirely absent."[38]

Unsure of how to truly share authority over the historical narrative between narrators and the

CHS, the exhibit in some ways concluded by eliding any narrative at all, to the chagrin of

visitors and reviewers. From within the museum field, Margaret Burroughs of the DuSable

Museum initially expressed concern that Neighborhoods encroached on the mission and scope of

the DuSable. The DuSable, a community museum founded by longtime Chicagoan and arts

organizer Burroughs, had focused on African-American history and culture in Washington Park

since its founding (long before CHS staffers began attending their antiracism workshops for

Neighborhoods).[39] At the African American Museums Association conference, Burroughs

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[37] Alter interview, February 2023.

[38] Thomas J. Jablonsky, review of *Review of Neighborhoods: Keepers of the Culture*, by Scott La France et al., *The Public Historian* 19, no. 4 (1997): 94–97, https://doi.org/10.2307/3379510.

[39] Hazel, "Don't It Always Seem to Go."

expressed concern that CHS duplicated the mission and programming of the DuSable: "I fear

that when this project goes public it will be interpreted by the African-American community as

an instrument to undermine DuSable Museum, consciously or not."[40]

However, some compromises did move the exhibit and its archival afterlife towards a

more genuine process of sharing. Conflict with the DuSable partially resolved when the

Douglas/Grand Boulevard portion of the exhibit eventually moved to be hosted at the

Washington Park museum.[41] By viewing exhibition as an alternative process of archival use, the

relocation of the exhibit can be seen as an attempt at post-custodialism, transferring control of

the CHS's product into the geographical community of its narrators. Again, though, the

mismatch between what the museum thought of as "community" (the DuSable and its curators)

and what the archive actually reflected (the narrators themselves and the actual population of

Douglas/Grand Boulevard/Bronzeville) resulted in tension. While Irish Catholics, Protestants,

and German Jews had played roles in the area's history before 1920, the museological niche of

the DuSable led its curator Ramon Price to remove biographies of white early residents from its

version of Neighborhoods, indicating that local control did not necessarily include a commitment

to multiculturalism or to community as geographically defined.[42] This exposed the

constructedness of a CHS commitment to "community" histories—because the Neighborhoods

project had taken for granted that neighborhood geography, rather than race, faith, or any other

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[40] African American Museums Association president John Fleming drew attention to the material consequences in terms of funding and the relative visibility of community museums in the eyes of major grant foundations, noting, "I think it's a shame that a large mainstream museum can go to a foundation or large corporation and get $1 million to do a black history or black art exhibit, while we go to the same people and somehow they don't think we can do the job the mainstream museum can." CHS received $175,000 each from the Joyce Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation across the project. See Charles Storch, "Museums in an Ethnic Turf Battle," *Chicago Tribune*, September 14, 1994.

[41] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 112.

[42] Lewis, 112.

axis of self-organization, would define "communities," the "community archive" of oral histories in fact did not necessarily represent either what the local museums or the narrators themselves considered their communities—something the archive was ill-equipped to handle except by further removal of material.[43]

Ultimately, the oral history project conducted for Neighborhoods generated an exhibit that was broadly well-received and a model of authority sharing that CHS would apply to future projects into the 2000s. The museum forged ongoing connections with community organizations like the DuSable as well as individual narrators across the city. However, the oral histories themselves resist the exhibit's more triumphal "multicultural" narrative in a way most visible in the archives, in places where personal narratives and voices contrasted most with the organizational structures of archiving—unsigned consent forms, contrasts between questionnaires and interview evaluations, and collapsed collections.

Teen Chicago (2001–2005)

CHS would continue to commit itself to oral history-based exhibitions following the Neighborhoods model. The next major development in its authority-sharing efforts, as mediated by oral histories, came in the form of Teen Chicago. This exhibit would focus on gathering histories of teen life throughout the 20th century by engaging a Teen Council of 15 Chicago high school students. Many elements from Neighborhoods were retained: the Teen Council echoed the community committee model, the museum planned to conduct oral histories as the research base for the understudied history of teen life and historical impact, and Neighborhoods project coordinator Tracye Matthews even returned to CHS for the project.[44]

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[43] Jarrett M. Drake, "Seismic Shifts: On Archival Fact and Fictions," *Sustainable Futures* (blog), August 20, 2018, https://medium.com/community-archives/seismic-shifts-on-archival-fact-and-fictions-6db4d5c655ae.
[44] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 136.

At the same time, Teen Chicago's emphasis on teens as its object of historical research represented an appeal to a different key constituency CHS sought to attract to the museum. New CHS president Lonnie G. Bunch wanted CHS to work closely with teachers and see itself as an educational institution. He brought previous experience working on teen projects in New Jersey and California, as well as a reputation as a nationally respected museum professional.[45] Across the museum field, teens were increasingly seen as crucial audience members: museums that had emphasized attracting young children and families wanted to keep those visitors as they aged, and museum professionals saw youth as a source of fresh perspective and cultural relevance.[46] However, "we had zero teenagers visiting the Chicago History Museum on their own," said project director Marie Scatena, so "we had a mandate to do a lot of programming."[47] Teen Chicago would fulfill that mandate. Framing the project as educational programming dramatically changed how much authority the museum was willing to delegate to the community members involved in the process of building the oral history archive.

Teen Chicago built on early attempts at including teens in interpretive authority that had begun in Neighborhoods. For the Douglas/Grand Boulevard project, coordinator Tracye Matthews brought in local companies Street-Level Video and Live Wire Youth Media Video, which recruited a dozen teens in each of the four neighborhoods to interview residents and edit interviews for video documentaries played in the exhibit.[48] Involving teens in editing was

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[45] Bunch had previously been associate director for curatorial affairs at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History before joining CHS in 2001, where Teen Chicago was largely seen as his project. His training in African American history and emphasis on the public aspect of community work positioned him as a progressive and experienced curator-historian.

[46] Deborah F. Schwartz, "Dude, Where's My Museum?: Inviting Teens to Transform Museums," *Museum News*, October 2005, 36.

[47] Amy M. Tyson, "Working to Connect: Oral Histories of Illinois Public Historians at the State Bicentennial," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1998-)* 111, no. 1–2 (2018): 157, https://doi.org/10.5406/jillistathistsoc.111.1-2.0152.

[48] Street Level Youth Media, OMM.D.1.S5–S6, Box 1–6, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Video Archives (Chicago Historical Society).

intended to bring them in early in the process and encourage them to think critically and

historiographically, exposing editorial decisions made in the exhibit.[49]

However, a transcript of a student training interview archived alongside other oral

histories showcases the inexperience of the Neighborhoods teen videographers and their teachers

via a constantly revised and rerecorded interview. Asked, "What are the problems the

neighborhood will have to deal with to change for the better?" a teen narrator begins their

answer, "Oh, for number one, gangs. Change gangs for the… That's what we really need to do.

'Cuz the gangbangers, they just gettin' out of hand," before being corrected by the (fellow teen)

interviewer, who repeats the question and adds, "Tyrone, try to say it this way. Try to say, I think

the neighborhood would be a better place if there weren't gangs, whatever."[50] These archival

transcripts capture teens unsure of how much of their voice to present to the museum and to the

archive, revising their testimony ("try to say it this way") mid-interview to erase both informality

("they just gettin' out of hand" becomes "I think the neighborhood would be a better place") and

personal viewpoint ("That's what we really need to do" becomes the more passive "if there

weren't gangs"). While the mission to engage youth in all stages of the exhibit remained

important, the student transcripts reveal how much work was needed to improve the process of

doing so at CHS.

In the Teen Chicago project, on the other hand, authority-sharing *became* CHS's goal, as

much as or more than any future use of the oral histories. This sought to improve upon the

previous teen videography process. Rather than seeing recruitment of the advisory committee as

just a prerequisite to oral history gathering, as in Neighborhoods, forming and training the Teen

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[49] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 113.

[50] Student interviews transcript, 1995, 2002.131, Box 2, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society), 2.

Council became in itself a form of engagement with teens across the city. Project director Marie

Scatena's selection considered "race, ethnicity, socio-economic, and academic achievement

levels and geographical backgrounds, skills, talents, interests, and individual personalities" and

explicitly saw this diversity as key not just to reflecting Chicago but also capturing energetic

youth perspectives.[51]

Facilitating Teen Council was also seen as educational programming by CHS. The

program was framed in terms of direct benefits to teen participants: financially, the museum paid

its council members; socially, it offered them museum space to meet, socialize, and work with

each other; and educationally, it offered teens ongoing training and authority to practice the skills

they gained. Teen Council member Claire Elderkin noted that CHS coordinators did not shy

away from allowing teens to genuinely disagree with the museum and each other over issues of

authority and interpretation: "Arguments between members of the Teen Council erupted almost

daily over race, sexuality, religion, the war in Iraq, gentrification, and the purpose of art, but we

learned to respect each other's opinions… these 14 amazing friends… have changed the way I

look at the world."[52] This was a stark contrast to the way CHS had blunted the impact of

narrators' more controversial comments, especially on race and gentrification, in Neighborhoods.

CHS saw itself as successful in the Teen Council process if it could use the museum's resources

and experience as an educational institution to foster intellectual change in the teens. This shift of

focus, centering the community participants, allowed the museum to be open to genuine

disagreement and authority contestation—teens were in some ways expected to be combative.

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[51] Linda D'Acquisto and Marie Scatena, "K-12 Curators: What Kids Learn by Designing Exhibitions," *Exhibitionist*, Fall 2006, 42.

[52] Claire Elderkin, "Museum Notes: Coming of Age," *Museum News*, August 2005, 14.

In Teen Chicago, the community members (teens) became interviewers, rather than narrators, in the oral history process. This was a shift from Neighborhoods, in which the community members on advisory committees had engaged with the oral history portion of the project, but primarily as narrators (interviewees). CHS invested substantially in Teen Council's professional development. They gained background knowledge from invited speakers, participated in a long process of oral history training that started by practice interviewing each other and CHS employees before branching out to volunteers and community members, and were trusted throughout to work as equals with adult CHS staff.[53] Crucially, being interviewers also meant that the teens were acting as history makers. They participated in intergenerational conversations with older narrators who had been teens in the 20th century, but the Teen Council were the ones who took on the authority of the museum and control in interviews, flipping assumptions about "ordinary people" as merely sources and academics/museums as sole interpreters in oral history archives.[54] CHS took on the risk of "asking a group of kids who didn't even have high school degrees to conduct detailed research," extending trust and authority to teens to represent the museum as oral historians.[55] Prepared by their training and confident in their own voices, Teen Council would conduct 100 oral history interviews with people who had been teenagers at any point in the 1900s, creating a diverse and comprehensive study of teen life in Chicago. These two major reframings of the oral history process—focusing on the advisory process as primarily educational and seeing the community participants as primarily interviewers of oral histories—placed Teen Council in a position of greater authority, skill, and trust vis-a-vis the museum.

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[53] Elderkin, 11.

[54] Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving," 216.

[55] Elderkin, "Museum Notes: Coming of Age," 11.

The manuscript archive of Teen Chicago captures a similarly negotiated, inexact process as in Neighborhoods, but in a way that emphasizes how that process—as a consequence of placing control in the teens' hands—was itself a goal of the project. Having already negotiated authority between themselves and the museum, Teen Council also had to find their place relative to narrators. In an extreme example, teens encountered challenges interviewing legendary oral historian Studs Terkel. The transcript captures Terkel deflecting students' questions, but teen interviewers, in turn, fluidly departed from their compiled questionnaire to follow up and generate real response and reflection from their narrator:

> R [Terkel]: I don't know what a teenager is. Is it thirteen, it's the beginning of it, is it not?
> Is it thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, what is a teenager? I still don't know…
> I [Interviewer]: It's the transition from childhood to adulthood.
> I: It differs for everybody. Everybody has different opinions.
> R: Yeah. I think it's a certain key period of blossoming, a key period of understanding…
> My life just flowed, one thing to another, accidents happened. There was no any one
> period in my life. I was going to the theater at the age of fourteen…[56]

Crucially, the educational framing of the project meant that this back-and-forth and rapport-building was embraced by both narrators and interviewers. Scatena noted that Terkel, off camera, praised the questions, and teens were excited they "*almost* got Studs to talk about his relationship with his father and his teenage dating experience."[57] Because the teens had some distance from the museum administration—they could genuinely occupy the role of youth who wanted to learn from older generations rather than museum staff seeking to extract narratives—they were not as obligated to "presume [friendship], nor… extend it on behalf of the museum," a dilemma faced by oral historians who are also balancing their roles as curators.[58] The transcripts instead provide

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[56] Studs Terkel oral history transcript, 2003, TER-147, TER-148, 2006.0161.1, Box 5, Folder 6, Teen Chicago Oral History Project Records Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society), 1-2.

[57] Alan H. Stein and Marie Scatena, "Studs's Place in Oral History Education," in *Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians: An Anthology of Oral History Education*, by Barry Allen Lanman and Laura Marie Wendling (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 26, https://worldcat.org/en/title/62281720.

[58] Thomas, "Private Memory in a Public Space," 99.

insight into how, for Teen Chicago, trust-building was embraced as a crucial part of producing the oral history archive and allowed into the interview recording itself.

Teen Council themselves are captured archivally through biographies. In a collection arranged alphabetically by first and last names, researchers encounter folders with biographies of Teen Council members among those folders containing the transcripts of oral histories they conducted. These biographies were self-written and capture the teens both as historians/museum workers playing key roles in the project and also as individuals with stories in their own right, such as one reading "Bakir is the resident web-guy of the Teen Council. He is a hard-worker who has enjoyed his time here at CHS and feels he has learned a great deal about teenagers and the city of Chicago. He was born in Sarajevo and left the country just before the war to come to Chicago."[59]

In some ways, this disrupts traditional conceptions of archival organization that would maintain records separately according to their creation—the biographies were originally administrative documents circulated among the Teen Council and in publicity materials, rather than being created during oral history interviewing. The intermixing also complicates future researchers' ability to distinguish interviewer from narrator at a glance. It is an arrangement choice that is un-archival in nature. What this arrangement underlines is the way in which the teen participants, not just the older-generation narrators, were prioritized as communities CHS sought to capture through the Teen Chicago project and its archive. Though given the interpretive authority of interviewers, they also were given space to tell their own stories in a way that may frustrate academic historians but that highlights the teens' own authorship. In this negotiation, the collection cedes some of the authority of orderly archival arrangement in favor

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[59] Bakir Bicakcic Teen Council member biography, 2001-2004, BIC-012, 2006.0161.1, Box 1, Folder 12, Teen Chicago Oral History Project Records Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

of bringing the content of the collection more in alignment with the meaning making methods of oral history: authenticity, first-person storytelling, and an acceptance of a kind of disorderly subjectivity.

Interestingly, the Teen Chicago archive also contains many re-interviews, in which narrators who had previously participated in oral history projects for the museum were interviewed again by Teen Council. This provided a clear comparison across oral history archival collections—for example, Timuel Black, who had been a key stakeholder and a narrator in Neighborhoods, contributed *two* more oral histories through Teen Chicago, one about his teenage life and one specifically about his work with Harold Washington, both conducted by teen interviewers.[60] Re-interviewed narrators were conscious of the goals of the project—they agreed to be re-interviewed because they were convinced of the educational value their testimony had to the teens both on the Council and who would visit the future exhibit—and made this clear through shifted focus in the oral histories themselves.

While the Neighborhoods interview of Timuel Black barely devotes a line to his high school life ("I went to Wendell Phillips High School, I went to Engle High School, and I went to DuSable where I graduated. But I came back to teach later at DuSable"),[61] notes by his teen interviewer, Ari Fulton, make it clear he emphasized parts of his life that would be relatable to his teenage interlocutor and indirect audience through the exhibit. In Fulton's handwritten index of the interview, Black's racial activism comes from a family and school connection: "Remembers talking about civil rights issues. Family came to Chicago for a better life for their children. Voteing was emporten to his parents. Teachers most racesist then students" (spelling

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[60] Stein and Scatena, "Studs's Place in Oral History Education," 28.

[61] Tim D. Black interview, February 1995, 2002.131, Box 1, Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture Project Oral Histories and Transcripts Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society), 2.

from original).[62] The Teen Chicago archive and its explicit educational goals resist the narrative

that archives oral histories are always spontaneous. While no less valuable, they demonstrate

awareness by both returning narrators and CHS as an institution of the limits of the oral history

archive. Rather than each interview being expected to "fill the gaps" in historical knowledge by

capturing more new "voices" (narrators), the use of re-interviews indicates CHS's awareness of

how each project and its goals could shape the historical knowledge gained in each oral history,

even from the same narrator. Teen interviewers could learn something new even from someone

who had previously participated in oral history projects; therefore, the museum and exhibit could

gain something new. In other words, re-interviews embrace the possibilities and limitations of an

oral history archive that is constantly constructed and revised ("re-figured") rather than

inherently authentic simply because the medium is oral history.[63]

Teen Council continued participating in the project as it advanced from collecting oral

histories to creating the exhibit and surrounding programming. Because they as individuals and

the oral history archive as a source of knowledge were deeply embedded into the exhibition

project, the archive was extensively and creatively used throughout the lifetime of the exhibit.

For opening weekend, Teen Council members Ari Fulton and Claire Elderkin wrote a play,

Coming of Age, that used the oral histories as short monologues; narrators were invited to see

their stories performed by Teen Council members.[64] Opening weekend prioritized teens as the

audience, with teens allowed to view the exhibit even before CHS's member-only opening.[65]

Curatorially, CHS staff made extensive use of the interviews in label writing. Per curator Joy

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[62] Ari Fulton, Timuel Black interview index, May 31, 2003, BLA-013, 2006.0161.1, Box 1, Folder 14, Teen Chicago Oral History Project Records Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

[63] Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 10.

[64] Elderkin, "Museum Notes: Coming of Age," 14.

[65] Teens Only Kickoff Party promotional postcard, 2006.0161.1, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Teen Chicago Oral History Project Records Manuscript Collection (Chicago Historical Society).

Bivins, "the oral testimony gave many of the objects more weight. It can be difficult to make the artifacts of youth 'sing' because many of them can be commonplace."[66] And by pairing oral history recordings with spaces of comfort, like a couch and bed, from which to sit and listen, museum visitors were given the time and space in the exhibit gallery to genuinely absorb the narrators' testimony.[67] This way, both community use (in teen-led performances and events) and museological use (to animate artifacts) immediately mobilized the oral history archive. Where archives alone may not have been able to inherently engage communities, archival *use* drew upon the resources, space, and network of the museum to do so.

Conclusions

Neighborhoods: Keepers of Culture and Teen Chicago represented experimental projects that turned to oral history archives as part of CHS's research, outreach, and programming strategy at the turn of the 21st century. Materially, both projects revitalized the museum and raised its standing as an innovative public history institution. After Neighborhoods, CHS formalized its negotiated relationships via creating a Community Advisory Council and its emphasis on oral history through increased photo and video collecting. It addressed some of the issues of Neighborhoods in a 2001 exhibit, Out of the Loop, which reengaged some of the same community partners from Neighborhoods committees; but having gained more confidence in the CHS institution, narrators became more willing to "not use the oral histories as evidence to support a historical argument… instead, the voices become the argument itself" in an exhibit that more directly addressed gentrification, white flight, and class conflict.[68] Teen Chicago won

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[66] D'Acquisto and Scatena, "K–12 Curators," 44.
[67] Gonzales, *Exhibitions for Social Justice*, 66.
[68] Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*, 119.

prizes for exhibition process and product from the American Association of Museums,[69] generated a curriculum guide used widely by other teen oral history projects, and formed the model for the ongoing efforts of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History at CHM, which continues to hire teen oral historians for exhibition research projects.[70]

The exhibits' success meaningfully influenced CHM's institutional history and led the museum to continue prioritizing authority-sharing, youth engagement, and oral history after 2005. The oral history archives capture previously understudied histories—of Chicago neighborhoods after World War II and of Chicago teenage life across the 20th century. However, the archives also reflect the institutional negotiations that made the projects possible and in fact necessary for institutional survival. Answering the call that "the circumstances of the production of specific oral archives require close attention, subject as they are to many of the same processes of modification, selection and exclusion as the documentary record,"[71] this paper has examined a specific oral history archive in which the museum acted as creator, preservationist, processor, and researcher in one, providing a unique opportunity to think of archival creation and mobilization as closely linked. Not just the oral recordings but also the extensive supplementary material captured in an oral history project—transcripts, notes, consent forms, biographies—present a nuanced picture of the institution over time. They expose negotiations and tradeoffs made throughout the process of oral history projects at CHM, especially as the museum sought to define itself as a community institution through the resulting exhibits. Museum authority clashed with the "authentic" viewpoints CHS claimed to value in its oral histories. As narrators' private

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[69] Daniel Oliver, "Exhibition Competition: From the Winners: 'Teen Chicago' Chicago Historical Society," *Museum News*, October 2005, 54.

[70] Alter interview, February 2023.

[71] Hamilton, *Refiguring the Archive*, 10.

memories became public history through interviews, public oral historians were captured as part

of the fraught history of the museum in their own right.

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Heroes, Victims, and Future Citizens: Representations of French Children During World War I

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Abstract: The effects of total war society in France during World War I (WWI) dramatically altered the daily lives of both adults and children, witnessing increasing levels of patriotic rhetoric, wartime propaganda, and anti-German sentiment. Children were often made the focal point of this propaganda, as they represented the future of the nation. As such, three specific representations of children emerge from WWI propaganda in France: the heroic child, the victimized child, and the malleable future citizen. Some of these representations were depicted in propaganda meant for children specifically, while others were depicted in propaganda meant to mobilize adults in the name of children. Regardless of whether the propaganda was made for children or simply manipulated their images to mobilize adults, these representations established the only acceptable roles that children could fit into in society during the war. By analyzing collections of photographs, posters, newspaper articles, children's literature, memoirs, and school assignments from 1914 to 1919, it is possible to examine the development of these representations of children in French media during WWI and, to an extent, judge whether or not children understood themselves as fitting into these roles.

Shortly after it began, World War One became a "total war" which seeped into all the crevices of society and dramatically changed daily life for both children and adults in France. Anti-German sentiment heightened in a nation where it already existed following the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), leading to portrayals of Germans as one barbaric and sub-human entity.[1] Schools in France distanced themselves from the late nineteenth-century trend of pacifist and socialist patriotism, instead fully embracing war rhetoric and putting it at the center of education.[2] Patriotism spiked as French media stressed the importance of contributing to the war effort, mass-producing posters, postcards, and literature, among other things, for public consumption. Children formed a central theme of this wartime propaganda in France, having the dual position of consumer and subject, and so sat at the heart of much cultural mobilization for both civilians and combatants.[3] Representations of children appeared on posters, in newspapers, on postcards, and in a host of other forms, reminding French men of why they fought—a good Frenchman would protect his country from the Germans to give his wife and children a safe, happy future. For women, French children's representations functioned as a call to humanitarian aid—both from within France and internationally—as the number of French orphans rose throughout the war. Women mobilized as members of societies that lent aid to suffering children, especially from the decimated region of

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[1] Neil Harris and T. J. Edelstein, *En Guerre: French Illustrators and World War I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2014), 27.

[2] Galit Haddad, "Chapitre 10. 1914-1918 : Un « défaitisme » des enseignants de l'école républicaine ? Le pacifisme des instituteurs et institutrices français face à la guerre," in Les Écoles dans la guerre : Acteurs et institutions éducatives dans les tourmentes guerrières (xviie-xxe siècles), ed. Jean-François Condette, Histoire et civilisations (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2016), 233.

[3] Manon Pignot, "Children," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, ed. Jay Winter, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 31.

Alsace-Lorraine, who felt the effect of war stronger than anywhere else in France.[4] In the later

years of the war, the philanthropic groups started in France in response to images of victimized

children would encourage American counterparts, such as the Children's Bureau of the

American Red Cross.[5] These American children's associations worked alongside their French

counterparts and generated their own French children's media to send home, encouraging even

more philanthropy.

French children became audiences for propaganda and patriotism, absorbing ideologies

and information on war taught to them in media designed for their age groups. Often, this media

had the end goal of encouraging enlistment of the oldest children upon reaching the military age

requirement, or of pushing younger and/or female children to contribute in other ways than

actual warfare.[6] War discourse recycled spaces and materials used in pre-war France to define a

specific place for children in society, turning schools, literature, children's magazines, and toys

into "vectors of distribution" for patriotic and pro-war sentiment.[7] The French school system

remade itself during wartime, with new curriculums and lesson plans specifically designed to

foster patriotism and justify the war to its young pupils.[8] Most homefront mobilization of

children occurred in the classroom, where students knitted for soldiers, created packages to send

to the front, and raised money for the war.[9]

From the propaganda involving French children during WWI—as subject or as

consumer—three distinct categories of children emerge: the heroic child, the victimized child,

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[4] Olivier Faron, *Les enfants du deuil: orphelins et pupilles de la nation de la Première Guerre mondiale, 1914-1941*, Textes à l'appui (Paris: Découverte, 2001).

[5] *The Fatherless Children of France, Inc* (New York: The Fatherless Children of France, Inc., 1919).

[6] Pignot, "Children," 34; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 2nd ed. (Paris, France: Armand Colin, 2004), 19.

[7] Pignot, "Children," 33.

[8] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 24.

[9] Pignot, "Children," 34 ; Alamy Limited, "Cartoon, French Classroom Scene, with Girls Knitting Socks for Soldiers at the Front during the First World War. Date: 1915 Stock Photo - Alamy," accessed September 27, 2022; "Aux Elèves de Nos Lycées et Collèges... | Gallica," accessed September 20, 2022.

and the future citizen. The representations of these varying "types" of children targeted different audiences for different purposes, with the manipulation of children being the underlying thread connecting them all. The first representation is the "heroic child": patriotic, desperate to fight for the Fatherland, even occasionally running away from home to enlist illegally. The heroic child encompasses the height of bravery and valor. Next, there is the victimized child—children left without family members or necessities such as food or shelter, whose suffering called for urgent intervention. The propaganda centered on this representation of the French child led to philanthropic associations who in turn created more of this media, their influence reaching as far as the United States and inspiring joint American-French children's missions. Finally, the third representation of children comes in the form of the malleable future citizen. Not yet considered citizens in their own right, French children were considered "blank-slates," ready to be molded through propaganda at home and at school into citizens who would respond to the needs of France.[10]

This three-part typology may not be applicable to every piece of child-related propaganda generated in WWI France, but it gives a general idea of how adults viewed children in a wartime context. Propaganda came in many different forms and filtered into all areas of daily life, and with children occupying a central place in society as "figures of innocence, symbols of home and future," it only makes sense that they had an equally central place in this propaganda, both as subjects and recipients.[11] These three representations were also not mutually exclusive; by layering these representations on top of each other with different amounts of emphasis on one or another, the creator of a propaganda piece could achieve an effect that would not be possible when using just one. What is harder to deduce, however, is how well French children themselves

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[10] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 23.
[11] Pignot, "Children," 31.

identified with these representations. Would they view themselves, and the war, in the same way as did adults? Or did they have a different understanding of their experiences and their roles in wartime? Perhaps they would have identified with one of these three representations and rejected the others, depicting themselves in some other, as-yet-unknown category.

Most work on the experiences of French children during WWI comes from two French historians: Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Manon Pignot. The two have generated much scholarship on the roles of children in wartime, with analyses of children in combat, changing family dynamics in wartime, and nationalistic sentiment within literature and other media. One of the best comprehensive studies of the lives of French children during WWI that currently exists, Audoin-Rouzeau's book *La Guerre des enfants: 1914-1918* (*The Children's War: 1914-1918)*, discusses the adult expectations of children in contributing to the war effort, as well as how they sought to encourage this at home, at school, and through child-directed content such as magazines and books.[12] His other works touch on these ideas as well, with specific focus given to the education system, child heroes, and children's overall interactions with their society. Pignot, similarly, has written a great deal on French children during wartime. Some of her works analyze the experiences of adolescent combatants on the front.[13] Pignot, like Audoin-Rouzeau, has authored an impressive comprehensive work based on archives of children's drawings, letters, diaries, memoires, and oral histories to examine the experiences of children as historical agents during WWI.[14] This rich collection of primary sources allow her to thoroughly examine how children experienced war through their own artistic and written expressions; however,

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[12] All translations are my own unless noted.

[13] Manon Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre: des adolescents au combat, 1914-1918* (Paris: Anamosa, 2019) ; Manon Pignot, "« Les Enfants Ne Vont Pas Au Front »: Les Combattants Juvéniles de La Grande Guerre," *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 261 (2017): 31–47.

[14] Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre*, Univers historique (Paris: Seuil, 2012).

caution must be taken with any analyses of memoires and oral histories documented after the war, as memories can alter over time as children grow into adults and time separates them from their past experiences. A few other historians have contributed to the field as well, such as Bérénice Zunino, who describes wartime children's literature, and Olivier Faron's writings on the status of war orphans; however, the bulk of the research on French children's daily lives during WWI comes from Audoin-Rouzeau and Pignot.

While these two historians have made notable progress in the documentation of the French child's experience during WWI, Audoin-Rouzeau and Pignot do not thoroughly analyze how propaganda categorized the experience of childhood during wartime through the creation of rigid and socially accepted roles for children. Children's lives altered quickly once the war broke out (at school, at home, and in society at large) and continued on this new, conflict-centered path through to the end of the conflict, but the varied avenues of *how* this occurred needs more study.[15] This paper seeks to examine the use of propaganda by adults in WWI France to create distinct roles for children in society (the hero, the victim, the future citizen), and how children's experiences reveal their own understanding of their place in society. The categorical representations of children in propaganda give us the adult perspective of childhood in wartime, while studying children's experiences can give us insight as to whether they understood themselves in this same way, or if they had a different understanding of their roles during the war. A variety of primary sources including posters, postcards, children's books, newspapers, and photographs can be used to investigate these questions and add to the existing scholarship on the topic.

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[15] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 18-22 ; Pignot, "Children," 29.

The Heroic Child

Brave, patriotic, and eager for a turn to fight, the heroic child appears often in both adult and child-focused propaganda pieces from WWI France. The heroic child essentially encompassed any child who made contributions and/or sacrifices during the war, whether on the homefront (as most cases were) or in actual conflict. For adults, child heroes functioned as symbols representing the nation fighting for survival, the small fighting for a larger whole.[16] Propaganda pushed forth the idea of a war for the defense of children, an idea which resonated with soldiers who had left children behind.[17] By employing imagery of children as war heroes themselves, adults seeing this propaganda remembered their cause for fighting and the influence their actions would have on nurturing the next generation. Before 1914, French adults sought to separate children from the topic of warfare, considering it "unchristian" to stir hatred among children and expose them to such brutality.[18] But the total war society generated by WWI changed this, raising the stakes so high that anything and everything could be justified, including the use and heroization of children in propaganda.

Since children's mobilization happened most often on the homefront, propaganda reflected this. For example, posters appeared in schools that called on youth to raise money and gold for the national bank. One poster, reading "Bring your gold to the Bank of France: To the students of our high schools and middle schools" demonstrates the association of children's war contributions with heroism.[19] The poster asks youth to raise gold donations from friends, family, and even their schoolteachers to give to the national bank to help fund the war. At the end of the poster's appeal, it states "The gold that one puts into the Bank of France resembles the harvest that your arms will have brought out of our fields: it's a strength and a weapon. You will be

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[16] Pignot, "Children," 31.
[17] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants : 1914-1918*, 17.
[18] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 186.
[19] Translated from original. "Aux Elèves de Nos Lycées et Collèges... | Gallica," accessed September 20, 2022.

proud one day to have been, you too, among the workers of Victory."[20] The use of war-centric

language in this poster clearly ties children's donations to the heroism of the battlefield, claiming

that children who participate will take part in French victory. Another example of the heroization

of children's homefront contributions can be seen in images of children knitting or making

parcels to send to soldiers. One cartoon from *La Baïonette* (The Bayonet)*,* a magazine distributed

to French soldiers, shows a classroom full of little girls knitting. One girl stands up to say that

another child has accused her soldier of having big feet, due to the size of her knitting.[21] In the

bottom-left corner, one girl writes a letter to a soldier which reads, "Dear Defender of the

homeland." While this cartoon was primarily meant to amuse soldiers, one can see how

ingrained heroic child rhetoric and imagery is through the chosen classroom setting, where the

students work on their knitting and letter writing with looks of intense determination.

Propaganda pieces like these were abundant, came in many forms, and always stressed the role

of the child as a hero.

For children, propaganda about the heroic child was a more stylized form of that for

adults.[22] Less of an abstract symbol of heroism composed of all the sacrifices and contributions

made by children, the heroic child in children's propaganda often appeared as an actual figure

doing heroic deeds; children did not mobilize by observing their own sacrifices and

contributions, but by modeling themselves after an idealized figure. The most common hero

figures come from children's literature, meant as role models and patriotic emblems for children

rather than examples of their actual compatriots. One of these role model heroes from children's

literature, was Boby, the young protagonist of the book *En guerre!* by Charlotte Schaller in 1914.

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[20] "Aux Elèves de Nos Lycées et Collèges... | Gallica."
[21] Alamy Limited, "Cartoon, French Classroom Scene, with Girls Knitting Socks for Soldiers at the Front during the First World War. Date: 1915 Stock Photo - Alamy," accessed September 27, 2022.
[22] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 12.

In the story, he, his two sisters, and the neighborhood children act out the first few months of the

war, mobilize their toy soldiers, and participate in key moments from the first year of warfare

such as the Battle of Liège and the Battle of the Marne. On the final page, children chant "Vivent

les alliés! Vive la France! [Long live the Allies! Long live France!]"[23] This book fit into a larger

trend of children's books published during the war which showed young French children such as

Boby participating directly in the war, using toys and other objects familiar to children to

successfully destroy the German threat.[24]

Children's publications also played into this representation by publishing comments by

young readers where they expressed a desire to fight, to kill Germans, and to be like their fathers.

A demand to enlist by nine-year-old Henri Lacorre received the following response from French

President Raymond Poincaré, published in the children's periodical *Mon Journal* (*My*

Newspaper) on May 8, 1915: "The patriotic desire expressed by Henri Lacorre cannot,

unfortunately, be realized, the law does not permit enlistment before the age of 17. But it is

already serving France to be a well-behaved and hard-working child."[25] Following children's

comments like this one with a statement that the reader was too young to fight, but praising them

for their zeal, these publications made it clear that a child could be a hero simply by wanting to

go to war, even if they could not actually do so. The heroic child of WWI ultimately became the

newest incarnation of the mythical figure of the "child hero" which had appeared in nearly every

conflict in France since the murder of child soldier Joseph Bara in the French Revolution.[26]

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[23] Neil Harris and T. J. Edelstein, *En Guerre: French Illustrators and World War I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2014), 111.

[24] Bérénice Zunino, "Children's Literature" (Freie Universität Berlin, August 2014), 3-5.

[25] Translated from the original French. Manon Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre: des adolescents au combat, 1914-1918* (Paris: Anamosa, 2019), 83.

[26] Pignot, "Children," 31; Zunino, "Children's Literature"; Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 185.

Real child combatants were not common throughout France in WWI, but they did exist, and their legacies appeared in different types of heroic child propaganda until the end of the war. As French society developed acceptable roles for children along traditional gendered lines, boys were encouraged to think of themselves as combatants-to-be, separated from enlistment solely by how many years were left before their seventeenth birthdays. Age, however, did not stop children from requesting—or even demanding—the right to enlist. Similar to Lacorre's case, political leaders and army commanders received numerous requests to enlist from adolescents and children from the very start of the war.[27] Many of these requests made their way into newspapers and magazines such as the *Ladies Home Journal*, demonstrating the heroism of youth, and reinforcing in the minds of the public a representation of heroic childhood that influenced how adults understood children's place in wartime society.[28]

From the many adolescents desiring to enlist in the war came a smaller group of boys who took matters into their own hands and actually attempted to join the military through illegal means. Propaganda and war culture in schools, at home, and in the public sphere had taught them that children had an obligation to recognize and participate in the sacrifices made by adults in a war meant to defend their generation, in order to be worthy of being called French.[29] For the adolescents who tried to, and sometimes succeeded in, illegally joining the military, their enlistment served as this recognition and participation in war sacrifices. Usually between the

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[27] Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre*, 84.

[28] "Roger Lang Is Only 14 Years Old but Even so, He Wants to Fight for France, and He Wants to Avenge His Mother Who Died from Fright One Night during a Bombardment, and His Father Who Went to the Front in 1914 and Has Never Come Back. The Boy Has Been Adopted by the [...] Thanks to the Money Which They Have Sent Him He Will Go to a Trade School and Then He Will Be Able to Support His Little Brother Pierre. For the War Will Surely Be over before Roger's Class Is Called, and There He and Pierre Can Go Back to Lorraine, Which Is Their Home Even If Their House Is Destroyed, and Even If the Father and Mother Are Both Gone. The American Red Cross Administers the Funds for the Maintenance of All the Children Adopted by the American Troops," image, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, accessed September 27, 2022.

[29] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 12 ; Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 16.

ages of fourteen and sixteen years old, child combatants mainly consisted of runaways (some

with family already looking for them), most of which were spotted as soon as they tried to

enlist.[30] The contemporary pedagogue Marie Hollebecque recorded around 127 cases of

voluntary departures in Paris alone in 1916—a low number compared to the number of

schoolchildren in Paris at the time, but still amounting to roughly ten attempts to run away and

enlist per month, on average.[31] The adolescents who successfully joined the military

accomplished this through falsifying their names and dates of birth, as well as confusing

recruiting officers by their appearances; while legally still minors, some of these young

combatants no longer looked like children and were hard to distinguish from the youngest

legally-enlisted soldiers.[32]

Not much information exists on French child combatants from WWI, as the majority of

those who successfully made their way into the armed forces needed to keep their illegal

participation a secret; however, the few who society knew of became the ultimate embodiment of

the Heroic Child figure and appeared in propaganda photos, articles, and books across the nation.

Gustave Chatain, a fourteen-year-old boy from Fontainebleau, was one of these emblematic child

soldiers, deemed even more heroic than other soldiers due to their dedication to the war at such a

young age. He ran away from home in 1914 and followed French troops into battle. Chatain

fought in the First Battle of the Marne and the First Battle of the Aisne, suffered gunshot

wounds, and took two German soldiers prisoner.[33] Finally, a ministerial order in 1915 forced his

return to his family; for his service, he received the rank of corporal and the Croix de Guerre

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[30] Pignot, "Children," 32.
[31] Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre*, 88.
[32] Pignot, "Children," 32; Pignot, *L'appel de la guerre*, 96-104.
[33] Union républicaine (France) Auteur du texte, "La Dépêche de Brest : Journal Politique et Maritime ["puis" Journal de l'Union Républicaine 'Puis' Journal Républicain Quotidien 'Puis' Quotidien Républicain Du Matin]...," Gallica, September 23, 1915.

(War Cross), a French military decoration awarded for feats of bravery.[34] Chatain's story

resonated with a population that judged individual worth by service to the state, and newspapers

such as *La Dépêche de Brest* (*The Brest News*) and *La Lanterne* (*The Lantern)* printed his story

for readers throughout the nation, consistently using strong language that emphasized his bravery

and heroism: "In the Golden Book that France is composing at the moment, there will be pages

for everyone and the children themselves will be honored," opens *La Lanterne* in its article about

Chatain.[35] The article goes on to describe his campaign as "brilliant" and states that "we all love

this brave kid" after giving Chatain's own detailed account of his war experience.[36] To readers of

this newspaper and the others which printed his story, Chatain and his fellow youth combatants

were the incarnations of the child hero and demonstrated the lengths to which all members of

society were willing to go for the nation, even those of the youngest generation.

As images and written accounts of real child combatants and enlistment-hopefuls won the

devotion of French adults and their continued allegiance to the concept of heroic childhood, the

majority of French children had a very different experience of the war. Children likely hoped to

become like the war heroes in the news, in their children's books, and on the front, but no

evidence exists to suggest that they understood their own experiences during wartime as heroic,

even though adults considered their smallest contributions and sacrifices to be so. In the daily

lives of children, heroic childhood propaganda was eclipsed by the amount of guilt and sacrifice-

based propaganda targeted at them at home and in schools. Many constituent texts by adults for

children pushed the idea that childhood gave the war its meaning, an idea reinforced by schools,

and created the unspoken rule that, if the war was *for* children, a lot could be asked of them

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[34] texte, "La Dépêche de Brest."

[35] texte, "La Dépêche de Brest"; "La Lanterne : Journal Politique Quotidien," Gallica, October 1, 1914.

[36] "La Lanterne : Journal Politique Quotidien," Gallica, October 1, 1914.

without complaint.[37] This specific war culture trained children to interiorize guilt, mobilize

through acts of goodwill, and constantly be aware of the sacrifices made in their name;

ironically, the acts of sacrifice and contribution French children made in their daily lives which

adults viewed as heroic, children viewed as the minimum requirements to be worthy of the

sacrifices in their name.

The Victimized Child

On the opposite side of the spectrum of children's propaganda rests the representation of

the victimized child, a child suffering from the terrible realities of war such as starvation,

occupation, injuries, and the loss of loved ones. With the pressures of rationing, the invasions of

German armies, and the disruption to family that came with the mobilization of 79 percent of

French men between the ages of fifteen and 49, nearly all French children from this period could

fall under this category in some way or another.[38] However, the bulk of this form of propaganda

derived from images and written accounts of children from the occupied regions of Alsace and

Lorraine, and fatherless or orphaned children throughout the nation. The representation of the

victimized child in propaganda targeted adults exclusively, using children as subjects and

exploiting their situations for financial gain. Victimized child imagery served a few purposes in

adult mobilization, such as inspiring men to defend children suffering at the hands of the enemy,

and, most importantly, raising money for philanthropic associations devoted to child-directed

charity work—the efficacy of this type of propaganda depended on emotional appeal to achieve a

goal.[39] The child victim inspired men to fight for justice and women to participate in

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[37] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 15-19.

[38] Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State Britain and France, 1914-1945*, ACLS Humanities E-Book. (Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 1993), 79.

[39] Olivier Faron, "Aux côtés, avec, pour les pupilles de la nation. Les formes de mobilisation en faveur des orphelins de la Première Guerre mondiale," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 205, no. 1 (2002): 15.

humanitarian work and volunteering, which became one of the main forms of female

contribution to the war effort in France.

Prior to WWI, France did not have much of a welfare state; orphans, widows, and the

poor largely depended on donations from places of worship and charitable organizations as the

government did not provide for them a regulated form of financial support and protection. The

devastation caused by WWI became a major catalyst towards the formation of the first

government welfare systems in France, and in Europe more broadly.[40] Partially responsible for

this was the mass mobilization of philanthropic organizations that rallied around propaganda of

suffering children.[41] Charitable associations created in the name of protecting and helping

children—especially orphans—subsequently produced propaganda of their own to encourage

further charitable mobilization, creating a chain reaction that led to large-scale multiplication of

philanthropy groups within the four years of warfare.[42] This representation of childhood in

French propaganda has the unique and notable trait of trans-Atlantic influence as well; imagery

and written descriptions of the horrors facing French children had a powerful effect on American

citizens as well as French, bringing American philanthropic organizations like the Red Cross

across the ocean to join in relief efforts for children. While these associations and organizations

often had very different influences, all had one shared characteristic: they appealed to the

generosity of the public in all possible ways in the name of rescuing French children.[43] An

American newspaper from 1916, *The Evening World*, shows how prevalent this issue was—in it

is a full-page "appeal for the orphan children of French soldiers who have died in defense of

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[40] Olivier Faron, "4. Orphelin, pupille, ayant droit...," in *Les enfants du deuil*, TAP / HIST Contemporaine (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 125; Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State Britain and France, 1914-1945*, 80.
[41] Faron, "Aux côtés, avec, pour les pupilles de la nation," 15.
[42] Faron, "Aux côtés, avec, pour les pupilles de la nation," 15.
[43] Faron, "Aux côtés, avec, pour les pupilles de la nation," 16.

France."[44] The appeal claims that orphans needing aid are in excess of 400,000 and emphasizes

the pledge of the American Society for the Relief of French War Orphans to help war orphans.

Published around Thanksgiving, this newspaper ad states in bold that "the needs of war orphans

of France peculiarly call for American sympathy and help…at this period of National

Thanksgiving," with declarations that helping French children is the least Americans could do

after the help giving to them by the French in the American Revolution.[45] Appeals like this could

be found in newspapers across the United States, as an entire population across the ocean sat

itching to contribute to the war, their spirits unperturbed by the war fatigue, lack of resources,

and devastation of territory that had fallen across the belligerent nations of Europe by 1917.

One particularly important and large philanthropic association, the American Red Cross,

stationed itself in key locations across France such as Paris and Evian, founding children's

hospitals and sending nurses into warzones to find and rescue children through their Children's

Bureau.[46] Services provided by the thousands of American and French volunteers included

cleaning children, delousing them, providing them with food and clothing, providing medical

treatment, and searching for any living relatives for the children.[47] To share their work with an

emotionally-invested public, the Red Cross published books and pamphlets such as June

Richardson Lucas's *The Children of France and the Red Cross* (1919) detailing the

circumstances of the children they helped. This book was composed of Lucas's daily journal as a

Red Cross worker, and she includes numerous stories of different children who are described as

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[44] The American Society for the Relief of French War Orphans, "Appeal for Orphan Children of French Soldiers Who Have Died in Defense of France," *The Evening World*, Saturday, November 25, 1916.

[45] The American Society for the Relief of French War Orphans. "Appeal for Orphan Children of French Soldiers Who Have Died in Defense of France." *The Evening World,* Saturday, November 25, 1916.

[46] William Palmer Lucas, *Work of the Children's Bureau, Department of Civil Affairs, American Red Cross, France* (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1918).

[47] June Richardson Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross* (Burgess Hill, West Sussex: Diggory, 2005), 19.

"poor," "homeless," "orphaned," "sad," "injured," "dirty," and full of lice.[48] This book, and many of the others like it, also included posed photographs of children with captions meant to evoke sympathy. In one example from *The Children of France and the Red Cross* is a photo of an injured young boy, with his injuries clearly visible to the viewer. The caption of his photo reads "A boy at Evian who has lost his left eye and has a mutilated left hand as the result of a loaded pencil given him by a German soldier;" this photo is just one of many similarly-posed and captioned images of children meant to evoke sympathy, charity, and reinforce Germanophobia.[49] Some of these children held the title of *repatrié* (repatriated)—French citizens that the Germans forced to relocate into Germany and Switzerland, and who were sent back to France when the lack of resources in Germany became too great.[50] The Red Cross and its fellow organizations presented the stories of children like these to the American middle class in hopes of receiving donations.

A particularly successful propaganda strategy using the concept of child victims, run by the Red Cross Children's Bureau, came in the form of a campaign allowing American soldiers serving in France to sponsor or "adopt" a child. Proposed by the *Stars and Stripes* (the newspaper for the US troops) and readily accepted by the Children's Bureau, American military companies could write to the Red Cross asking to sponsor a child fitting whatever descriptions they desired.[51] The company would pay five hundred Franks (one hundred American dollars in 1918) which the Children's Bureau would apply to the "care, education, or useful training of any kind, for a French child."[52] In exchange for their donation, the soldiers would receive a

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[48] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*. No page number provided, as each of these descriptions appears numerous times throughout the entirety of the book.
[49] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 48.
[50] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 4.
[51] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 187.
[52] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 187.

photograph of their child, the child's history, and how to keep in touch with them. A popular

program for American soldiers seeking to help the many children they encountered, dozens of

"adoptions" occurred within its first few weeks. One such case, noted in *The Children of France*

and the Red Cross is described: "Several days ago we had a letter from Company G…:

"*Company G met Easter morning. We want to adopt a little boy of six with blue eyes, the son of a*

man who fell at Verdun."…We found Henri…we had him photographed at once and his picture

and his history sent to the company. Miss P—…said he had two brothers and two sisters. To-day

we received the answer: "*Company G takes the whole bunch.*"[53] Children like Henri became

known as French "mascots," and their stories, along with their communications with their

American "godfathers," became a key form of propaganda used by American philanthropic

associations in France.[54] Works such as these provided a public desperate for good news with a

redemption story they could feel proud of—the suffering child, victimized by the morally-

depraved Germans, saved by the generous donations and volunteer work of the morally upright

Allied powers.

American and French philanthropists ran a joint campaign to raise donations of free milk

for France as well—due to most French cattle dying during the war—using emotional

illustrations of hungry children waiting in line for food in both English and French. One poster

from this campaign, titled "Free Milk for France," shows a benevolent American soldier

spooning out milk to disheveled French children of various ages, as well as one haggard-looking

French soldier waiting behind them.[55] The image of the children and the French soldier looking

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[53] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 188.

[54] "From French 'Mascots' to Their American 'Godfathers,' Letters from French War Orphans 'Adopted' by Members of the American Expeditionary Forces to Their Soldier Friends : Pamphlet 1919 | WorldCat.Org," accessed September 12, 2022.

[55] "Free Milk for France / F. Luis Mora.," image, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, accessed September 27, 2022.

worn-down and hungry contrasts with the American soldier, who looks strong and healthy. The

juxtaposition of figures in this poster, and in others from the campaign, emphasized the sorry

state of French children and how Americans, having suffered much less from the war, could

afford to help save them. Additionally, many mothers of infants across France lost their ability to

produce milk due to stress, grief, and malnourishment. Journal entries describe firsthand

accounts of this: "I saw a tired woman feeding a five months' old baby sweet chocolate…We

found that in the flight, and terror of those days, her milk had stopped. In a few minutes our

doctor discovered fourteen other mothers in the same condition."[56] In order to quickly amass the

necessary resources to nourish French children and return them to health, philanthropic

associations leaned heavily into the emotional pull of child victims in propaganda.

The representation of victimized French children, specifically the orphan, occupies a

central place in the collective memory of WWI in France and its effect on children; however,

claiming this representation as the "touchstone" of children's relations to the conflict leads to

dangerous assumptions about how children actually experienced wartime.[57]As with the case of

the representation of the heroic child in propaganda, the understanding of children as victims of

war comes from adults, not the children themselves. The adult understanding of this

representation of victimized children, encouraged and strengthened by propaganda, dictated what

roles and experiences French children should have in wartime; yet as human agents in their own

right, a wide variety of experiences and understandings of war existed for children just as they

did for adults. Did children understand their place in society to be one of victimhood, requiring

charity and international humanitarian aid? For some children, maybe so. Records of children

served by the Red Cross and other philanthropic associations include descriptions of children left

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[56] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 181.
[57] Pignot, "Children," 44.

ill, injured, and/or without family members who gravitated towards volunteer nurses as a source of safety and help following bombing, conflict in occupied zones, and other scenes of violence.[58]

However, children—like most other groups during wartime—likely did not actively understand their role as solely one of victimhood. Children facing extreme hardship during the war turned to the ideology of self-sacrifice and courage to find strength in the face of devastation. Lucas's journal entries follow one family in particular, a group of five siblings who saw their mother killed by a bomb and who had not heard from their father at the front in two years.[59] Her descriptions of these children include their illnesses and hardships, but focus more on the courage, strength, and determination of these children to stay together and follow their mother's final requests; "That is what impressed me so deeply about this family. They all seem to have just one desire—to do all the things their mother had talked to them about before she was killed over a year ago."[60] Faced with several cases like this one, it becomes harder to equate adult understandings of children as victims through propaganda with the actual lived experiences of wartime childhood. Additionally, children often protested against the label of "orphan" and its broader connotations. One little girl cared for by the Red Cross Children's Bureau following her parents' deaths was found crying after a boy in the bed next to hers called her an orphan, claiming vehemently that "she *isn't* an orphan, she has a *sister.*"[61] While this girl legally *was* an orphan, her strong reaction to this term demonstrates the aversion some children had to this role and its greater implications. Children in French society in general appear to have fixated on the fate of orphans, gathering what money they had to donate to them in both a show of childhood

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[58] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross.*
[59] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 98.
[60] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 101.
[61] Lucas, *The Children of France and the Red Cross*, 113.

solidarity and recognition that the fate of an orphan could easily became their own.[62]

Representations of the victimized child created a sense of urgency and purpose for the adults

who produced them, yet, despite this, children did not necessarily let their understandings of

their own wartime experiences become pigeon-holed into this one role.

The Future Citizen

The third and final representation of children in French propaganda from WWI was the

malleable "blank-slate," the future citizen. Not yet considered citizens in their own right, French

children had to be shaped into a generation of exceptional, patriotic adults, raised in a way that

allowed them to respond to the needs of France.[63] French children in media acted as the symbol

of what men must fight to protect: in order to protect the innocent French child, a man had to

enlist and destroy the "barbarians" who threatened their nation.[64] Children were expected both to

keep their innocent nature and to follow the patriotic trend of dehumanization and violence

towards the enemy. This representation of innocent and malleable childhood became an ideology

of sorts, permeating school curriculums and home life through patriotic rhetoric, posters, lesson

plans, children's publications, and children's literature. Media for children varied from very

obvious pro-war themes to more subtle indoctrination, such as in fairytale illustrations where

heroes and princesses had more French and Alsatian characteristics while enemies looked more

"German".[65] Studying children's drawings of war, violence, and occupation can give valuable

insight into how successful or unsuccessful patriotic rhetoric in schools and children's media

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[62] Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre*, Univers historique (Paris: Seuil, 2012), 132-133.
[63] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 22-23.
[64] Pignot, "Children," 33.
[65] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 4.

really was, and how well children understood themselves and their experiences within this style

of propaganda.

No institution had as strong an effect on the indoctrination of French children than

schools, which acted as a "privileged vector" of mobilization and experienced several

adaptations during wartime in the name of molding children to fit the image of the ideal future

citizen from propaganda.[66] Following the outbreak of war in 1914, the Minister of Public

Instruction did not hesitate to publish new teaching objectives for republican education during

wartime, first and foremost being the honoring of French soldiers who spilled their blood for

liberty, justice, and human rights.[67] The ministerial instructions of the first two years of the war

did not map out a general academic framework for teaching war, but they still reveal some of the

orientations taken by the republican school during wartime in hopes of fostering a generation of

young patriotic citizens.[68] Gone was the pre-war educational trend of pacifist and socialist

"patriotism of reason", replaced with a "reflective patriotism" that disassociated the ideas of the

fatherland and war, instead claiming that France engaged in a war of defense.[69] The new war-

centric ideology of schooling was possibly best summarized when the education officer of a high

school in Poitiers gave out a prize to a student, saying "An exceptional time like ours cannot

tolerate ordinary children…You cannot, if you have a heart, accept that one must be killed for

you without wanting to be worthy of this sacrifice. Because it is for you that they are being

killed."[70] Propaganda designed to develop future French citizens appeared in classroom materials

distributed within schools, and educational mobilization consistently emphasized for children the

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[66] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 24.
[67] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 24.
[68] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 25.
[69] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 27-28.
[70] Translated from original French. Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 18.

sacrifice of combatants, urging children to live up to them by serving the country through their

schoolwork—if the place of the soldier was the battlefield, the place of the child was at their

desk, fighting the "battles of childhood."[71] This type of war-centric language aimed to convince

children that they could best help the war effort by continuing their schooling. Having succeeded

in gathering the majority of French children in one institution for several hours each day, the

government could impose patriotic propaganda on these citizens-to-be easier than on any other

demographic of the French population.

Daily interactions with propaganda for young French students included the reading of

casualty lists of local soldiers and impromptu discussion of major events in the war, such as the

entry of the United States in the war which the premier of the Third Republic advised teachers to

spend at least an hour discussing in class.[72] Education officers had all liberty to take teaching

initiative in class, so long as it related to the conflict, but "it was the inspectors who were the real

keystone of the process of developing a teacher of war; their reports, demanding, critical, show

their decisive role in the pedagogical turn imposed on the teaching body."[73] These educational

tools forged during the war constituted another relay of propaganda that directly interacted with

pupils, engulfing them in a constant flood of propaganda and rhetoric. Even as public support for

the war waned in France in 1917 and 1918, schools continued to teach about the war and,

alongside churches, were the first to commemorate the dead of combat.[74] Schools, as well,

organized the majority of children's homefront mobilization, through posters directly appealing

to children to raise money for the national bank, classroom "adoption" of soldiers to send

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[71] Pignot, "Children," 33; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, "Children and the Primary Schools of France, 1914–1918," in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. John Horne, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 26.

[72] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 26; Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie*, 132.

[73] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 26.

[74] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 36.

homemade parcels to (an interesting reversal of charitable adoptions of children by soldiers), and classroom knitting and sewing campaigns to create and/or mend socks for soldiers.[75]

At home, children encountered patriotic, anti-German propaganda meant to shape them into the ideal French citizen through their literature. War literature aimed at children and youth existed prior to WWI, but with the advent of the first "modern" total war and its massive impact on European societies, the quantity and quality of this genre changed.[76] The war saw an overall decrease in the production of children's books; however, the percentage of children's books that fell under the category of war literature increased greatly from the first year of the war onwards. Publishing houses either stopped production during the war and fell away, or ramped up production of patriotic children's books, one of the most prolific houses being Berger-Levrault. In France, children's books about the war took on many signature characteristics which served to encourage the next generation of citizens to embrace patriotism from a very young age and support the war effort, even if only ideologically. This hyper patriotism trickled down into books meant for even the smallest children, unlike in other participating powers such as Great Britain, who mainly targeted teenagers approaching the age of enlistment.[77]

French children's books demonstrated a wide range of literary and propaganda techniques to mold children into ideal citizens, benefitting from the fact that children's books were meant as a pleasurable leisure activity; hence, children would associate propaganda messages within their books with a sense of enjoyment and personal choice, as opposed to school assignments, which had regulations and were mandatory. Illustrators employed several tricks to engage children in literary propaganda and influence their opinions of the war, of the Fatherland,

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[75] Pignot, "Children," 34-35; "Aux Elèves de Nos Lycées et Collèges... | Gallica."; Limited, "Cartoon, French Classroom Scene, with Girls Knitting Socks for Soldiers at the Front during the First World War. Date."
[76] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 1.
[77] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 3.

and of the Germans. These included bold uses of color, emphatic militarism, and simplistic

figures. *Bébés s'en vont en guerre! Une histoire et des images* (*Babies Are Going to War! A*

Story and Pictures, 1918) by Simone Bouglé, is one example of a children's book from this

period that heavily employs simplistic illustration, bold colors, and militarism to demonstrate to

children a fantasy about children going to war.[78] Not only do children mimic their adult

counterparts in this book through fighting in battle, escaping imprisonment, and caring for the

wounded, they also are shown at the home front doing activities they would have actually

partaken in such as knitting, sending parcels of necessities to soldiers, growing vegetables,

forgoing new treats and toys, and contributing their pocket money to the national defense.[79]

Notable as well about this volume is the inclusion of girls in the war effort, often overlooked in

children's literature depicting mobilization. While their male counterparts play soldier, girls

played the role of war nurse—a major female role model of the time.[80] In this book, contributing

to the war seems fun due to the happy faces of the characters, the bright colorful settings, and the

exciting storyline.

The theme of anti-German sentiment—ranging from disliking the enemy but hoping for a

peaceful future to come, to outright demonization of Germans—runs through most French

children's books from WWI as well. From a very young age, children not only felt the effect of

patriotism in their literature, but also developed a strong hatred and dehumanization of their

"hereditary enemy."[81] Seeing soldiers, both human and toy, kill Germans in books was perfectly

fine—celebrated even—by young audiences who had learned from propaganda that Germans

were evil and subhuman. Depictions of German soldiers occasionally showed just a soldier in

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[78] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre,* 124.
[79] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 124.
[80] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 3.
[81] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 2.

typical German military dress, but more often the soldiers appeared with bestial features or as

outright monsters, only recognizable by their *pickelhauben*: the characteristic spiked helmet used

by Prussia and Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The book *Spahis et*

tirailleurs (*Spahis and Infantrymen*, 1916) by Val-Rau tells of the valor and commitment of the

French colonial regiments from North Africa and West, East, and Central Africa using the

representation of them as toy soldiers and incorporates this anti-German imagery in doing so.[82]

Brightly colored in traditional clothing, the colonial troops appeal to the eye and appear uniform

and orderly in a way that pleases the reader. This contrasts their German enemies, who have

yellow-green skin, muted colors on their clothing, bestial facial features, black *pickelhauben*, and

stand in a jumbled heap. Children would have gravitated towards the heroic and visually-

appealing French colonial regiments and been repelled by the Germans, whose skin color and

facial features in the book resemble the monstrous ogres of fairytales. A notable thing about this

book is that the colonial regiments—who normally would have been seen as inferior due to their

races and ethnicities—are shown as heroic, strong, and equal to their French commanders.

Through Germanophobia and service to France, they have been elevated to the level of ideal

citizenship, despite their non-French origins. This must have emphasized how service to the

nation and collective hatred of the common enemy united all under the French flag—citizens

shared these characteristics, and they proved more important than even the contemporary

colonialist rhetoric about the superiority of native French people over the imperial subjects.

Children's literature from WWI France appealed to small children by showing them a

colorful, idealized world using stories and formats they would recognize and enjoy.[83] Fairytales

published at this time had patriotic imagery and anti-German sentiments embedded in them both

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[82] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 119.
[83] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 2.

subtly and overtly, retelling well-known tales in a way that would influence children to associate

certain characters and themes with certain nations. *Histoire du petit chaperon rouge* (*Little Red*

Riding Hood, 1917) by Charles Moreau-Vauthier, adapts the tale of Little Red Riding Hood and

places Germany in the role of the Big Bad Wolf. Even while the wolf hides in Grandmother's

bed wearing her nightclothes, the reader can see the point of his distinctive German helmet

through his bonnet. Ironically, this book follows the German retelling the story by the Brothers

Grimm, *Rotkäppchen*, where the huntsman saves Little Red and her grandmother by killing the

wolf.[84] On the final page of the book, simply-drawn figures dance around the dead wolf, French

flags wave, and the story closes with a message about the possible return of peace and good

health one day in the future. For young children already familiar with this fairytale, this book

would be easy to follow along, entertaining, and would also associate patriotic and

Germanophobic propaganda with the story itself. Children familiar with Little Red Riding Hood

would understand that, to be a hero, you had to kill the wolf, and with Germany playing the wolf

in this version, they would now understand that in order to be a good French citizen, they should

want to kill Germans.

Part of being a good French citizen during WWI was supporting the French goal of

reclaiming the lost territories of Alsace and Lorraine from Germany, and so it makes sense that

these territories also played into propaganda children's books. They often appeared in fairytales,

as their loss and eventual "saving" fit perfectly into most fairytale storylines. L'oncle Hansi, an

author, illustrator, and unabashed promoter of Alsatian culture, celebrated the return of Alsace to

the French in a series of books called *L'Alsace Heureuse* (*Happy Alsace*, 1919), which contains

the famous illustration "La belle au bois dormant (The Sleeping Beauty)." This depiction of the

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[84] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 120.

Sleeping Beauty tale shows the eponymous character awakening in her bed while wearing a

traditional Alsatian headdress. The French cock adorns her bed, and Sainte Odile (the patron

saint of Alsace) guards her from above during her long sleep. Above her as well is a depiction of

Saint Georges slaying the dragon, a mythical tale brought back from the Middle East by

crusaders in the twelfth century—in this case a possible allegory of the French slaying the

German foe, bringing a distinct religious justification. A brave French soldier is her prince,

coming to save her and return her to France.[85] Alsatian and French imagery saturate this image,

associating the tale of Sleeping Beauty being rescued and living happily-ever-after with the

history of Alsace-Lorraine's loss, occupation, and hopeful eventual return.

For the youngest children, alphabet books about war became the best vehicle for

patriotic, pro-war rhetoric. Many countries published ABC's with war themes, and France

produced a number of these over the course of the conflict. These books transferred hostilities to

the world of children to explain the causes and goals of war to children.[86] The most popular ABC

book in France was André Hellé's *Alphabet de la Grande Guerre 1914-1916* (*Alphabet of the

Great War 1914-1918*). This book took the conflict out of the playroom and conveyed its

message with power and strength, making sure to do so in a way simple enough for tiny minds to

grasp.[87] Using combination of letters and words such as "Batterie" and "Charge," Hellé made the

war vivid and appealing to children. Copies of this book found with notes inscribed inside show

that it was a popular gift for adult relatives to give young children. Alphabet books and picture

books such as this ensured that patriotism and citizenship truly was learned by even the youngest

of children.

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[85] Harris and Edelstein *En Guerre*, 121.
[86] Zunino, "Children's Literature," 3.
[87] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 114.

One final theme of French children's literature from WWI was the call to tradition, especially religious tradition. By putting important events and locations of the war in historical context, authors and illustrators passed along a message of cultural superiority, longevity, strength, and spiritual protection. Following the September 14th bombing of Reims Cathedral in 1914, this location became one of the emblems of tradition-centric children's literature. The cathedral has a long and illustrious history as the place where Clovis was baptized, founding the Frankish empire, and of hosting the coronation of all French kings; its severe damage from the German bombing came as a personal affront to all French citizens. Louise-Andrée Roze's *Josette et Jehan de Reims* tells the story of the Reims Cathedral from the work of stonemasons carving the famous Smiling Angel, to the church's use for coronating kings. Bright, unmodulated colors and simplified forms in this book are reminiscent of the stained glass within the actual structure.[88] Blue-helmeted soldiers accompanying Charles VII foreshadow the *poilus*—French infantry soldiers from WWI—retaking the city from the Germans.[89] On one page of the book, the Smiling Angel statue is shown bleeding after the German destruction, but the final message of the book is that the soul of the cathedral remains no matter what, acting as living testimony to the triumph of faith over brutality.[90] *Reims: La cathédrale* (1918) by Robert Burnand follows a similar ideological narrative of tradition and religion using the cathedral. The Smiling Angel became a symbol of hope in the story of a young soldier who sees an image of the angel. Although the cathedral burns during the story, the triumphant soldier waves an olive branch to herald the ultimate French victory.[91]

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[88] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 122.
[89] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 122.
[90] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 122.
[91] Harris and Edelstein, *En Guerre*, 123.

The representation of children as innocent-yet-patriotic future citizens in propaganda seems to have had the largest impact on French children's actual wartime experiences out of the three representations of children in propaganda. Exposed to this type of propaganda daily, both in the home and at school, and with content designed specifically to vehicle war ideologies to them rather than adults, children appear to have identified with this depiction of themselves the closest. They internalized the republican messianism that placed France in the position of the beacon of humanity, as well as societal dehumanization and violence towards Germans that had been brewing since the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871.[92] Like always, however, it is impossible to create an all-encompassing generalization of how children understood their place in this representation of themselves. The trauma of war and the progressive emergence of lassitude, indifference, and outright rejection of the conflict among French children in the later years of WWI can demonstrate how their experiences fluctuated in and out of the roles assigned to them by propaganda.[93] One example of how some children did not overwhelmingly support the war as they were taught to comes from a school assignment of a young girl in February 1916; having seen a train of wounded soldiers passing by, she wrote "I feel pity for this poor disabled soldier," which her teacher then corrected by crossing out the word "pity" in red ink and replacing it with the word "admiration."[94] Children also went against this representation in their reactions to the Armistice. While some children celebrated alongside adults that the terrible war had ended, many others who were children at this moment shared personal accounts of the event that were painful and ambiguous. Children who reacted to the Armistice with tears due to the enormity of

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[92] Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre Des Enfants: 1914-1918*, 185.
[93] Pignot, "Children," 36.
[94] Pignot, "Children," 36.

their own personal losses during the conflict received punishments by the adults in their lives for not joining in with the collective joy and relief in French society.[95]

Conclusion

No matter what type of representation was used in propaganda—hero, victim, or future citizen—the relationship between French children and the media was an exploitative one. Children's images appeared in propaganda to evoke emotional responses in the target audiences and inspire them to act. Even propaganda meant to help children—like propaganda for children's charities—exploited the image of children to reach their goal. These three forms of representation of children in society were used to gain public support for war and encourage enlistment. But they also manipulated schools, homes, literature, and other parts of children's daily lives to shape children into unquestioning patriotic vessels who would enlist when old enough and do anything to protect and serve France. To truly understand the success of these representations of children in propaganda, it is necessary to look at accounts from children themselves during the war to see how they understood themselves as part of the war effort. While some analysis of this was done in this paper, there is still much to be done on this matter. Future historians may want to investigate the rich collections of wartime drawings from schools in Paris, Alsace, and other regions of France to see how children may have reproduced the propaganda about them—or deviated from it entirely.

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[95] Pignot, "Children," 44.

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"Into the Sea of Forgetfulness:" An Analysis of Anna Komnene's Alexiad in Relation to the First Crusade

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Abstract: Anna Komnene's account of the First Crusade in her work, *The Alexiad,* provides invaluable insight into the Byzantine perspective of this pivotal event defining the 11th century. While shunned in a monastery, she wrote her celebrated work known as *The Alexiad*. Anna's primary motivation for writing the biography stems from her desire to emphasize the accomplishments of her father, especially in regards to protecting the Byzantine Empire against invaders, both Latin and Turkish. For Anna, the crusade functions as a Western pretext for taking land away from the Byzantines. Comparing specific sieges in the First Crusade to their Latin counterparts provides a significantly more nuanced comprehension of the Crusades from a Christian perspective. Anna's Byzantine perspective contradicts the simplified characterization of the First Crusade as a united Christian front against the Muslim forces.

In December of 1083, Princess Anna Komnene (1083-1153) was born to Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Komnenos (1057-1118) and Empress Irene Doukaina (1066-1138). Her birth solidified the union between the two powerful Byzantine houses of Komnenos and Doukas. She became heir to the throne upon her birth and held the title until the birth of her younger brother John in 1087. Her status as Princess afforded Anna the highest standard of education. Her education included—but was not limited to—mathematics, ancient philosophy, and literature. Throughout her life, Anna believed and maintained that she was the legitimate heir of her father. Despite this, when Alexius died on the 15th of August, 1118, Anna's brother John ascended the throne. Scornful, Anna, with the aid of her mother, tried to usurp her brother's title and position. When John became aware of the schemes afoot, he swiftly sent both Anna and her mother to a monastery to rid himself of the threat they posed. Within the walls of the monastery, Anna began what is arguably the most comprehensive biography of Alexius I's life.[1] Her work, known as *The Alexiad*, is masterfully constructed using rhetoric and allusions, both mythological and biblical, to paint an almost saintly and, most certainly, triumphant image of her father and his reign. Found within the pages of *The Alexiad* are accounts of the First Crusade.[2] These accounts offer an uniquely Byzantine perspective to the happenings of the crusade. Komnene describes in detail the inner-workings of the Byzantine Empire and its leaders' relations with the crusading Franks. As a chronicle of the First Crusade, Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* provides invaluable detail and insight into the Byzantine perspective, underscoring the tension and strained relationship between the Eastern and Western Churches. Comparing Anna's *Alexiad* to the Latin Frankish sources provides clarity and a more well-rounded understanding of the alliance between the West and East that allowed the First Crusade to transpire.

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[1] Herrin, Judith. "Anna Komnene." In *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*, 232–41. Princeton University Press, 2007.

[2] Books X-XIII of *The Alexiad* contain crusade accounts.

Historical analysis necessitates scrutiny. When dissecting historical texts, one must carefully consider the author and their intentions. An author's objective will no doubt skew their perception of the historical events they record. In the case of Anna Komnene, she writes her *Alexiad* with the purpose of memorializing her father's reign. In the first pages of her work she writes, "...I intend in this writing of mine to recount the deeds done by my father so they should certainly not be lost in silence, or swept away, as it were, on the current of time into the sea of forgetfulness…."[3] While Princess Anna's stated purpose was to record the achievements of her father, she no doubt has ulterior motives. Throughout her work she attempts to persuade readers of the religious superiority of both the Eastern church and of her father the emperor. In addition, the death of her husband Nikephoros Bryennios (1062-1137) motivated her to complete the work. Ever the dutiful daughter and wife, Princess Anna felt the responsibility to complete Nikephoros' writings. As she has taken up the mantle of completing the work of her husband, an official Byzantine historian, Princess Anna hopes to assure the reader of her unbiased accounts with the declaration, "He who undertakes the 'role' of an historian must sink his personal likes and dislikes…he must never shirk either blaming his friends or praising his enemies."[4] While undoubtedly biased, her statements show an astute acknowledgement of the impartiality that every historian should strive for when recording history. Despite her assertions regarding the role of historians, Komnene clearly uses the *Alexiad* to persuade readers of the Byzantine Empire's righteousness and its strength under her father's reign.

Beginning in Book X of *The Alexiad*, Komnene starts to address the First Crusade and its relationship to the Byzantine Empire. She first remarks on the sheer magnitude of pilgrims.

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[3] Comnena, Anna. *The Alexiad of the Princess Anna Comnena: Being the History of the Reign of Her Father, Alexius I, Emperor of the Romans, 1081-1118 A.D.* Translated by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes. New York: AMS Press, 1978, p. 1.
[4] Ibid., p. 2.

Komnene writes of the crusaders heading East: "For the whole of the West and all the barbarian tribes…had all migrated in a body and were marching into Asia through the intervening Europe, and were making the journey with all their household."[5] Firstly, Komnene's assertion aligns with the Western sources that tell of the large number of people, both alone and with accompanying family members and household servants, that went on the journey across Europe to the Holy Land. Additionally, the princess perceives the number of crusaders as an imminent threat to the security and sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire. In the context of *The Alexiad*, she views the crusaders as an added problem facing the empire in addition to internal political conflict and the foreign Turkish threat.[6] Komnene makes mention of the logistical problems that the Franks cause throughout *The Alexiad*. Interestingly, she raises the concern about how to logistically supply such a mass quantity of people. As Helen J. Nicholson, a crusade historian, writes, "[Anna's] focus is on hidden agendas and the long-term consequences for Byzantium."[7] For the princess, the First Crusade has significantly more political and logistical implications for the Byzantines than it has religious implications. Throughout *The Alexiad*, Princess Anna's judgment of the crusade is always in relation to the burden it places on the Byzantine Empire.

The Alexiad provides a unique interpretation of the origin of the First Crusade. In Komnene's view, the crusade was spearheaded by a certain Peter the Hermit. She writes:

> "The reason of this upheaval was more or less the following. A certain Frank, Peter by name…had gone to worship at the Holy Sepulchre and after suffering many things at the hands of the Turks and Saracens who were ravaging Asia, he got back to his own country with difficulty. However, he saw that he ought not to make the journey to the Holy Sepulchre alone again, lest worse things befall him, so he worked out a cunning plan. This was to preach in all the Latin countries that 'the voice of God bids me announce to all the Counts in France that they should all leave their homes and set out to worship at

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[5] *The Alexiad*, p. 268.
[6] France, J. "Anna Comneno, The Alexiad and the First Crusade," *Reading Medieval Studies* 10, (1984): 20-38, p. 21.
[7] Nicholson, Helen J. *Women and the Crusades.* Oxford University Press, 2023, p. 195.

the Holy Sepulchre, and to endeavour wholeheartedly with hand and mind to deliver Jerusalem from the hand of the Hagarenes.' And he really succeeded. For after inspiring the souls of all with this quasi-divine command he contrived to assemble the Franks from all sides…".[8]

The most striking and telling aspect of Komnene's claim lies in the fact that she makes no mention of the pope and his contribution to the initiation of the crusade. Pope Urban II's (1088-1099) speech at the Council of Clermont (1095) is pointed to in many of the Western sources as the catalyst for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Her failure to mention the role of the pope could be simply attributed to confusion as to how the crusade began. Contrarily, the princess may have been attempting to minimize the role of the pope as to not give religious legitimacy to the Latin church and its pilgrimage. Additionally in this section, Princess Anna firmly establishes that she does not believe in the First Crusade's divine inspiration, but instead posits that the movement had entirely secular motivations. The crusade had purely personal inspirations according to Princess Anna, with Peter only preaching for people to join him on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land so that he would have greater protection against a Turkish attack. Author and Byzantinist Hélène Ahrweiler writes of the Eastern perspective of the role of the pope in the crusade. She writes, "The crusade launched by the pope, was above all for the Byzantines was a symbol of the usurpation of imperial power by the spiritual leader who thus committed a quasi-sacraliage."[9] Komnene's use of the phrases "quasi-divine" and "contrived" shows her doubt of a religious justification for the First Crusade. Komnene does however recognize that an overarching goal of the crusade is the liberation of the Holy Land from its Muslim rulers. In this way, her view aligns with the Western sources. Lastly, comparing Komnene's judgment of Peter the Hermit to the Western accounts reveals that the Western sources—especially that of Abbot Guibert of Nogent—are similarly skeptical about Peter. While

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[8] *The Alexiad,* p. 249.

[9] Ahrweiler, Hélène. *L'idéologie Politique de L'empire Byzantin*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975, p. 79.

the Western sources describe Peter as a leader of the "People's Crusade,"[10] there is general confusion about his origin and motivations. Guibert of Nogent writes, "We saw him going through the cities and towns under the pretense of preaching."[11] Nogent's assertion aligns with Komnene's skepticism of the holy nature of Peter's motivations. Komnene's explanation of the crusade's origin reveals that from a Byzantine perspective the crusade was a practical conception, temporally inspired. This theme presents itself throughout *The Alexiad* as Komnene actively dismisses the Western claim that the crusade has religious motivation and authority.

Throughout *The Alexiad*, Komnene suggests that the true motive for the Frankish leaders going on crusade was to conquer the Byzantine Empire. Komnene writes that "...Bohemund and men of like mind, who had long cherished a desire for the Roman Empire…wished to win it for themselves, found a pretext in Peter's preaching…deceived the more single-minded, caused this great upheaval and were selling their own estates under the pretense that they were marching against the Turks to redeem the Holy Sepulchre."[12] For Komnene, the crusade's primary goal was to conquer the Byzantine Empire.[13] This assumption was not unfounded as in the years prior to the First Crusade there were numerous battles fought between the Western Normans and Eastern Byzantines over Byzantine territory. The Norman-Byzantine wars were in fact led in part by Boheumnd of Antioch, a prominent First Crusade leader and his father.[14] Komnene views the

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[10] The "People's Crusade" was one of the first pilgrimage groups to make the journey to the Holy Land. The People's Crusade was led by Peter the Hermit and consisted of those of the lower classes. The crusade never reached its final destination of Jerusalem with many dying or being captured before reaching the Holy City.

[11] Guibert of Nogent, in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, Edward Peters, ed. 2nd ed. Philadelphia, 1998, p. 103.

[12] *The Alexiad,* p. 252.

[13] Anna makes this claim repeatedly throughout the Alexiad. In addition to the previous quote she also writes, "...The other counts agreed to Bohemund's plan, and in their dreams of capturing the capital had already come to the same decision …that while in appearance making the journey to jerusalem in reality their object was to dethrone the Emperor and to capture the capital" (*The Alexiad,* p. 258).

[14] McQueen, William B. "Relations Between the Normans and Byzantium" 1071-1112." *Byzantion* 56 (1986): 427–76.

First Crusade in a larger context as the continuation of the Latin West's plan to depose the

emperor and destroy the empire. Despite her varying explanations for the crusade, her accounts

closely mirror many of the Western sources. She views the crusade from an outsider point of

view as she focuses her writing on how the crusade affected the reign of her father. The primary

effect of the crusade being that the Byzantine Empire was now threatened by invaders on all

sides—East and West. For Princess Anna, the crusade masked itself as a religious pilgrimage

while harboring sinister motives. With the accessible information and based on the Franks'

previous actions, it is understandable to see how Princess Anna came to such a conclusion.

It is generally agreed upon that Alexius I invited the Franks to the Byzantine Empire in

hopes of using their military forces to his advantage to fend off the encroaching Turks. Many of

the Western sources record that Pope Urban II initiated the First Crusade in part due to cries for

help from the Byzantines. Interestingly, Komnene alludes in *The Alexiad* that Alexius was taken

by surprise by the arrival of the Franks. Komnene writes: "[Alexius] heard a report of the

approach of innumerable Frankish armies. Now he dreaded their arrival for he knew their

irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character and all the peculiar natural and

concomitant characteristics which the Frank retains throughout; and he also knew that they were

always agape for money...."[15] Komnene's lack of acknowledgement of Alexius's role in

spearheading the crusade could be attributed to Anna's age at the time of the crusades.[16] Her age

at the time of the First Crusade would have impacted her understanding of the events as she most

likely would not have had full awareness of Alexius' political maneuvering. Keeping in theme

with the rest of *The Alexiad,* the omission of Alexius' role could also be Komnene's reluctance to

acknowledge an alliance between the Eastern and Western churches.

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[15] *The Alexiad,* p. 248.
[16] At the time of the initiation of the First Crusade, Anna would have only been around 13-14 years old.

The only mention of the pope in relation to his role in the crusade within this section of

The Alexiad is seen when Komnene describes the pope's interaction with Bohemond of Antioch

(1054-1111). Bohemond went to the pope some time after the beginning of the crusade to ask for

support in securing the City of Antioch as an independent state rather than allowing Alexius to

maintain control following the crusade's conclusion. The addition of this section is significant as

it emphasizes that the pope sanctioned Bohemund to act directly against the authority of the

Eastern Church. Emphasizing this point, Komnene writes, "For who among the

barbarians…would not come of his own accord to a war against us when the high-priest gave his

consent and an apparently just cause aroused every horse, man, and soldierly arm?"[17] The

mention of the pope reveals the Byzantine perspective of the Latin head of church as a direct

political and military adversary. As the sole mention of the pope within the larger context of the

crusade, Komnene leaves her readers with the impression that the pope poses a threat to

Byzantine sovereignty.

A frequent insult that Princess Anna hurls at the Frankish race is their inclination towards

greediness. Komnene uses Frankish greed throughout her account of the crusade to weave a

common thread within the narrative. She writes, "...the Latin race is always very fond of money,

but more especially when it is bent on raiding a country."[18] In this short statement, she addresses

two of the primary attributes of the Franks in *The Alexiad*: warmongering and greed. She uses

these descriptions of the Franks to contrast with her description of the "civil" and "peaceful"

Byzantine people. She particularly harps on the greed of Frankish leaders, showing more

sympathy towards the common folk of the Frankish countries. She writes, "the simpler-minded

were urged on by the real desire of worshipping at our Lord's Sepulchre… but the more astute,

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[17]*The Alexiad,* p. 318.
[18] Ibid., p. 251.

especially men like Bohemund and those of like mind, had another secret reason, namely, the

hope that while on their travels they might by some means be able to seize the capital itself…"[19]

In this context, Komnene specifically correlates Frankish greed to their desire for the Byzantine

capital. The Franks' greed is a trait known to both their allies and enemies alike. Komnene

claims that a Turkish leader tricked Frankish pilgrims into an ambush by sending messengers to a

Frankish camp claiming that a parceling out of money would occur after the fall of Nicaea.[20] It is

necessary that Komnene characterizes the Franks in this way as it emphasizes the threat that the

Franks and their crusade pose to the Byzantine Empire.

The initial trial of the Byzantine-Frankish alliance came during the Siege of Nicaea in

1097. The accounts of the siege vary depending on the sources read. The primary difference

between the Latin and Byzantine sources regards Emperor Alexius's role in the siege. Both

perspectives acknowledge that the siege was hard-fought and lasted into the night. Before sunset

the Franks had the upper hand, but by nightfall the tides of luck had changed in favor of the

defending Turks. After the initial Frankish attack, Alexius sent much-needed reinforcements and

siege equipment to aid the Franks. After these events, the perspectives diverge. In *The Alexiad*,

Princess Anna describes Alexius' plan to successfully capture Nicaea and place it under

Byzantine rule. She writes: "[Alexius]...aimed at capturing Nicaea himself, if the occasion

seemed propitious, and not receiving it from the Franks in accordance with their pledged word.

He kept this plan to himself …he sent [Butumites] to win over the barbarians inside, partly

promising them complete immunity besides many other things…"[21] In accordance with the deal

Alexius made with the Turkish leaders, the Turks secretly surrendered the City of Nicaea to the

emperor. According to Princess Anna, Alexius still encouraged the Franks to siege the city that

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[19] *The Alexiad,,* p. 250.
[20] Anna writes, "Besides this, as he [the sultan] knew the Franks' love of money…" (*The Alexiad,* p. 251).
[21] *The Alexiad*, p. 268.

way the Franks would believe that their military might won the city and not by his deception.

Historians highly value Princess Anna's account as it adds an unique perspective and explanation

of the occurrences at Nicaea.[22] From the princess' view, Alexius's plan benefited the Franks as he

prevented their complete slaughter with his understanding of the city's strength and defenses.

Komnene emphasizes how Alexius truly wished to comply with Frankish plans but decided

instead to form his own secret deal in order to ensure the safety of his people. Western sources do

not share this sentiment.

The Western sources either do not mention Alexius's double-crossing, or, if they do,

recognize Alexius's betrayal and paint a decidedly negative image of the emperor. Fulcher of

Chartres, a cleric who later became chaplain for King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, positively praises

Alexius for his contribution of reinforcements and weapons only adding one sentence that

alludes to the scheming involved in the surrender of Nicaea.[23] The *Gesta*, written by an

anonymous author, similarly describes the events of the siege. In addition to acknowledging

Alexius's role in reenforcing the Frankish army, the author seems to misconstrue the true nature

of the city's surrender. The *Gesta*'s author seems to believe that the Turks contacted the emperor

first with the terms of their surrender and not vice-versa.[24] The *Gesta's* author, however, does

chastise the emperor for accepting the Turkish offer and allowing the surviving Turks to walk

free relatively unharmed. The version of events according to Raymond d'Aguilers, a chaplain for

Raymond of St. Giles, a prominent First Crusade leader, presents the most comparable version of

events with Princess Anna's *Alexiad* version. D'Aguilers outright declares the emperor a traitor

for personally accepting the Turkish surrender.[25] Despite the inconsistencies found within the

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[22] France, J. "Anna Comneno, The Alexiad and the First Crusade," *Reading Medieval Studies* 10, (1984): 20-38, p. 26.
[23] Fulcher of Chartres, in *The First Crusade,* p. 64.
[24] Anonymous writer of the *Gesta*, in ibid., p. 182.
[25] Raymond d'Aguilers, in ibid., p. 184.

sources of the Siege of Nicaea, all the sources address the strained relationship between the East and West.

Anna Komnene presents the Siege of Antioch (1097-1098) as the next most consequential siege in the First Crusade. Komnene pays special attention to this siege as it resulted in Bohemund of Taranto becoming the Prince of Antioch. Both Latin and Byzantine sources focus on the plan Bohemund concocted in order to secure the city for himself. While both Eastern and Western sources discuss Bohemund's scheme to ensure his possession of the city after its siege, they present his plan in dramatically different lights. According to Western sources, Bohemund befriended the Armenian-Muslim leader of the city, Pirus, promising him wealth and honors if he handed the city over to Bohemund secretly. After finalizing the deal, Bohemund then went to the other Frankish leaders to propose a competition that whichever one of them first captures the city will gain possession of it. Because of his deal with Pirus, Bohemund was assured of his victory. In the *Gesta* version of events, the counts originally refuse Behomend's plan, but after hearing of a large approaching Muslim force they concede. Interestingly, in this version, the leaders only agree to cede the city to Bohemund if emperor Alexius fails to come to the aid of the Franks at Antioch. The *Gesta*'s author writes, "let us give it to him freely with one accord, on condition that if the emperor comes to our aid and wishes to carry out every agreement, as he swore and promised, we will return it to him by right. But if he does not do this, let Bohemund keep it in his power."[26] In this version, the plan is only agreed upon out of necessity and fear of the nearing Muslim army with the Frankish leaders acknowledging that the city rightfully belongs to Alexius due to oaths the Franks swore before Alexius in Constantinople.[27] In contrast to the *Gesta*, Fulcher's version presents the arrangement

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[26] Anonymous writer of the *Gesta,* in *The First Crusade,* p. 203.
[27] After first arriving in Constantinople the Frankish crusade leaders swore oaths to Emperor Alexius that any of the cities they captured would become vassals of the Byzantine Empire.

between Bohemund and Pirus as a larger mutual agreement between the Frankish leaders and Bohemund. Fulcher provides little detail of this deal, but stresses the crucial fact that Antioch would have been nearly impossible to siege due to its fortifications. For this reason, the military leaders favored strategic agreement. All Western sources emphasize the suffering of the Franks due to a lack of supplies and their subsequent starvation during the nine month siege. For these reasons, the authors of the Western sources present the deal between Bohemund, the Frankish leaders, and Pirus as an agreement of self-preservation.

Anna Komnene's version of the Siege of Antioch primarily concentrates on Bohemund's plan to control the city and Alexius' perspective of the siege. Anna presents Bohemund's plan with Pirus as directly in violation of Bohemund's oath to the emperor. Her version of Bohemund's plan aligns with many of the Western sources where Bohemund proposed a competition for the city's governance.[28] Her emphasis in this section focuses on the direct betrayal to the emperor and Byzantine rule inherent in Bohemund's plan. She calls his scheme a "wicked plan,"[29] characterizing Bohemund as a decidedly conniving person. She continues this characterization writing, "Bohemund plied [Pirus] with honeyed words, tempted him with many promises and thus persuaded him to betray the city to him."[30] Once again, the inclusion of Bohemund's plan supports Komnene's theme of Frankish greed. Following the description of how Bohemund came into possession of the city, she shifts her focus to Alexius and his role—or lack thereof—in the siege. The primary value of Komnene's account of the Siege of Antioch is that it reveals Alexius's reasoning as to why he failed to send aid to the sieging Franks. Her account paints Alexius sympathetically as she emphasizes his distress at not being able to come

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[28] *The Alexiad,* p. 278.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 277.

to the Franks' assistance.[31] She justifies Alexius's absence from Antioch writing, "by hastening

to the assistance of Antioch he might cause the destruction of Constantinople."[32] Similarly to the

Western sources, Alexius understands the challenge that Antioch poses militarily with its

considerable defenses and strategic location. Komnene, when writing of the Siege of Antioch,

primarily concerns herself with the defense of her father's decision to not help the Franks. By

using accounts from *The Alexiad,* one's understanding of the Siege of Antioch becomes more

well-rounded through the understanding of Emperor Alexius's reasoning for failing to aid the

Franks.

The most important siege to the Franks only lasted a month and ended in July 1099. The

Siege of Jerusalem, while notably short, represented the culmination of a years-long journey.

While the Western sources spend significant time analyzing and detailing the siege, *The Alexiad*

dedicates only two lines to the entire event. Komnene writes of the siege: "...They encircled

[Jerusalem's] walls and made frequent attacks on them and besieged the town and within one

lunar month they took it and killed many of the Saracenic and Jewish inhabitants. When they had

brought all into subjection and no one resisted them, they invested Godfry with supreme

authority by unanimous consent and called him 'king'."[33] One possible reason for the curt

description of the siege could be because the siege did not involve the Byzantines and as such

had no narrative value as evidence of Alexius's triumphs. Another possible reason could be that

Jerusalem marked the culmination of the crusade for the Franks while for the Byzantines the

capture of Jerusalem had no effect on the overarching threat that both the Muslims and Franks

posed by their presence in Byzantine territory. An interesting aspect of Komnene's writing is that

she emphasizes that the Franks crowned Godfrey "king". One reason for this emphasis of "king"

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[31] *The Alexiad,*, p. 283.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., p. 285-286.

could be Komnene once again subtly alluding that she does not believe that the Franks had

rightful ownership over the cities that they conquered and that they instead belonged to Alexius.

Despite being the most significant siege in Western sources, the Siege of Jerusalem plays little

role in *The Alexiad*.

One of the most important figures found within both the Western and Byzantine sources

is Bohemund of Antioch. His role in *The Alexiad* is especially unique as he simultaneously

represents the numerous flaws and the few virtues that the Franks possess as Anna sees them.

Throughout *The Alexiad* he is also compared and contrasted against Alexius's "Byzantine

qualities". Anna views Bohemund as the most prominent and successful Frankish military leader

in the crusades and as such she uses him throughout *The Alexiad* to represent the entirety of the

Frankish race. Komnene uses the word "wicked" repeatedly to describe Bohemund and his

actions.[34] In this way, Komnene makes the association for her reader between Bohemund and the

Franks with wickedness and immorality. Before describing a meeting between Alexius and

Bohemund, Komnene makes the point to analyze both the physical and mental qualities of

Bohemund. She writes of Bohemund, "this man who was of such a size and such a character was

inferior to the emperor alone in fortune and eloquence and in other gifts of nature."[35] In this

section, Anna makes the direct contrast between Bohemund as the leader of the Franks to

Alexius, leader of the Byzantines. While Bohemund's baseness is the main quality emphasized,

Anna acknowledges his shrewdness when she describes an event only found within *The Alexiad*.

Anna describes an event around the year 1100. Anna claims that after leaving the City of Antioch

in the hands of his nephew Tancred, Bohemund faked his death by hiding in a coffin with rotting

animal corpses for days on end while his companions smuggled his coffin to the Island of

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[34] *The Alexiad,* p. 294, 278.
[35] Ibid., p. 347.

Corfu.[36] As this story has no equivalent in the Western sources, it seems as though Anna has

included this tale solely for the purpose of embellishing her narrative. She uses the story to once

again emphasize the barbarity of the Franks and lengths to which they will go to destroy the

Byzantines. She writes, "the deviance of the barbarian was unique in the world of our time, and

was directed at the downfall of the Roman hegemony."[37] This story highlights Anna's more

dramatic writing style sacrificing accuracy for thematic consistency. Using Bohemund as the

embodiment of all Frankish flaws and strength, allows Anna to critique the Franks race with the

inclusion of stories such as Bohemund's attempt to fake his death.

After the Siege of Jerusalem, Princess Anna's focus in terms of Eastern relations with the

West focuses on Bohemond. She is less preoccupied with the Frankish sieges of other Turkish

cities following Jerusalem. For the princess, the more imminent threat lies in Bohemund and his

desire for the Byzantine Empire as opposed to the threat that the Turks pose. While the

culmination of the First Crusade is usually referred to as the Siege of Tyre in 1124, Anna's

crusade narrative roughly ends with the Treaty of Devol in 1108. Following the treaty, she moves

quickly through the defeat of the Turks to the death of her father. The Treaty of Devol aimed to

end the battle of sovereignty between Alexius and Bohemund over various holdings including

Antioch. The treaty is heavily skewed in Alexius's favor with Bohemund becoming the

emperor's vassal.[38] For Anna, the treaty signifies the end of Frankish invasion of Byzantine land.

It is a monumental treaty for the security of the empire and as such she dedicates significant time

to describing its terms. Anna uses her account of the oath to reinforce the authority of the Eastern

Orthodox Church with Bohemond, a Western Christian, swearing to recognize the authority of a

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[36] *The Alexiad,* p. 297-299.
[37] Ibid., p. 289
[38] *The Alexiad,* p. 350.

Byzantine Patriarch.[39] This is particularly significant to Anna as she viewed the First Crusade

within the context of a struggle between the authority of the Eastern and Western church.[40]

Throughout the oath, Alexius refers to himself and his son John as "Emperors of the Roman

Hegemony"[41] further supporting Komnene's claim of the legitimacy and authority of the Empire.

She presents the oath as a barbarian coming to his senses and showing remorse for his behaviors.

The treaty is the culmination of the First Crusade in the eyes of Anna and the Byzantines as in

her version it ended with the triumph of the Eastern Church and empire.

As the only substantial and comprehensive Byzantine account of the First Crusade, Anna

Komnene's *Alexiad* provides invaluable accounts to the known collection of First Crusade

sources. Penned by a female historian, the work becomes even more extraordinary. Sources

written by male historians dominate the vast majority of First Crusade records, but with *The

Alexiad* comes a new perspective from an underrepresented minority. Through comparing *The

Alexiad* to the well-known Western sources, one can acquire a more complete understanding of

the complex inner-workings of the crusade. *The Alexiad* adds a depth of detail not found in other

crusade sources as the author Princess Anna had firsthand knowledge of the events. Princess

Anna firmly establishes by the end of her work her belief that the crusade was undoubtedly a

political endeavor of the Franks. Throughout the work, she almost entirely neglects its religious

significance to the Western Christians. Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* has the potential to change the

popular understanding of the First Crusade, revealing that the First Crusade cannot be easily

characterized as an united Christian front against the Muslim armies. Princess Anna's unique

perspective within *The Alexiad* tells of the complexities of the relationships between the two

Christian armies in their struggle for political and religious dominance.

[39] Ibid., p. 354.
[40] Nicholson, Helen. *Women and the Crusades,* p. 225.
[41] *The Alexiad,* p. 350, 353.

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Rider of the Black Horse

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Abstract: This article explores the actions and ideology of the Russian revolutionary and terrorist Boris Savinkov through his final novel, *The Black Horse*. I argue that the book represents its author's attempt to come to terms with a world in which he feels politically homeless with the victory of his enemy, the Bolsheviks. Savinkov reckons with his fate through the liberal use of Biblical allusions and apocalyptic imagery.

Introduction and Background

Boris Viktorovich Savinkov was a contradiction of a man – a socialist who collaborated with reactionaries, an insurgent who sympathized with the regime he fought against, a terrorist who condemned terrorism. Who was this man, and what did he stand for? Savinkov left behind for study several semi-autobiographical works of literature that detail the development of his personal ideology. I will be studying this apparently paradoxical figure with an emphasis on his final novel, *The Black Horse.* The question of what can be gleaned from this work forms the basis for the following essay.

Founded in the early twentieth century from the ashes of Populism, the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) Party was one of the primary instruments of revolutionary pressure on the Tsarist regime. Contrary to the Marxist Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, the SR Party pushed an agrarian socialist agenda. Rather than focusing on the urban proletariat as the instrument of revolution, they emphasized the role of the peasantry. Savinkov was a member of this group, eventually becoming the leader of its semi-autonomous Fighting Organization (alternatively known as the Terrorist Brigade or Combat Organization). In this capacity he carried out multiple instances of revolutionary terrorism, including assassinations. This use of terror was a source of tension between Savinkov and his fellow revolutionaries, both inside and outside of the SR Party. Furthermore, he was apparently resistant to accepting the truth of the Azef Affair. When his fellow SR terrorist Yevno Azef was revealed as an agent of the Tsarist secret police, Savinkov would begin to drift away from his comrades.[1] His tenuous relationship with the SRs was finally officially broken when in 1917 he joined Alexander Kerenskiy's Provisional Government as Deputy Minister of War. Shortly thereafter he aligned himself with General Lavr Kornilov and fought against the Soviets during the Russian Civil War. Following the end of that conflict, Savinkov worked with a number of groups in opposition to the Soviet Union, from the Polish government to MI6.

[1] Richard B. Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," *East European Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (March 1990): 22.

What is so strange about Savinkov's political story is that until 1917 and his alignment with reactionary forces, he seemed an entirely committed socialist and revolutionary. Certainly, though his methods and ideology went counter to that of the Bolsheviks, they were very much in line with Populist history and theory. As part of the Terrorist Brigade, he was responsible for the assassination of Russia's Minister of the Interior Vyacheslav von Plehve in 1906.[2] For their own part, the Marxists opposed this action on principle.[3] Per Leon Trotsky, the Russian Social Democrats believed that individual terrorist acts undermined the larger class struggle, while also having limited effect on the bourgeois state. Nonetheless, when Savinkov committed political violence he was doing so in the same spirit as a long line of socialist terrorists, from Vera Zasulich to Alexander Ulyanov. Under threat of imprisonment, he was forced to flee into exile after von Plehve's killing. He then made contact with the Russian emigre community and continued his revolutionary activity. When the Great War broke out in 1914, dividing socialists between the Defensists (those who backed their countries in the conflict) and the Internationalists (those who advocated resistance to the war effort), Savinkov aligned with the Defensist philosophy. He supported the Entente broadly and France specifically during the conflict, before traveling to Russia following the February Revolution.[4]

However, during the Russian Civil War, Savinkov worked at first with the Provisional Government and later with various White generals, as well as external anti-Bolshevik forces. When he began to collaborate with the reactionary Kornilov, he was expelled from the SR Party. Thereafter he would continue to operate against the Bolsheviks with the aid of the British and Polish governments, and the personal support of Winston Churchill.[5] Notably, he was part of a delegation sent by a coalition of White governments to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (though the group was not officially

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[2] Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," 21.
[3] Leon Trotsky, "Why Marxists Oppose Individual Terrorism," Marxists.org, November 1911, https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1911/11/tia09.htm.
[4] Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," 22.
[5] Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," 23.

recognized by the Entente).[6] I note this not to question Savinkov's revolutionary credentials or motivations, but offer the beginning of an explanation for his activities during the last years of his life. The degree to which the agendas of his patrons influenced his own ought to be considered.

During their early history, the Soviet Union and its predecessor and later constituent state, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, were constantly harassed by anti-socialist groups, many of which were organized by Savinkov, that posed an existential threat to the newly established state. The Cheka's solution came in the form of Operation Trust, a counterintelligence program that set up a fake White resistance group. In 1924 Savinkov was lured into the USSR by this group and imprisoned. His death less than a year later has been ruled a suicide.

While abroad, Savinkov was encouraged to begin writing by the emigre poet Zinaida Gippius. He published his first novel, *The Pale Horse,* in 1909. In Russia and abroad he authored a number of novels and analyses, including *What Never Happened* (1912), *Memoirs of a Terrorist* (1917), and *The Black Horse* (1924). While *The Black Horse* has been subject to little study in English-language scholarship (though an anglophone translation exists, difficulties in locating and accessing it made translating it myself the simpler task), Savinkov's actions both within the SRs and during and after the Civil War have been relatively thoroughly analyzed. Even so, his role within the larger revolutionary movement, or even if he should be considered a revolutionary at all, remains a matter of debate.

What I wish to investigate, then, is how Savinkov's literary work can aid in defining his ideological journey, and what the endpoint of that journey actually was. In this essay, I will analyze the novel *The Black Horse* in pursuit of new perspectives on Savinkov and the development of his political thought. I will be focusing on how his attitudes towards the Bolshevik party, terrorism, and socialism in general bleed through the pages of the book, to the extent that his characters and themes may be taken as representative of his own beliefs and ideology.

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[6] Charlotte Alston, "'The Suggested Basis for a Russian Federal Republic': Britain, Anti-Bolshevik Russia and the Border States at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919," *History* 91, no. 1 (January 2006): 26.

The Black Horse as an Ideological Work

Generally, Savinkov's writings should be considered political actions – they were tools to explain, analyze, and propagate his ideology. They deal with subjects and events with which the author either had some personal stake in or took part in directly. Take his first novel, *The Pale Horse,* for example, which is very much a counterpart to *The Black Horse*. Putting aside their references to the same portion of the Bible, they are both told through the point of view of a terrorist under the pseudonym of George, and they both appear to deal with Savinkov's personal journey towards disillusionment with the concept of individually-perpetrated revolutionary terrorism. George begins *The Pale Horse* as a terrorist and revolutionary, and ends it doubting his cause – but still with revolver in hand.[7] I take the position that George's revolutionary and counterrevolutionary actions that drive the plot of both of these books represent Savinkov's own struggle to understand his ideology and political purpose.

The Black Horse tells the story of Colonel George and his band of insurgents in their campaign against the Soviet government. The group encounters the destruction wrought by both sides in the conflict, and slowly each of their motivations for fighting are revealed against the backdrop of the turmoil and violence of civil war. Although the communists take on the role of the ever-present main antagonist, George also struggles with more violent and reactionary elements of the White army. Their insurgency eventually moves from the countryside to the city, where George hides in a safehouse as his comrades are picked off by the Cheka, one by one, until only he remains.

The novel opens with a preface in which Savinkov reflects on why he did not name it after what he views as its main character – not George, but Fedya, one of his subordinates. After all, he states, Fedya embodies the apparent message of the book – resisting the Bolsheviks. He is supposed to be any agent of anti-communist resistance. In the preface, Savinkov explains his reasoning: "Fedya, not knowing why he struggles against the Bolsheviks, and still hating them, was everywhere, on all fronts,

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[7] Boris Viktorovich Savinkov, *The Pale Horse,* trans. Michael Katz (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), XXI.

in all 'White' armies, in all 'Green' squads and in every secret organization."[8] In a way, he is even able to benefit from the conflict, having carved out a new identity for himself. More than a soldier, Fedya is an artist. In a self-portrait, he depicts himself in Western-style clothing and entertains sending the work to an exhibition, if it were possible.[9] What Savinkov leaves unclear is whether Fedya had a chance to acquire this skill if his life were more peaceful, or if the conflict revealed it. Considering that the description of his self-portrait pays special attention to his battle scars, I am inclined to believe the latter. Taking this into consideration, Fedya's artistic talent serves as a sort of light in the darkness, a singular positive point in an ailing world.

However, the story of *The Black Horse* is told not through Fedya's point of view. Rather, George is the first-person narrator. George may well be the same character as the protagonist of *The Pale Horse,* with whom he shares a name[10] and Savinkov's personal experiences as a terrorist and revolutionary. When Savinkov was an SR and a terrorist, he wrote George as an SR and a terrorist; when Savinkov was a White Army insurgent, so too was George. Being the experienced, single-mindedly anti-Bolshevik leader of a group of insurgents, he may very well be a self-reflection of his author, but he potentially could also be meant to function as a projection for the reader. Regardless of the events of *The Pale Horse,* George has no real past in *The Black Horse.* He is nothing but the sum of his values and experiences: "But what do I hate for? I have no home and no family. I have no loss because I have no property."[11] Whereas most of his compatriots in the fight against Bolshevism have had something taken away from them by the communists, George had nothing to begin with. He represents neither revenge nor justice, but struggle for its own sake. In this sense, he works as a protagonist just as well as Fedya. Recall that Fedya was defined as the main character for his ability to be anyone against the Bolsheviks. Similarly, both of them have no real motivating cause.

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[8] Boris Viktorovich Savinkov, *The Black Horse* (1924).
[9] Savinkov, *The Black Horse.*
[10] Savinkov, *The Pale Horse,* 116-117.
[11] Savinkov, *The Black Horse.*

Yet there is a major difference in their values. Where Fedya never doubts the cause and eventually gives his life for it, George has trouble justifying his purpose, at times: "What could I answer? Yes, at the home front we have Tsarist generals. Yes, landlords drag, like leeches, behind us. Yes, in the army there is theft..."[12] George, like the author who created him, continues to fight without any real purpose. Through George, we may view *The Black Horse* as Savinkov's acknowledgment and acceptance that he has become totally consumed by the anti-Bolshevik conflict. However, this is a narrow view, and there is certainly more to be said about Savinkov's self-perception within the book.

The Collective and Individual Communist

Savinkov on occasion uses characters to represent various concepts. The most obvious of these, literally spelled out for the reader, is George's former lover, Olga – "Russia is Olga, Olga is Russia."[13] But she is more than simply a static character to humanize George. What complicates their relationship is that Olga is a communist, and therefore aligned with the system he has spent the entire novel fighting against. The two interact a few times throughout the book, and are always ideologically opposed. Furthermore, she gives communism in the novel a face, and a sympathetic one at that. Communists are frequently referred to negatively and in the abstract. As an example, take one of George's companions, Egorov, whose "House [they] burned and son [they] killed"[14] In this statement, the communists are first a unit, the one indistinguishable from the other, and second the perpetrator of political violence. Egorov, meanwhile, is first the victim of this action, and second the vehicle of righteous vengeance. Savinkov differentiates between characters, who are defined by what they do and what is done to them as individuals, and groups, which are defined by their collective actions. When Egorov, Fedya, or any other character does something, that action is their own. When a communist does something, that is the action of all communists – which is why Olga as an individual is difficult for George to reconcile.

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[12] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.
[13] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.
[14] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

The communists are also placed in Biblical terms, being literally demonized in the text, with Egorov referring to them and those aligning with them as "those devils."[15] The Bolsheviks are cast as an obscene and otherworldly adversary. Rather than just people bound together by a cause, they instead represent something inherently malevolent. Furthermore, they are a homogeneous group, with no national or religious identity, no defining characteristics beyond their infernal nature. Contrast this to George's motley band, made up of peasants, Cossacks, Old Believers, and others. This only serves to further contribute to the characterization of George's companions as living, breathing people, opposing an undefined mass of ideology. In fact, Savinkov even seems to be portraying the very concept of ideology as the enemy. George is defined by what he fights against; the Bolsheviks are defined by what they fight for. Nonetheless, by the novel's end, ideology, that is, mass belief in a set of ideals, seems to win out over the individual.

But let us now return to Olga. She is, I believe, the key to Savinkov's entire ideology in writing this book. It is the work of a broken man. George continues to love her, in spite of what she has become and how the two have grown apart. Similarly, Savinkov held an idealized image of a Russia that might have been. His work between the October Revolution and his imprisonment revealed a projection of his own beliefs on the people of Russia. In *The Black Horse,* he acknowledges that the Russia he wants cannot be. The scene in which George leaves Olga near the very end of the novel represents Savinkov's at least partial acceptance of the new Bolshevik status quo. Partial, because Olga still wishes to accompany George wherever he goes, but an acceptance nonetheless that she, and Russia, will remain communist.

Savinkov's Political Stance

The reader may also note the apparent lack of archaic language present in the novel. Savinkov uses word choice that is literary, but not at all inaccessible. The novel was clearly meant to be widely approachable. This begs the question, then – who is *The Black Horse*'s audience? With his attempts at

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[15] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

insurgency foiled time and again, did he hope that it would be read by anyone? Distributed to a

sympathetic Western public or White emigre community? Smuggled into the Soviet Union to inspire

anti-Bolshevik resistance? In order to answer these questions with any degree of satisfaction, we must

further address the political alignment of *The Black Horse.*

That is, is *The Black Horse* even against the Soviet Union at all? Further complicating this

entire situation is an important and rather obscure piece of context – by 1923, Savinkov's faith in the

anti-Bolshevik struggle showed signs of faltering. In the text, he certainly demonstrates a level of

regret for his actions – or at least their direct consequences. George is painfully aware of the pain that

he has caused: "The Jews went into the forests, with the elderly, women and children, with the cattle

and household goods. We are not liberators in their eyes, but pogromists and murderers. In their place

I would also leave."[16] (To his credit, George does punish his subordinates harshly for their crimes.)

Even beyond *The Black Horse,* there is evidence that he expressed a certain amount of admiration for

the Communist leadership.[17] In personal correspondence, he specifically characterizes *The Black*

Horse as sympathetic to the Soviet cause: "Did you read the last page of [*The Black Horse*] in the

original version? Do you remember that I completely changed it because unconsciously it gave the

impression [of being] definitely in favor of the Bolsheviks?"[18] His use of "unconsciously" suggests a

contradiction between his actions and his beliefs: Savinkov's experiences were beginning to lead him

into alignment with the Bolshevik cause, even as he continued to work to undermine it. Naturally, this

quote suggests no small level of discomfort with this notion. However, there is another source that

suggests a different point of view.

One must keep in mind that Savinkov wrote *The Black Horse* after experiencing a series of

failures to ignite anti-Bolshevik resistance. It reflects a rather different Savinkov than his other works.

He is no longer the daring revolutionary he featured in *The Pale Horse.* There exists a letter, an appeal,

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[16] Savinkov, *The Black Horse.*
[17] Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," 27.
[18] Spence, "The 'Savinkov Affair' Reconsidered," 33.

to Felix Dzerzhinsky, then the head of the Cheka, penned by Savinkov in the days before his death. In the correspondence, he (rather boldly) proposes that he be released from prison and go to work for the Soviet government, referencing previous discussions had with and assurances received from other Soviet officials.[19] One's interpretation of this proposal depends on whether one sees in it Savinkov the ideologue or Savinkov the pragmatist. Other documents written at the same time as *The Black Horse*, fortunately for scholars of Russian and Soviet history, play an important role in informing us of his ideology and mental state during this final period of his life.

Savinkov, it seems, was a man who dealt in absolutes. In this letter to Dzerzhinsky, he describes himself thusly: "I can't take a halfway position, I must be either pro or contra…."[20] In light of this, it becomes easier to reconcile his socialist history with his alignment with the Whites. In order to be contra to the Bolsheviks, Savinkov found it necessary to work with anyone who shared his enemy, be they the Provisional Government, reactionary insurgents, the Poles, or the British. Earlier, I briefly discussed the idea that Savinkov's actions were motivated less by his own beliefs than by those of his supporters. That is, he became a tool for use by external and internal anti-revolutionary forces. That Savinkov was a socialist became secondary to his single-minded war against communism – and that was exactly what was needed by his patrons.

The Biblical *Black Horse*

There is an apocalyptic element to the novel. Following the preface are two Bible verses. The first is from Revelation 6:5 – "...And behold, a black horse, and on it a rider, holding a scale in his hand."[21] The black horse and its rider are of course part of a quartet, with the rider of the white horse representing conquest, the red – war, the black – famine, and the pale – death.[22] Yet it is not the rider but the object he carries that Savinkov invites the reader to study. "And the subjectively unshaken

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[19] Boris Viktorovich Savinkov, letter to Felix Dzerzhinsky, May, 1925.

[20] Savinkov, letter to Dzherzhinsky.

[21] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

[22] Helmut Nickel, "And Behold, a White Horse... Observations on the Colors of the Horses of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 12, (1977): 179. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1512732.

scales objectively bow with one of their cups, that on which is the 'final and decisive' for the life and the wellbeing of the working people. That is not George's cup."[23] The scales may be a reference to Dostoevskiy's *The Idiot,* which also emphasizes this particular aspect of the third horseman.[24] In fact, the end-of-days aspects of *The Black Horse* recall a long tradition of apocalyptic imagery, and reference to *Revelation* in particular. What must be considered is that the apocalypse in Dostoevskiy's work was simultaneously two things: a rejection of earthly utopianism and at the same time an invitation to a new, unearthly paradise for the virtuous.[25] With this in mind, Savinkov's vision of Biblical Armageddon in Russia becomes clearer. The conflict between the Bolsheviks and the counter-revolutionaries becomes a divinely-inspired necessity, a crucible for the country to pass through if utopia (communist or otherwise) is to come.

The order in which the horsemen arrive may also be important. The black horse is the third to arrive, and before it are the riders representing conquest and war.[26] The Russian Empire had clearly suffered conquest and war during World War I and the Revolution, but death has yet to claim it. Therefore, with the first two horsemen already having left their mark on the country, it is famine's turn to come to Russia. Savinkov implies in the title of *The Black Horse* that Russia is the victim of an apocalypse in progress, but his conclusion is unclear.

I am inclined to believe that the Bolsheviks are the riders of the pale horse. His apparently reluctant acceptance of the resilience of the Soviet system, both in personal correspondence and the novel itself, suggests that a successful Bolshevik revolution may actually serve as the fourth horseman in Savinkov's worldview. It would be necessary for Russia to die so that a new socialist state could rise in its place. "'For Russia'… but for which Russia?"[27] Perhaps Savinkov's understanding of the conflict

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[23] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.
[24] William J. Leatherbarrow, "Imagery in Dostoevskij's *The Idiot* and *The Devils,*" in *Shapes of Apocalypse: Arts and Philosophy in Slavic Thought,* ed. Andrea Oppo (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 128.
[25] Leatherbarrow, "Imagery in Dostoevskij," 133.
[26] Rev. 6:1-6:8 (New King James).
[27] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

places both George and the Bolsheviks as fighting for different Russias. Savinkov's Russia rides the

black horse, bringing Tsarist generals and aristocrats like parasites. The Communists' Russia rides the

pale horse, killing the old world and heralding the new – that is, rejecting an earthly utopia and

shepherding Russia onward to an unearthly one, in line with the tradition of Dostoevskiy that Savinkov

may well have followed in.

However, given textual evidence and Savinkov's own commentary, it is more likely that the

black horse instead represents the Bolsheviks. With the Communist Party in power, it is they who hold

the scales that balance the allegiance of the people. And the scales, not the famine, are the aspect that

Savinkov intentionally emphasizes. The famine that the rider of the black horse brings is secondary to

the measure that he carries. Perhaps, by extension, in Savinkov's view, the loyalty of the people matters

more than any turmoil that the Bolsheviks have brought.

Let us now return to this quote about the scales and dissect it piece by piece. "And the

subjectively unshaken scales objectively bow with one of their cups…."[28] The scales are "subjectively"

unshaken, meaning that they may appear stable from one point of view, and shaken from another, yet

they "objectively" bow, meaning that regardless of how one sees them, they are weighted towards one

side. This suggests an argument that there is an objectively more virtuous, more correct side in Russia's

conflict. The cup that bows carries the "'final and decisive' for the life and the wellbeing of the

working people," and it decidedly does not bend to George.[29] Savinkov argues that George and his

band are fighting a losing battle for the allegiance of the Russian people. Given this, he becomes a

tragic hero, fighting against the inevitability of history for the loyalty of a people that are already

aligned *against* him, and therefore *with* the communists.

And Savinkov does indeed reserve the SR's traditional place for the common people, and the

peasants in particular, in the revolution. In comparing rural laborers to urban workers, George notes,

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[28] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.
[29] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

"We knew Nietzsche, but not how to distinguish winter crops from spring crops."[30] From his understanding, the country cannot survive on the know-how of intellectuals, soldiers, and all the others that made up the Red and White armies. More crucial to Russia's future than any of them is the peasantry.

Earlier I had mentioned that *The Black Horse* begins with two quotes from the Bible, but only discussed the first. The second, John 2:11, may support the idea that Savinkov's last novel is the beginning of a reconciliation with the communists: "But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."[31] Civil wars are often cast as tragic wars between brothers, but that it is featured so prominently, just below the quote taken from Revelation 11:5, implies that there is more to it. One way to interpret Savinkov's use of this quote is that it functions as a proposal of rapprochement between himself and the Soviets. Evidence of at least some level of sympathy for the Communist government in his personal writings, as well as in *The Black Horse* itself, as I have argued, supports this idea. If this is taken as true, then Savinkov envisioned himself as part of a brotherhood with the communists – maybe based on their shared national identity, or maybe based on their similar belief in a socialist future. Based on his understanding that the Russian people have chosen their side, he appeals to a sense of fraternity in the hope of having a place for himself in the Soviet future.

Alternatively, it should also be considered that Savinkov sees a brotherhood not with the Bolsheviks, but with his fellow insurgents – that is, between George and his companions. One of George's defining characteristics is that despite his self-doubt, he is committed to the struggle for its own sake. With no past or relatives, his comrades have in a real sense become the only family he has. This sense is arguably reciprocated, making it all the more tragic that at the novel's end, George's brothers-in-arms are eliminated, and he is forced to abandon his struggle all alone.

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[30] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.
[31] John 2:11 (New King James).

Conclusion

I propose that the *The Black Horse* is the ego document of a broken man in a broken world. Showing the view from rock bottom, it is Savinkov's last attempt to come to terms with his own failures and the contradictions of his beliefs. Within it, he reconciles the futility of the struggle he has devoted the last of his life to, and accepts that he is no one at all without it. Moreover, he reckons with having no future, because he has no real hope of success, and his actions have precluded acceptance into the Soviet Union. Ultimately, Russia's future is not for Savinkov to shape, and he struggles to see any place for himself in it on his current path – "What have I achieved? Behind – freshly dug graves. Ahead... What awaits me ahead?"[32]

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[32] Savinkov, *The Black Horse*.

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Reframing Perceptions of Signares in French Colonial Senegal

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Abstract: Fifteenth to nineteenth-century French Colonial Senegal was a period of unprecedented cultural contact and convergence in Western Africa. With these interactions came new social hierarchies and the emergence of the signare identity. Signares were wealthy mixed-race and African Women who became involved with French men. This paper examines nineteenth-century art by Frenchman David Boilat and Stanislas Darondeau, and the eighteenth-century house of signare Anne Pepin. It critiques the racism and sexism depicted within Boilat and Darondeau's work as well as its misinterpretations by contemporary scholars Mark Hinchman and George E. Brooks. Signares were knowledgeable entrepreneurs rather than manipulative and seductive women, which I argue with the support of contemporary scholars Marylee Crofts and Hilary Jones' work. As I complicate existing research and develop an alternative narrative, I urge readers to question the diverse narratives about these African and mixed-race women in French Colonial Senegal.

Introduction

From the fifteenth century when Europeans first made contact with West Africans in Saint-Louis and Gorée, a new cross-cultural context emerged that was influenced by the social dynamics of Europeans, mixed-raced individuals, and West Africans. Signares, wealthy mixed-race and African Women, entered into temporary marital unions known as *le mariage à la mode du pays* with French men. These women became some of the wealthiest property owners in Western Senegambia (also simplified to Senegal in this paper) by working as intermediaries between African middlemen and French traders. Despite the significant influence these women had in the region, there are no surviving accounts written by them. The only primary sources referencing them are sexist, racist traveler's accounts and portraits, such as those of mixed-race African priest David Boilat and Frenchman Stanislas Darondeau, which reflect Eurocentric ideologies. Biased sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries influenced later analyses.

Modern scholars from 1980-2015 offer divergent interpretations of the racial dimensions of the signares in eighteenth and nineteenth century Saint-Louis and Gorée. George E. Brooks and Mark Hinchman glorify the region and overlook the sexist and racist beliefs characteristic of this era. Scholars such as Marylee Crofts and Hilary Jones are more attentive to race relations, capturing a broader perspective of what signares' lives might have looked like. This paper will critique Boilat and Darondeau's art and challenge Brooks' and Hinchman's interpretations of their work and other accounts, which discount signares' agency and misrepresent them. Then, I will analyze the architecture of the time and argue, with the support of Crofts and Jones, that

signares were knowledgeable entrepreneurs who filled an essential role in French Colonial Senegal.

When French colonists found themselves in an unfamiliar landscape, they became involved with knowledgeable African women (later known as signares) to ensure their survival and prosperity. In the seventeenth century, the French claimed the islands of Saint-Louis and Gorée in Western Senegambia. The first wave of colonists came in search of gum arabic and, as a result, sought to form relationships with local Africans who could acquire these goods for them.[1] The French encountered many challenges because they did not know the landscape or local food sources, and many had never performed domestic labor.[2] French men found themselves vulnerable and many fell ill. This is what led their relationships with Africans to be vital to their basic survival, and ultimately, their success in extracting wealth from the region.

As French men began having intimate relationships with local African women many moved into roundhouses, structures with round morphologies and conical roofs. These women filled the role of domestic caretakers, cooking and washing their clothes. African women learned French, bridging the language gap barrier between Europeans and Africans. Being bilingual, they were uniquely suited to assist French traders and African middlemen with business affairs.[3] By the mid-1800s, these relationships between African women and French men evolved into a culture of signares. *Le mariage à la mode du pays* became the formalized practice for uniting French men and African and mixed-race women with the approval of local African officials. While these relationships could be mutually beneficial, bringing wealth and status to both

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[1] Dwight Carey. "Early Colonial African Landscapes: The Case of Senegal." Lecture at Amherst College, Amherst MA, September 14, 2022.
[2] Carey, "Early Colonial African Landscapes: The Case of Senegal."
[3] Dwight Carey. "The Case of Senegal Continued." Building Colonial Cities, Lecture at Amherst College, Amherst MA, September 19, 2022.

parties, the racist and sexist beliefs of French men meant they could also be strained, painful, and difficult for the women involved. Marriage for domestic labor and economic gain did not guarantee mutual respect or equality.

Signares in Art

Eighteenth and nineteenth century traveler's accounts provide a very narrow window into what signares' lives were like, but demonstrate the writers' sexist and racist biases, which prevailed at the time. Their writing focuses on the physical appearance and character of mixed-race and African women, making it challenging to construct a holistic narrative about them. Analyzing these primary accounts provides insight into European travelers' varied attitudes toward signares (as objects, laborers, exotic beauties, among other things) and how modern historians drew conclusions about signares' roles in Saint-Louis and Gorée.

David Boilat captured nineteenth century perceptions of signares in his portrait on the right. This woman is poised regally, her head held high, arms placed neatly on her lap; she appears refined, polite, and well-mannered. Despite a seemingly positive portrayal of the signare, French men believed signares were conceited and greedy due to their poise and attire. To the first point, the subject's choice to maintain eye contact with the portraitist may be interpreted as confidence derived from vanity. One Frenchman went as far as to say signares "are so fastidious about their appearance that they carry a

Figure 1: Boilat, David, "Signare," 1853, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

little mirror with them… so that they may feast their eyes on their own good looks."[4] The

fashionable attire of the signares provides additional evidence to support the French men's claim,

given that many travelers believed their choice to indulge in luxuries stemmed from self-

centeredness.

Despite these perceptions, the signares' dress reflects their high status, wealth, and

connection to the global world. The money signares made from working as trade intermediaries

enabled them to afford products from across the globe, including the highest European fashion of

the time. Hilary Jones explains the global reach of these women, writing, "They wore the grande

pagne (wraparound cloth) of African women with a chemise of fine fabric, Moroccan shoes, and

imported cloth from India (guinées) as a head wrap."[5] Jones also mentions how signares paired

European embroidered shirts with skirts made by local weavers.[6] Signares' attire reflects a

blending of styles, and their appearance marked Senegal as a center of cultural contact and

convergence, a fact blatantly ignored and twisted in the traveler's accounts.

In addition to commenting on signares' gentility and vanity, travelers characterized

signares as erotic, sexually desirable, and exotic. One French man wrote that they were "sweet,

seductive, and voluptuous."[7] Similarly, French scientist Michel Adanson objectifies signares

noting, "Their skin is fine and extremely soft. Their eyes are large and black; their mouths and

lips are small…many are perfect beauties."[8] These idealized facial features—unblemished skin,

small lips, and large eyes—are also illustrated in David Boilat's portrait. Racism clouds French

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[4] Marylee S Crofts. "Economic Power and Racial Irony: Portrayals of Women Entrepreneurs in French Colonial Senegal." *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society,* no. 19 (1994): 216–25. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43007777, 220.
[5] Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 36.
[6] Jones, *The Métis of Senegal, 91*.
[7] Crofts, "Economic Power and Racial Irony," 220.
[8] Crofts, 222.

perceptions of their beauty. A 1789 traveler's account reads, "Seeing the women of Senegal, one regrets only that they are not white. Apart from that, they are full of grace and kindness."[9] This French man acknowledges his perceived inferiority of these women before any descriptors are supplied, implying that they are secondary. Racism obfuscates their positive attributes. French men also believed these women manipulated them with their beauty, seducing them to exploit them for profit and status.[10]

Stanislas Darondeau's 1842 portrait displayed on the right reflects the perceived grace, vanity, and sexual desirability of signares but uniquely contrasts them with a racist, heavily stereotyped illustration of African women. Upon examining this painting, historian George E. Brooks points out the lighter skin of this signare and the improbability that she would have been so fair skinned.[11] By painting her in this way, Darondeau may have been trying to reduce the potential distaste and shock of the realities of French colonial interracial relationships. Furthermore, Darondeau juxtaposes the signare against other seemingly uncivilized bare-breasted
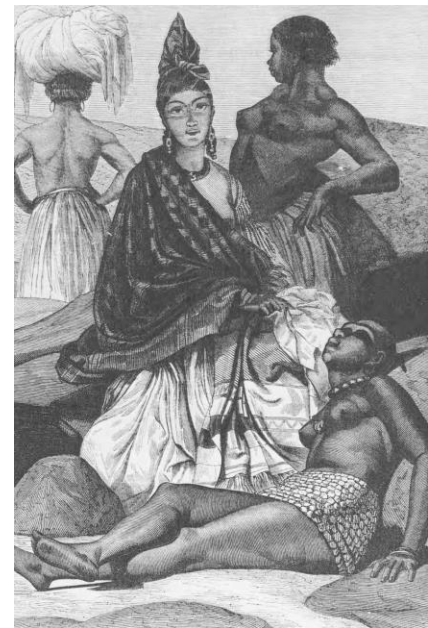

Figure 2: Darondeau, Stanislas. "Unnamed Portrait," 1860. Included in George E. Brooks article "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares."

African women whose bodies are displayed brazenly. He painted the signare as respectable, modern, and distinctly different from African women in the eyes of the French. Another distinguishing feature is the conical hat of the signare. Many African women (such as the women in the background) wore bundles on their heads to carry things while they worked; while the

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[9] Crofts, "Economic Power and Racial Irony," 220.
[10] George E Brooks. "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares: Insights Concerning French Racist and Sexist Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century." (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 87.
[11] Brooks, "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares," 83.

conical hat symbolized that one did not have to work because of their wealth.[12] This image is deceptive on many accounts, curated to contrast the signare against other African women. Darondeau's idolization of signares dismisses the racism they experienced.

European art and written accounts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reveal the racism and sexism that undergirds the emphasis on high social standing and physical beauty in their portrayal of signares. Brooks falls victim to these incomplete narratives. He begins his 1980 analysis "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares" by introducing them as "renowned during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century for their beauty, elegant dress, and enviable life-style."[13] Following the pattern of primary art and literature, Brooks seems to reduce signares to their physical characteristics and wealth, deeming these their most significant attributes. Fueling the stereotype that signares are seductive, he writes, "European men found Senegalese women irresistible, and the ungovernable passions they aroused are reputed to have ruined many careers."[14] Brooks also claims that "relations between Africans and Europeans were long unaffected by the spread of racism in Europe," citing the "highly flattering" nature of artistic representations from the nineteenth century.[15] He marks the 1870s as the turning point when racism "arrived" in Senegal, but it was ever-present as French men dismissed the personhood of Africans while exploiting them to gain access to the land's resources. In fact, the signares' success was based on navigating the colonial context to benefit themselves socioeconomically.

Brooks acknowledges positive attributes of signares, commenting on their roles as caretakers and language interpreters. Nonetheless, like eighteenth and nineteenth century travelers, Brooks argues they acted solely for their economic gain. He concludes, "European

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[12] Carey, "The Case of Senegal Continued."
[13] Brooks, "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares," 77.
[14] Brooks, 83.
[15] Brooks, 82.

artists did not see beneath the women's masks," saying if they had done so, they "might have heard the rich, deep laughter of Senegalese women discussing how they manipulate French men to their advantage."[16] Ending by saying signares were manipulative indicates that Brooks did not see beneath their "masks" either. He takes European descriptions and depictions as fact, characterizing signares based on their physical appearance and relationships with French men.

Twenty-first century architectural historian Mark Hinchman also does not deeply question primary source material, using travel narratives to support his argument that relations in French Colonial Senegal were mostly amicable. He calls Senegalese women fastidious about their appearance, reiterating the words of French travelers.[17] He argues that signares controlled the production of their image, but why would they have chosen to depict themselves in a manner which reflects Eurocentric ideologies? Hinchman concludes that because African and mixed-race women influenced their portrayal in portraits, they shaped the stereotypes that French travelers imposed on them.[18] He speaks to the agency of signares, but he does so primarily to support his claim that they controlled their portrayal.

Hinchman's interpretation of eighteenth-century French scientist Michael Adanson's traveler's accounts is striking. He describes Adanson as "exemplary" for his objectivity, citing his "statements about the relative nature of beauty" as an example of "his unbiased observational powers."[19] The statements to which Hinchman refers objectify and eroticize signares, referring to their soft skin, small lips, and other facial features. When Hinchman chooses to acknowledge Adanson's insults of Senegalese women, he brushes them off, saying Adanson was "absent-

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[16] Brooks, "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares," 87.
[17] Mark Hinchman. *Portrait of an Island: The Architecture and Material Culture of Gorée, Sénégal, 1758-1837.* (Lincoln: Nebraska Press, 2015), 286.
[18] Hinchman, *Portrait of an Island*, 201.
[19] Hinchman, 166-167.

minded."[20] Hinchman consistently praises Adanson's scientific work and traveler's accounts,

ignoring the sexism and racism within them. He fails to recognize that *none* of the travelers to

French Colonial Senegal were unbiased observers; further, Hinchman does not acknowledge how

these travelers' perceptions of race and gender influenced their work.

Examining art and traveler's accounts paints a limited picture of signares, particularly

because they paid little attention to their non-physical attributes. Their racist insults and sexual

objectification deem their accounts as unrepresentative of the role of signares in French Colonial

Senegal. Primarily, these accounts confirm the wealth and high social standing of these women,

partially displayed by their choice of imported and local clothing. There is also truth to signares

using their relationships with French men to gain wealth and status, but portraits such as Boilat's

and Darondeau's obscure these narratives and dismiss the racism and systems of control these

women navigated while doing so. Unfortunately, we only have the European perspective of the

era, given that illiterate signares did not preserve records that would address the gaps and biases

of surviving documentation. To construct a more objective narrative of the signares' day-to-day

lives—with whom they interacted, their professional and personal ambitions, and the context in

which they lived—one should examine their visual legacy. The architecture of their homes and

possessions within them position signares in the Senegalese context.

The Architectural Record

The well-preserved Maison Pepin house, home to signare Anne Pepin in eighteenth

century Gorée, Senegal, provides an alternative narrative centered around the daily lives of

signares. The home is split into two stories with the main bank of rooms (arranged en filade) at

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[20] Hinchman, *Portrait of an Island*, 167.

Figure 3: D'Hastrel, Adolphe, "Maison de la signare," 1839, Included in Mark Hinchman's *Portrait of an Island*.

the far end, a large central courtyard, and the enslaved people's quarters and storage spaces at the front facing the street. These homes were expansive, inhabited by signares' enslaved people, and filled with luxury goods, reflecting the wealth and status of the women who owned them. There are distinctly public and private spaces. The signare and her family's rooms were private, and their enslaved people inhabited both the public courtyard and their private quarters. In the image above, one can see enslaved people working in the central courtyard. The courtyard was primarily occupied by female enslaved people who watched children, washed clothes, and cooked in the space. Some male enslaved people, particularly sailors and fishermen, spent the day laboring outside the compound, although weavers and carpenters worked inside it.[21] The courtyard also served as a place for hosting gatherings referred to as *folgars* with "music, dancing, wine, and other refreshments" where women in the community could "observe and be observed."[22] The space was one where enslaved people, traders, visitors, and other community members were constantly coming and going. The signares' economic pursuits, position as trade intermediaries, lavish lifestyles, and global connections brought people of different races and classes together in their homes. The layout of their homes, particularly the large courtyard, enabled them to do so. The architecture suggests a narrative detailing the economic success of

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[21] Hinchman, *Portrait of an Island*, 223.
[22] Brooks, "Artists' Depictions of Senegalese Signares," 83.

signares without attributing them to greedy and manipulative personalities, as implied by European travelers.

The two stories of the house mark social divisions. The signare and her family could observe their enslaved people at work in the courtyard below from the gallery. The enslaved people's quarters were also on the ground floor, physically placing them below the high-class signares. Another feature of note is the signares' placement of storage spaces for trading goods. In the image, these flank the main bank of rooms. Signares stored goods from around the world, including French wines, Indian cloth, gold, and blue cotton.[23] The placement of these goods suggests business was conducted at the front of the home where signares' goods were displayed. Signares' elevated living quarters and their centrality to business deals demonstrated their success and status within this colonial society.

Signares' homes also reflected their global connections through features adopted from different cultures. For example, the central dirt courtyard reflects those of traditional African compounds. The materials used in construction are local; masons used *argamasse* (Goréen mortar), limewash, *chaux* (plaster), clay, and in later years, paint. By contrast, the double spiral staircase resembles European palace architecture. Signares also constantly altered and expanded their homes, which was customary in Europe as a display of wealth.[24] While there were both French and African elements to signares' homes, they were uniquely adapted to suit the needs of each signare.

Mark Hinchman analyzes the architectural features of the Maison Pepin house in *Portrait of an Island*. He acknowledges the role of signares in shaping Saint-Louis and Gorée, commenting on how their homes reflect their wealth, status, and agency—glorifying the

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[23] Hinchman, *Portrait of an Island*, 329.
[24] Hinchman, 225.

women's success and dismissing their struggles. Hinchman describes the signares house as "her base of operations, it affirmed her status, it was a source of income, and it stood as a symbol of her familial and social life."[25] These functions are accurate, but his analysis falsely characterizes French Colonial Senegal as harmonious, ignoring social divisions within the home.

Repeatedly, Hinchman omits and overlooks details that reveal the complexities and challenges signares face in French colonial cities. He spends a great deal of time discussing how their wealth was displayed. Hinchman references inventories of Anne Pepin and other signares' homes, commenting on their Indian mosquito nets, French gourds, and English mirrors.[26] While examining material possessions provides insight into the lives of signares, Hinchman is so caught up with specifics that he spends little time analyzing their implications. He only emphasizes the wealth and status of signares rather than fully contextualizing their role and position in society.

Hinchman covers interracial marital unions between French men and African and mixed-race women in just one and a half pages. He explains that French men entered these relationships for "pragmatic reasons, such as arranging for food, washing clothes, lodging, and sex," but that doing so consistently resulted in the formation of "an ongoing emotional attachment."[27] While there may be some truth to his assertion, Hinchman does not provide evidence to support it—how are affection and emotional attachments guaranteed, for example? Hinchman argues that signares had amicable, affectionate relationships with French men, which elevated their status and increasing their wealth. He only briefly mentions their role as trade intermediaries to explain how they came into this wealth and an additional benefit gained by French men when they

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[25] Hinchman, *Portrait of an Island*, 133.
[26] Hinchman, 329.
[27] Hinchman, 170.

became involved with signares. Hinchman's primary focus is on the positives, painting Western

Senegambia as a bustling colony full of trade, wealth, and easy living, but such was not the case.

Contextual Realities of the Signares

Transitioning from identifying misinterpretations of the signares, Crofts' and Jones'

work reveals the true nature of signares' lives in French Colonial Senegal. As discussed above,

signares entered temporary marital unions with French men. The system of exchange between

these men and women went in both directions as signares acted as caretakers and trade

intermediaries while French men expanded their opportunities to gain wealth and social

prominence. However, these relationships were complex; each couple navigated cultural

differences. Because of their race and gender, the French viewed signares as inferior, and this

was amplified by the explicit power imbalance dynamics of colonialism. Still, French men's

ideologies did not deter them from taking advantage of the benefits of forming relationships with

signares. Jones writes, "Colonialism worked its way into the intimate spaces of home, courtyard,

kitchen, and bedroom occupied predominantly by women."[28] The French exemplified this by

inhabiting African spaces and exporting their goods, exploiting their power.

Signares were entrepreneurs with knowledge of the landscape, business acumen, and

fluency in Wolof and French. Crofts references the intelligence of signares and discusses how it

has only been acknowledged in some of the most recent scholarship. Despite the signares'

profound influence that shaped French Colonial Senegal, they are largely erased from the record,

which is told "through the lens of male power and privilege."[29] Nevertheless, the success of the

French would not have been possible without the resources and knowledge signares provided.

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[28] Jones, *The Métis of Senegal*, 4.
[29] Jones, 21.

Signares "instilled European tastes and values in their children but also reinforced the link between coastal people and African societies of the mainland."[30] They blended African and European cultures, creating a new context that did not perfectly model French or Wolof societies. It was signares whose intelligence and influence shaped French Colonial Senegal.

Conclusion

Signares' attire and homes support the claims that these women were wealthy and of a high social class while revealing the ways these women facilitated trade and established connections to those across the region and world. Cultural convergence in Saint-Louis and Gorée is exemplified in signares' dress which blended fashion styles from European embroidered shirts to Moroccan shoes. The blending of cultures is also reflected in signares' homes constructed with local materials and featuring European styles, such as double spiral staircases. Signares' homes were constructed to support the comings and goings of enslaved people, visitors, traders, vendors, and other community members.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century signares and the cultural context they created reflected themes of many European colonies. The travelers' accounts and artistic depictions of signares demonstrated white supremacy. Racial divisions blurred as Africans, Europeans, mixed-race people, and foreigners interacted, though Europeans strongly desired to preserve the boundaries of whiteness. Colonizing nations falsely believed they had more control and influence. In reality, Africans, particularly mixed-race and African signares, played the most significant role in shaping Saint-Louis and Gorée. Even within the confines of the home, French men consumed locally sourced foods and lived under roofs made of local materials. The wealth generated in

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[30] Jones, *The Métis of Senegal*, 31.

French Colonial Senegal was made possible by the African and mixed-race women who looked after French men and put them in contact with African middlemen. The French take more credit for the region's economic prosperity and culture than is due.

Another critical aspect of colonies is cultural convergence and globalization. As discussed previously, signares wore clothes from around the world, blended European and African architectural styles, and participated in the global economy. Africans, French men, and other foreigners lived in close proximity, interacting with each other frequently. A globalized world was formed from trade and connections between members of different cultures. A textile producer in India could be traced to a signare in Western Senegambia or a French trader possessing porcelain to China. Even though most of these people never met, they influenced one another by participating in the global market.

When analyzing these relations, one must recognize the most abundant (and sometimes only) documentation is that of European colonizers. Analyzing art and architecture provides a unique lens through which to understand the experiences of signares. Still, there are gaps and biases in primary source material, and many perspectives such as those of signares and Africans will never be fully reconstructed. What is excluded from the record is just as important, if not more so. Through examining and critiquing the works of artists and scholars of the eighteenth through twenty-first centuries, I have determined that signares were knowledgeable entrepreneurs who played a crucial role in maintaining amiable relationships between the French and Africans. Even without detailed accounts from signares and other colonized peoples, through studying the spaces they occupied, one may begin to write them into the historical record.

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The Battle Over Memory: The Contestations of Public and Familial Narratives in Remembering 9/11

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Abstract: On September 11, 2001, the four plane crashes marked the three sites of trauma that, to this day, sit in the heart of United States history. The paper examines the contested and often conflicting public and familial narratives at sites of memory and the recurring themes behind commemoration narratives. Drawing on newsletter articles and seven interviews with members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows and The Peace Abbey, the paper concludes that national and public remembrances of 9/11 adopted a top-down approach that has repressed familial remembrances in three main ways: by glorifying the victims, co-opting the version told of 9/11 stories, and erasing distinct voices that did not fit the national narrative. By contrast, familial remembrances of the victims built a bottom-up approach to memorialize 9/11 and its victims that valued the holistic representation of their lost loved ones in remembrances.

Introduction

Four days after what President Bush referred to as "evil, despicable acts of terror,"[1] Orlando and Phyllis Rodriguez, who lost their 31-years old son in the 9/11 tragedy, wrote the letter "Not In Our Son's Name."[2] The letter contradicted the deterministic war narratives that prevailed in the national discourse. Instead of the publicly emphasized need to again "[stand] down the enemy"[3] without situating the attacks "as an object of historical knowledge,"[4] the Rodriguez family expressed their distress of bearing the thought that their son's name alongside the many other victims who were killed on September 11th, 2001 would be then turned into the fuel for the United States to declare acts of war.

In February of 2003, a protest involving over 500,000 participants consisting of family members of victims, peace activists, and supporters echoed the same sentiments as Orlando and Phyllis Rodriguez.[5] Family members carried signs that read, "NOT IN OUR SON'S/DAUGHTER'S NAME," "9/11 FAMILIES AGAINST WAR," and those that prompted a similar call challenging the collective national memory of the trauma, which focused on inciting horror and retaliation that has now become a vital part of the history of New York and the United States in general.

The collective memory surrounding September 11th has remained contested, unresolved, and constantly in flux. Considering the conflicting narratives that were present, the immediate call for the building of memorials to commemorate the victims had to inherit that very

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[1] "Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation." Office of the Press Secretary. September 11, 2001. Accessed on May 11, 2023. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html.
[2] Orlando & Phyllis, Rodriguez. "Not in Our Son's Name A Plea to the President." Accessed on May 11, 2023. https://changeagent.nelrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Not-in-Our-Son%E2%80%99s-Name.pdf.
[3] "Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation."
[4] Lucy Bond, *Frames of Memory after 9/11: Culture, Criticism, Politics, and Law* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13.
[5] Peaceful Tomorrows, "United for Peace and Justice," 9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, November 27, 2013, https://peacefultomorrows.org/stories/united-for-peace-and-justice-2/.

contestation of collective and familial memories. "'Rebuilding the site,' as architecture scholar Christine Boyer has prophesied, has turned into a 'battle over images and lost opportunities' as much as 'about material form.'"[6] This paper asks the following questions: "For what audience are these memorials at sites of trauma designed?" "Are these commemorations and sites of memories[7] a place for grief or retraumatization?" "To what extent are the voices of family members (symbolic survivors) of 9/11 incorporated in the building of memorials?" "What do family protest and self-constructed memorials symbolize, and how do they differ from publicly displayed memorials?"

In this paper, I examine the narratives constructed in public 9/11 sites of memories and explore the sentiments and reactions of family members towards these sites to suggest how contested narratives situate themselves in the memorialization of 9/11 and its victims. Drawing on newsletter articles and interviews with members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows and The Peace Abbey, this paper concludes that in the battle over 9/11 memories, national and public remembrances adopted a top-down approach when forming a narrative of the event. As a result, they have repressed familial remembrances in three main ways: by glorifying the victims, co-opting the version told of 9/11 stories, and erasing distinct voices that did not fit the national narrative. Familial remembrances of the victims, by contrast, built a bottom-up approach to memorialize 9/11 and its victims that valued the holistic representation of their lost loved ones in remembrances.

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[6] Ekaterina V. Haskins and Justin P. DeRose, "Memory, Visibility, and Public Space," *Space and Culture* 6, no. 4 (2003): 377-393, https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331203258373.
[7] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520.

9/11 and the War on Terror

The crashing of planes into the World Trade Center towers on September 11th *officially* marked the start of the War on Terror initiated by President George W. Bush. The administration adopted what Lucy Bond described as the rhetorical proliferation of trauma culture to maintain a hegemonic narrative surrounding the event. Bond argued that the surge of media coverage, literature, and political claims had depoliticized 9/11 and portrayed the event as singular, incomprehensible, and requiring the need to "fight back."[8] Thus, the war inevitably became a dominant component that contributed to the collective memory of 9/11. This often led to the blurring of the national and familial remembrances in media coverage, with seeming support of war rhetoric from family members who called for building memorials solely dedicated to the victims. However, these media coverages frequently overlooked how the space for memorialization has been shared between the two parties and the power dynamics at play.

After Bush initiated the War on Terror, the memories of 9/11 quickly shifted from ones that centered on personal tragedy to ones that constituted a nation-oriented geopolitical struggle. The memories expanded from the lost loved ones to narratives that pinpointed the "innocence" of the United States before the tragedy and the following wars. Media coverage of 9/11 has often been conflated with discussions on war strategies. Consequently, the public sites of memory adopted a narrowly defined patriotic and nationalistic approach to reinforce the idea of an innocent and exceptional America and how its collective cultural identity had been targeted by 9/11 and "terrorist" ideologies. The conflation and the following shifting scale of 9/11 memories point to how the public narrative has imposed itself upon the personal and familial memories using a top-down approach that served the national purpose instead of one that constructed a more accurate remembering of those who were at the sites of trauma.

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[8] Bond, 10-14.

Glorification: "In whose name?"

Immediately after the event, the sites of tragedy (mainly Ground Zero, Pentagon, and Shanksville) experienced a surge of public memorialization that continued every year after with their popularization as new tourist destinations. However, the question remained: "What was the collective narrative told at the public memorialization?" Although the sites of the tragedy remained where family members go to memorialize the victims, many families who suffered the loss of loved ones felt stressed and unwilling to participate in the ongoing public commemorations of 9/11 victims in war sentiments. Andrea LeBlanc, a September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows member, recalled, "It was very distressing to…see all the flags waving because they stood for something very different from what I thought the American flag represented. It was all about going to war… little dialogue about what we might be responsible for."[9] The presence of the flags came as less of a surprise considering the proliferated rhetoric that echoed how "America was under attack." At the same time, the national representation adds to the relation between 9/11 commemorations and the national agenda by highlighting its political and symbolic function while further conflating the personal with the public memories.

The distress highlighted the patriotism and glorification of victims that dominated the 9/11 sites of memories, directing the symbolic nature of these sites to serve as a justification for military actions under the nationalist notion of "fight for your country." The extension of patriotism by situating the flag (vehicle of collective identity) within the sites of memories is then further imposed onto the victims. The mix of nationalist sentiment and the memorialization of innocent loss under Bush's excessive push for aggression against the Middle East absorbed the victims into the "national cause." As Sandra Bodley remembers, in the earlier version of *United*

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[9] Andrea LeBlanc, in discussion with the author, April 2023.

93, the film closed on the note to honor "our warriors who started the War the Terror"[10] in

remembering the victims. Again, this glorification of victims into "warriors" who "actively"

participated in the following War on Terror deprived the individual will and familial

remembering of them, a trend that overshadowed the discourse on 9/11. Moreover, it is crucial to

acknowledge that the victims in public sites of memorials are frequently remembered not simply

as "heroes" but as "*American* heroes and warriors." The distinction being the latter implies a

national sense of war. As Amy Sodaro writes of the mediated and national portrayals of the

event, "[They] encourage the public to strongly identify with the 9/11 victims as embodiments of

the American cultural identity that was targeted by the ideology of the terrorists."[11] This

single-sided remembering aimed to establish the symbolization of the 9/11 victims as the ones

who sacrificed under a full-on war initiated by "Islamic extremist groups."

Similarly, patriotic rhetoric remains prevalent in the current 9/11 sites of memories. In the

9/11 Memorial Museum's *In Memoriam* exhibit, the walls are lined with photographs of the

victims and artifacts of commemorative objects. There were clothing, instruments, family

souvenirs, military badges, etc., framed outside the open-styled, darkened room where the

profiles of the victims and quotes from their family members have projected all around. It was

evident in the museum that many narrated rememberings referenced the militaristic glorification

of victims in the artifacts exhibited and the quotes printed. The portraits and individual stories at

the sites, although claiming to be a personal account of the victims, "were being put to work in

the cause of a patriotic momentum... None here cheated on her spouse, abused his children, or

was indifferent to community activities… The notices seem formulaic… regimented, even

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[10] Sandra Bodley (member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows) in discussion with the author, April 2023.

[11] Amy Sodaro, "Prosthetic Trauma and Politics in the National September 11 Memorial Museum," *Memory Studies* 12, no. 2 (April 2017): 117-129, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017720257.

militarized, made to march to the beat of a single drum."[12] In the 9/11 museum and media

coverages, those killed were *American heroes;* they are remembered by the idea that they were

the first fighters in the geopolitical tension, namely, "the United States under 'terrorist attacks.'"

Co-optation: "Under what memory?"

The collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11 circulated on the front pages of media coverage

and was the first image that most of the public would recall from the event. As Marita Sturken

noted, the recurring "spectacular images" played a significant role in weighing a narrative that

focused on the "spectacular destructiveness" of the trauma instead of the individualized and

personal rememberings of victims.[13] In my recent observation at the site, most visitors glanced

passingly at the names and took turns taking tourist pictures while standing in front or sitting on

the edges of the memorials. US flags and flowers left in the stone carvings became

complementary aesthetic objects for photo compositions, significantly losing their symbolic

significance for memorialization. More visitors stood in amazement at the massive memorials

and the Post-9/11 buildings instead of reading the names and descriptions along the sides.

The narrative in the 9/11 memorial and museum at Ground Zero can be described as

"reliving the tragedy." Images of explosions, debris from the actual event, and played recordings

of victims' last phone calls became vital to the immersive experience the public memorials

incite. The massive number of visitors crowded the exhibitions, causing anxiety and suffocation

that resembled the sentiments on the event day. In the museum, "actual personal memories are

precluded because, even in these individual accounts, there are *only* perpetrators and victims;

only us and them; only a world comprising individuals for whom there is "before September

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[12] David Simpson. *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 23-24.

[13] Marita Sturken, "Tourism and 'Sacred Ground': The Space of Ground Zero," in *Tourists of History Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 165-218.

11th" and "after September 11th"; only a ceaseless process of collection rather than a work of mourning.[14] This binary was simultaneously imposed onto the familial remembrances too. Phyllis Rodriguez expressed in the interview, "The atmosphere of the country was…either you agree with the President, or you are a traitor or terrorist sympathizer."[15] This binary, therefore, emphasizes that there is only one narrative and only one definition of being patriotic.

The familial accounts of the victims have been co-opted at the sites of these public memorials as they overshadowed and constructed the life stories of those who died on September 11th, 2001. Instead of a place to exchange the memories of the victims, these public sites persistently reminded the family members, visitors, and the world that they were first and foremost victims and that 9/11 and death are at the epicenter of all their stories. Interviewed family members expressed how the inclusion of personal attributes (name carving, profiles, artifacts) all could not fully reflect their loved one's life because it memorialized them as victims and not for the entirety of their lives. The family members wanted to remember the victims by what they loved and not how they died. The emphasis on the generalized victimhood documented at these sites of memories leaves little to no room for full familial rememberings.

Furthermore, the encroachment on familial memories was echoed extensively in mainstream media, a vehicle of memory. The massive media coverage of statements on various anniversaries pushed for finding closure. For instance, six years after the tragedy, the New York Times published an article that incorporated Mayor Michael Bloomberg's call for people to "go forward," supporting examples from relatives of the victims who "didn't see anything else [they]

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[14] Sarah Senk, "The Memory Exchange: Public Mourning at the National 9/11 Memorial Museum," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 48, no. 2 (2018): 254-276, https://doi.org/10.3138/cras.2017.029.
[15] Phyllis Rodriguez (member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows) in discussion with the author, April 2023.

could do but go forward."[16] Similarly, a year later, the India Times published a piece on the

seventh anniversary that included the subtitle "Pentagon Memorial's Opening Brings Closure

for Many." Nevertheless, throughout the article, there was no reference to how family members

perceived or brought up the notion of closure.[17] In fact, family members claim that closure is a

stage that will never come.[18] Instead, the family members absorb such memories and sentiments

into their lives. The aggressive nature of these co-optations that infiltrate the familial memories

becomes problematic as the site of memories becomes one that biasedly serves a national

purpose rather than one that fully incorporates the personal and familial rememberings of

victims, losing a significant part of their function to hold a place for familial commemorations as

memorials.

Erasure: "Of whose voice?"

During the building of the 9/11 memorial, the committee in charge reached out to

September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, asking the family members to provide a

square for the quilt they planned to build. Peaceful Tomorrows requested a square to remember

the undocumented people killed at the tower but never acknowledged. However, the committee,

as one interviewee recalled, "wanted none of that."[19] The erasure at the public commemorations

is political, targeting anyone who does not fit in the collective narrative of the innocent United

States and the justification for the War on Terror. Public speeches and mediated information on

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[16] Diane Cardwell. "Bloomberg Tries to Move The City Beyond 9/11 Grief: Accord Over Ceremony Searching for a Balance Between Recalling and Rebuilding." *New York Times,* Sep 11, 2007, https://proxy.swarthmore.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bloomberg-tries-move-city -beyond-9-11-grief/docview/848054011/se-2.

[17] "7th Anniversary of 9/11; Pentagon Memorial's Opening Brings Closure for Many." *News India - Times,* Sep 26, 2008, https://proxy.swarthmore.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/7th-anniversary-9-11-pentagon-mem orials-opening/docview/367628532/se-2.

[18] Andrea LeBlanc, April 2023.

[19] Name of the interviewee intentionally kept anonymous out of consideration for their privacy and safety.

US news media platforms failed to acknowledge the victims' diverse ethnicities, classes, and identities. They had often generalized all those killed as US citizens. At the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 event, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said, "We must also share with them the beautiful memories of the loved ones we lost and of the incredible examples of courage we witnessed on that day." While the implication of "we" has effectively illustrated the assumption that all victims belonged to one category, Arnold Schwarzenegger made the American assumption more explicit, "Let us remember the tragedy but also the triumph of the American spirit…And let us return to the solidarity all Americans felt following those terrorist attacks."[20] The assumption that all victims are under the American identity hindered a more ethnically sensitive, culturally aware, and familial remembrance of the victims; instead, their stories either appeared as one of the many or were not included. By excluding those who did not fit the "innocent American citizens" rhetoric, the public sites of memories could mask the political tensions among those killed in the tragedy.

Although the generalized assumption of "American victims" pertained to the center of the 9/11 discourse, among the "American victims," a hierarchy of remembering and grief has been established in these public sites of memories.[21] Victims are commemorated to different extents at the public sites of memories, with the prioritization of rescuers at the top and the undocumented and unclaimed at the bottom. The hierarchy is meant to reinforce the heroic sentiments that glorify the victims and the broader American identity they are generalized under. Therefore, the erasure of those lost ones who did not fit the heroic and patriotic rhetoric is deemed as deserving

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[20] "VOA News: Americans Commemorate Victims of 9/11 Attacks." *US Fed News Service,* Sep 11, 2006. https://proxy.swarthmore.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/voa-news-americans-commemorate-victims-9-11/docview/472727267/se-2.

[21] Elizabeth Miller (member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows) in discussion with the author, April 2023.

less commemoration at the public sites of memories. Conflated with the hierarchical structure in these memorials, the familial rememberings of those that fall under the less prioritized are more prone to be neglected and disregarded in the memorials. In the After 9/11 section of the 9/11 museum exhibit, most familial commemorative artifacts, especially cards made by the victims' families, included US flags and military badges that the victims had. In my observation, there is the prevailing sense in the exhibition that many of the killed are and had long been patriots and fighters for the country and that they continued to do so in the event of 9/11.

Unsurprisingly, the political act of erasing also prevailed in the public memorials by depoliticizing the "perpetrators" and the "enemies." Near the end of the historical exhibition, a few small rooms had a very minimal description of the rise of al-Qaeda and their 9/11 plan. The less than 7-minute film that was central to this section has five sections: Militant Islamists (1970s-1980s), al-Qaeda Emerges (1980s), al-Qaeda Strategy Evolves (1990s), War Against the US (1998-2000), and The 9/11 Plot (2000-2001). The limited information it provided devalued the need to discuss the broader political intention behind the attacks and failed to bring the historical scenes into play. The museum has been "criticized for not doing enough to distinguish al-Qaeda from Islam… and the museum's use of phrases and terms like "fringe elements of Islam" and "Islamist" to describe al-Qaeda might indeed conflate Islam and terrorism in the minds of some visitors." [22] This latent "Islamophobia" was, in fact, one fear the members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows held. Right during the event, when the attackers' identities were still undisclosed, Sandra Bodley recalled how she had hoped that the attackers were not Muslim so that the tension would not escalate this quickly.[23]

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[22] Sodaro, 124-25.
[23] Bodley, April 2023.

Towards Remembering

The contestations surrounding remembering 9/11 marked the distinction between public and familial rememberings. The glorified, co-opted, and selectively erased memories exhibited in the public sites of memories imposed a top-down approach towards remembering the victims nationally but simultaneously misrepresented and limited the presence and reflection of familial remembrance. John McGovern, who lost his loved one at the age of nine, expressed in the interview that he felt hesitant to share his personal experiences and perspectives that differed from the public voices growing up.[24] Families have avoided going to public 9/11 memorials due to the fear of being a part of national war rhetoric under the victims' names.

The crowded and political sentiments proliferated in every public and national discourse have retraumatized family members and those who shared the lived experience of the event instead of creating a site for grief. Elizabeth Miller, the Project Director and former Exhibition Coordinator at the 9/11 museum, underlines, "A lot of the individuals who go to the 9/11 museums…are not native New Yorkers… [they] were like 'we lived through this, and there is no reason for us to go through the museum."[25] Similarly, family members have lived through the experience of losing loved ones that they could never forget. The incomplete profiles exhibited, mediated coverage on television, public calls for finding closure, etc., have made familial grief more difficult to grapple with, contrary to its "intention" for memorialization. Phyllis Rodriguez echoed in her interview, "Media kept retraumatizing people… buildings being hit…of the people running and screaming. We got rid of our TV. Even commercials refer to [the event]."[26] The

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[24] John McGovern (member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows) in discussion with the author, April 2023.
[25] Miller, April 2023.
[26] Rodriguez, April 2023.

collective national narrative and its focus on the traumatic significance had perpetuated the retraumatization of those who shared proximity with the victims.

Understanding how the national narratives do not sufficiently reflect the familial rememberings of the victims, therefore, makes it crucial to acknowledge what the family members consider as reflective and holistic sites of memory. Importantly, nuances were present in the familial opinions on the War on Terror that can be spotted in the different protests during the construction of 9/11 memorials. However, the families frequently resonated and agreed with what should count as a more familial remembering of the victims and asked for the truth and reasoning behind these attacks instead of one that only remembered the war. Terry Rockefeller expressed her frustration, "[Initially], the government response was not to have a 9/11 commission…but it took not Peaceful Tomorrows members but just 9/11 family members to… demand that the 9/11 commission be organized."[27] Drawing on responses from the September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows members, three themes of familial memory: familial settings, continuity, and entirety, stood out compared to the more public and national memorialization.

Familial Settings

In the interviews, when asked "what was considered a more familial remembering", all the family members pointed to the proximity shared in the sites as central to the remembrance of their lost loved ones. While some have and still participate in public commemorations held at national memorials, they all underlined how full familial rememberings occur in specific familial settings. The Rodriguezes described how their family would gather at Christmas and talk about

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[27] Terry Rockefeller (member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows) in discussion with the author, April 2023.

their lost son. They would look at his childhood photographs and, importantly, situate him in the familial sphere instead of a public one that encompasses the generalization of all victims.[28] Other interviews echoed similar sentiments. Families believe that these familial sites of memory provide a more accurate snippet of the victims' lives, one that extended beyond the scope of 9/11.

Moreover, in the opinion of family members, places with more familial settings better served and reflected familial rememberings. In the 2020 anniversary, the family of Christopher Faughnan organized and hosted their own 9/11 memorial for their loved ones. Colorado Daily reported, "The gathering, which involved Facetiming family members who couldn't be there, was followed by a family picnic." The intimacy shared in this familial setting of family gatherings and "sending messages filled with loving words up to him by releasing balloons"[29] indicates how the familial settings are central and effective as they incite a stronger bond and allow the family members to grieve and commemorate the victims more holistically.

Continuity

At the public sites of memory, the victims are frozen on September 11, 2001, a day that "marks" the end and the most highlighted part of those killed. There is only before 9/11 and 9/11 in the narratives that centered on the victims. However, the familial rememberings hope to dismantle that distinct categorization of the lives of their loved ones. Family members would go to victims' favorite sports events and imagine what comments the victims would give if they were still there.

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[28] Phyllis Rodriguez, April 2023.

[29] Jennifer Rios, "Family Hosts Own 9/11 Memorial for Fallen Husband, Son and Father," *Broomfield Enterprise*, September 11, 2020, https://www.broomfieldenterprise.com/2020/09/11/family-hosts-own-9-11-memorial-for-fallen-husband-son-and-father/.

In familial remembrances, their focus lies on extending living memories of the victims instead of one that centers around the abrupt ending of the victims.

This continuity can be further examined by what narratives the familial rememberings hope to tell in the name of the victims. One year after the event, in the name of Michael Lynch, a firefighter killed at Ground Zero, his family started a foundation that grants scholarships to the relatives of victims who died in fires and other disasters. Jack, Lynch's father, said, "The act that killed him was evil, I felt that we had to find a good response to that evil." As years passed, the foundation continued to expand in its scope and was almost entirely run by family members.[30] Despite the anger and political orientation that the word "evil" implies, the familial response focuses on making a memorial and remembrance that continues to do good in honor of the victims instead of one that centers on retaliation and war.

Entirety

In contrast to the patriotic and limited public narrative that focused on portraying the perfect "innocent victims and America," the familial rememberings tend not only to recall the achievements and honors the victims have received but also the challenges and harshness their loved ones experienced. In the film documenting the Rodriguez family, the familial remembrances they shared at their gatherings not only entailed 9/11 but the obstacles and achievements their son met growing up.[31] These details might not be useful for the public to contribute to its determined narrative, but they are crucial to the families as they encapsulate the victims more fully and reflectively. The familial memorialization challenges the single-sided war rhetoric and tries to push for the centering of victims' lives as a whole, providing a more accurate

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[30] Colin Moynihan, "9/11 Scholarships Are a Family Memorial," *New York Times*, March 22, 2010, https://proxy.swarthmore.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/9-11-scholarships-are-family-memorial/docview/1458371785/se-2.
[31] *In Our Son's Name*, directed by Gayla Jamison (2015), Online.

version and countering the co-opted versions told at the public sites of memories through a

bottom-up construction of the life stories of their lost loved ones.

Building Memorials from the Bottom-Up

The World Trade Center memorial competition was launched two years after the event in

2003 and opened its memorial planning process to the mass public. As a part of the required

element, the guideline asked all the designs to reflect the historical and social context of the

World Trade Center building.[32] The guideline led to the need for a delicate balance between

remembering the victims and survivors and situating the design in the context of its surroundings.

On the same note of situating 9/11 in a broader historical and social context, the "Unknown

Civilians Killed in War" Stonewalk took a different route. In the peaceful movement, The Peace

Abbey and September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows members joined forces to pull the

one-ton stone from Boston to New York City. At the gatherings along the way, "people [who lost

their loved ones] would come out and put their hands on the stone and [told] a story… beautiful

stories, some very sad."[33] Many stories were shared of their lost ones and how the family

members remembered them in their hearts present at the Stonewalk. The gatherings were a place

where individuals' stories constituted a larger picture of not only the event but also of mourning

for the victims and the grieving families.

The differences between the World Trade Center memorial and Stonewalk become

evident when examining how the victims' individualized stories are situated in these sites of

memory. In the World Trade Center and other public monuments, the proliferation of trauma

culture *encompasses* stories that create a sense of tragic loss and patriotism. Whereas at the

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[32] "World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition Guidelines." Accessed on May 11, 2023.
https://www.911memorial.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2003%20april.28%20LMDC%20Memorial%20Guidelin
es.pdf.
[33] Dot Walsh, in discussion with the author, April 2023.

gatherings of Stonewalk, sharing stories that collectively *build* familial and national memories from the bottom-up facilitates the three themes of rememberings echoed in the interviews.

The collective building of memories also provides a better channel of grief. While public memorials that deployed top-down management of the two opposing sides (perpetrators vs. victims) add to the anger and support for the war, the collective building process allows family members and all participants to express their grief without the necessity to follow up with a political agenda and establishes a stronger bond of remembrance. Dot Walsh, the Program Director of The Peace Abbey, recalled a family who lost their son to the 9/11 tragedy. Immediately after the attack, the husband expressed an intense hatred toward the attacks, resonating with rhetorics present in public sites of memories. However, listening to how other family members came with significant effort pulling the stone and remembered their loved ones in promoting a peaceful world provided him a place to reflect and situate the attacks in a broader socio-political context, one that focuses not necessarily on the War and national security, but more on the civilians who are killed in these attacks and the reasons behind.[34] The constituting of familial rememberings through vivid individual stories thus creates a shift of focus that allows families to remember and take up space in the face of mass proliferation of national rhetoric.

Crucially, this bottom-up approach is not impossible in public-constructed sites of memories. In the Shanksville memorial, Sandra Bodley mentions tremendous family participation.[35] Their involvement in the planning meetings and mock-up voting contributed significantly to the more familial sentiments the Shanksville evoked than the memorials at Ground Zero, where the national rhetoric prevailed as the plane crashings in New York City is deemed more of an "attack on the nation's heart." Nevertheless, the example hints toward the

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[34] Walsh, April 2023.
[35] Bodley, April 2023.

trend that the national top-down approach imposes itself on the familial bottom-up approach to an even larger extent in sites where the idea of America is firmly tied, shedding light on how public memorials frequently underlie the overarching theme of America and do not fully reflect these tragedies.

Conclusion

There's no sign of closure. The battle over 9/11 memories continues to date. With the help of vehicles of memories, public sites of memories overshadowed and repressed the familial memories of 9/11 and its victims as they share a different list of priorities and demands than the national and narrowly defined patriotic rhetoric. A bottom-up approach needs to be included in the planning, constructing, and commemorations of and at these memorials. The need is more than urgent in the face of mass shootings followed by the coining of children as martyrs and much more. The imposed national rhetoric needs to be carefully examined. It should not only situate itself in politics but truly reflect the holistic familial rememberings of the victims at the sites of memory. Further discussion should examine the discrepancies between familial narratives, how and when the line between the public and familial rememberings blurs, and in what direction conforming memories travel.

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A Market for Plenty: Immigrants and the Making of the Fulton Fish Market

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Abstract: Founded in the early nineteenth century at the southern seaport of Manhattan, New York, the Fulton Fish Market was, and remains, one of the largest seafood markets in the world. At its heart was a workforce capable of moving hundreds of millions of pounds of fish a year, that endured public suspicion and resisted activist reform, and which ultimately shaped the palate of not only New York City, but America as a country—a workforce that was, in its formative decades, predominantly immigrants. This article builds on pre-existing general scholarship regarding the Fulton Fish Market and introduces perspectives found in contemporary newspapers, memoirs, and other nonfiction writings to study the contributions immigrants made to the identity and functions of Fulton. It adds another piece to the ever-deepening literature on New York City's immigrant histories and foodways.

Introduction

The Fulton Fish Market is, in many ways, a unique institution. Originally established as a wholesale market in 1820, the fish market grew and splintered into its own entity on the docks in 1831, and rapidly established itself as a centerpiece of the American seafood trade. During its peak in the early twentieth century, it sold a quarter of all fish marketed in the United States; in 1926, it moved a staggering 394 million pounds of fish.[1] Hundreds of vessels, businesses, and workers labored daily to ship seafood to and from over hundreds of miles away, connecting the retailers and citizens of New York to international fishing fleets and providing Lower Manhattan with one of the most diverse selections of fish in the world for over two centuries.[2] It became an iconic mainstay of New York, surviving changes in technology, government regulation, and public opinion, even as other public markets rose and fell through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[3]

At the same time, it was still an archetypical public market—a key feature of New York's consumption and distribution systems, a common product of its time. Fulton Market and other public markets sprung up along the ports of Southern Manhattan, where people and commerce were concentrated, in the nineteenth century, corresponding to an immigration-fueled exponential growth of population in New York at the time.[4] Food historian Andrew Smith puts it succinctly: "Cities were founded on the government's ability to deliver affordable, appropriate,

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[1] Jonathan H. Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market: A History* (New York: Columbia, 2022), 13.

[2] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 11-12.

[3] Andrew F. Smith, *New York City: A Food Biography* (Landham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 139-140.

[4] Andrew F. Smith and Garrett Oliver, *Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover's Companion to New York City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1244.

and safe food to its people, and New York City is no exception."[5] If a city is based around a skeleton of consumption, the significance of the grassroots immigrant presence cannot be overstated: a symbiosis between small shops and pushcarts, growing organically out of low overhead costs and ease of entry for newly arrived immigrants seeking to feed themselves and their families, selling lunches, groceries, and confectionaries, feeding the millions powering the industrial, economic, and sociocultural engines of the city. There is a long history of immigrants creating New York's foodways, and though many of the individual accounts went unwritten, there has been a respectable effort in academia, especially in urban and immigration studies, to document the foodways of New York's working class.[6]

Public markets form another crucial piece of the urban food network, consolidating vendors and goods in licensed buildings for ease of feeding the public and streamlining trade. Though its trade routes spanned hundreds of miles and its influence the nation, the Fulton Fish Market has always been deeply connected to its place in the Lower East Side. I became interested in that local connection between the market and its immigrant-dominated neighborhoods, between the institution and the people within it, and how the Fulton Fish Market, with its outsized impact on New York food supplies and the American seafood industry, might provide another conduit for understanding the impact immigrants have had on New York City and America at large. Though there exists a smattering of feature-length histories on the Fulton Fish Market that frequently mention the extensive immigrant workforce at the market, rarely does the scholarship delve any deeper than a note of demographics. Jonathan H. Rees's *The*

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[5] Smith and Oliver, *Savoring Gotham,* 1244.
[6] There are too many works and authors to name, but consider Andrew Hurley's "From Hash House to Family Restaurant: The Transformation of the Diner and Post-World War II Consumer Culture" for the relationship between immigrants and blue-collar diners, Sean Basinski's "Hot Dogs, Hipsters, and Xenophobia: Immigrant Street Food Vendors in New York" for a history of immigrant food vendors running into the contemporary era, and countless other works focusing on specific ethnic groups, such as Chinese-American restaurants, Greek-American confectionaries, and Jewish pushcarts.

Fulton Fish Market: A History goes further in specifically noting the various contributions of these immigrants, but it is far from comprehensive.

To put this paper together, I used the pre-existing histories of the Fulton Fish Market as springboards for locating primary sources, primarily historical newspaper articles and interviews, that could tell me about immigrant experiences on the New York waterfront. The lack of written records about the market's workers meant that I had to contextualize their experiences in larger historical trends to fill the gaps in the narrative and carefully consider the information in what examples I could find. From this patchwork, I endeavored to stitch together an understanding of the immigrant presence in Fulton Fish Market and along the New York waterfront at every step of the market's distribution process. This essay thus proceeds in three parts, illustrating their roles as the suppliers of fish, the movers, and the buyers. Through this, I seek to unearth yet another way immigrants have contributed to American foodways and identity.

The Fishermen

As a city on the coast, threaded with rivers and lakes, New York's waters supplied a successful nineteenth century trade in local shellfish (especially oysters) and fish, drawing a steady stream of immigrants looking for work.[7] In the mid-twentieth century, there were around 1,500 men who called themselves baymen, making a living harvesting the waters of Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Queens; the majority of trawlers were Italian-Americans, some of whom grew up fishing in the ports of Sicily and still graced their boating vessels with evil-eye amulets and scapular medals.[8] They and other fishermen either brought their catch directly into the Fulton Fish Market's piers throughout the day, or packed it in ice and had it trucked into the

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[7] Smith and Oliver, *Savoring Gotham*, 584.
[8] Joseph Mitchell, *Up in the old hotel and other stories* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 473-474.

marketplace.[9]

Still, New York never attracted the same quantity of immigrant fishermen that some New England settlements did, especially as increasing water pollution in the twentieth century made recreational and commercial fishing more dangerous.[10] By 1938 only a "small fraction" was brought into Fulton directly through the pier—instead, the market primarily processed catch sent in trucks from all around the country, acting as an important distribution hub for fishermen.[11] It was a valuable source of income for many new immigrants and encouraged more to enter the market, feeding into the conception of America as a melting pot of financial opportunity, even when said immigrants did not always live in the immediate New York region. From the North Atlantic came international fleets of Irish-Canadian, Portuguese, Italian, and Scandinavian fishermen, gathering along the open streets and coffee-pots of the market, mingling into the diverse crowds.[12]

Another example comes from Stonington, Connecticut. The Fulton Fish Market had long held a special connection with Stonington, with many of the market's earliest fish dealing companies founded by Stonington fishermen who moved down.[13] In the nineteenth century, Stonington also became host to a vibrant community of immigrant Portuguese fishermen, who sold the bulk of their catch in New York, almost certainly to Fulton.[14] For these Portuguese, fishing was a part of their identity.

> "Of course, back then Portuguese fishermen were in demand because
> they were taught the basics that most people have to learn after they go

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[9] Charlotte Hughes, "A New Day for the Old Fulton Fish Market," *The New York Times,* April 24, 1938, 126.

[10] Smith and Oliver, *Savoring Gotham*, 584.

[11] Hughes, "A New Day for the Old Fulton Fish Market," 126.

[12] Hughes, "A New Day for the Old Fulton Fish Market," 126.

[13] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 56.

[14] Fred Calabretta, "The Portuguese in Connecticut: 'They Came Here as Fishermen…,'" Fall 2013, https://www.ctexplored.org/they-came-here-as-fishermen/; Fred Calabretta, ed., *Fishing Out of Stonington: Voices of the Fishing Families of Stonington, Connecticut* (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, 2004), 182

fishing. These people were taught this as young men. … You came home from school, if there was a school, and you helped your parents to survive. So, these people knew their business, their jobs, long before they came here. They came here as fishermen, which was considered an art in the old country. It was something that you didn't learn in school, but it took a talent to know it. You had to have knowledge, and this knowledge was already in these people."
—Joe Reindeiro, 1994[15]

Like with the baymen, the fish market allowed Portuguese immigrants to both continue a traditional way of life and support themselves in the new world with it. In exchange, they brought a specialized cultural knowledge to the fishing industry and bolstered Fulton Fish Market's culinary richness, contributing to the foundational blocks of New York's reputation as a city of plenty.

The Waterfront

The essential operations of the Fulton Fish Market took place on the waterfront—the loading and unloading, the buying and selling. In early decades of the market, native-born, white, Protestant Americans dominated the upper echelons.[16] Even so, the "forgotten" waterfront, its inner workings obscure to the public even at the time, reflected the diversity of New York's working class. Along the Brooklyn and Manhattan shorelines, the vast majority of longshoremen, in charge of moving cargo to and from ships, were Irish Catholic, Italian, and Austrian—a *New York Times* reporter in the mid-twentieth century ventured that among dockers they made up "nine out of ten."[17] It was difficult work, and they were considered exploited even compared to other blue-collar groups like miners and railroad workers.[18]

At the same time, those underregulated conditions made working in the market an

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[15] Calabretta, "The Portuguese in Connecticut."

[16] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 225.

[17] Budd Schulberg, "Joe Docks, Forgotten Man of the Waterfront," *The New York Times*, December 28, 1952, 133.

[18] Schulberg, "Joe Docks, Forgotten Man of the Waterfront," 114.

opportunity for some to climb the economic ladder. In Barbara Mensch's *South Street*, a book

deriving from the author's personal experiences with Fulton in the 1970s, an owner of an

unloading company recalls growing up in a poor Italian-American family, in the ghetto, and

dropping out of school at age fourteen to work alongside his father moving boxes, his first step in

heading his own firm.[19] The waterfront gave immigrants with little formal education and no

official documents a chance to join the workforce, and more than that, feel pride in his work,

regardless of how difficult the job was—as one old-timer put it, "their job was their worth and to

do your job well meant something."[20] For many, frustrating as the strict pecking order was, the

market was a space where they could forge purpose and identity, away from government and

public scrutiny.

This became especially true with the turn of the twentieth century, as the ranks of Anglo-

Saxon wholesalers were increasingly joined by Irish, Italians, and Jews working their way up.[21]

The rise of the Italian Mob in the 1920s, in particular, is often traced to Joseph "Socks" Lanza's

ascension from immigrant journeyman to Genovese capo, controlling the market through the

United Seafood Workers Union.[22] Lanza's public image ranged from criminal bully to hero and

protector of the people, but more uncontested is how he and the mob affected market

demographics. Throughout the Fulton Fish Market's lifespan, its needs for labor were frequently

met by workers bringing over relatives from their homelands, utilizing the family-based

immigration networks underlying the growth of Lower East Side ethnic neighborhoods.[23] The

mob further encouraged that migration, pulling from old-world political and social connections

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[19] Barbara G. Mensch, *South Street* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 149, 151.

[20] Mensch, *South Street*, 151-152.

[21] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 226.

[22] Phillip Lopate, "Introduction: The Fulton Fish Market," in *South Street*, by Barbara G. Mensch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 22.

[23] Lopate, "Introduction: The Fulton Fish Market,"19.

in Italy to fill the market's ranks of union labor with men they could trust to be loyal.[24] By the

end of the twentieth century Fulton was well-accepted as "the province of Italians and Jews,"

eventually joined by small influxes of other groups, including Greek-, Portuguese-, and Asian-

American seafood dealers.[25]

For all that this 'Fulton fish mafia' shielded the market from conventional law

enforcement, though, in many ways it was the insular culture of the Fulton Fish Market that

allowed the mob to prosper, rather than the other way around. It was a culture not manufactured

by any criminal underground, or ordained by business needs, but one that came foremost from

the people working there. In her time at Fulton, Mensch observed that "the men of South Street

shared work ethics and habits, and codes of moral behavior, originating deep in the past,"

allowing them to function as "an insular group, every member with his particular role and all

working to guarantee the survival of the market."[26] Often these were habits of resilience and

industry, a familiarity with gritty environments and a willingness even among bosses to get their

hands dirty, even a tattered proletarian fashion—passed down from their fathers and reinforced

among coworkers. Though this work culture prompted Progressive backlash, for its perceived

chaotic and "unsanitary" practices, it kept Fulton's workers tight-knit and productive, running

the largest seafood market in America for over two centuries.[27] The insularity, too, drew from the

presence of undocumented immigrants—as well as an old-world distrust of authority. A

journeyman, reflecting on his Sicilian heritage, explained to Mensch how his ancestors lived in

"lived in a world of suspicion and paranoia" and poverty, traumatized by a brutal, corrupt

government, and how they developed careful ways of protecting themselves against outsiders,

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[24] Schulberg, "Joe Docks, Forgotten Man of the Waterfront," 133.
[25] Lopate, "Introduction: The Fulton Fish Market," 19.
[26] Mensch, *South Street*, 160.
[27] Smith, *New York City: A Food Biography*, 139.

such as special codes.[28] Many of those systems of communication and defense mechanisms were

inherited and carried on against the white-collar world and law enforcement opposed to Fulton.

Into the twenty-first century, sociologist William Helmreich observed that the relocated Fulton

Fish Market remained a stronghold for the expression of "rough-edged white ethnic culture"—a

quality that kept it running for so long.[29]

And for all of its seediness, its exploitation and rough edges, Fulton Fish Market was, for

some, a community. Louie Morino, a mid-sixties restaurant proprietor, left his home fishing

village in Italy at the age of eighteen, and over twenty years later, in 1930, opened his business in

Fulton, choosing a run-down building on South Street over other, posher locations. Why?

> "The reason I did, Fulton Fish Market reminds me of Recco. There's a world of difference between them. At the same time, they're very much alike—the fish smell, the general gone-to-pot look, the trading that goes on in the streets, the roofs over the sidewalks, the cats in corners gnawing on fish heads, the gulls in the gutters, the way everybody's on to everybody else, the quarreling and the arguing. There's a boss fishmonger down there, a spry old hardhearted Italian man who's got a million dollars in the bank and dresses like he's on relief and walks up and down the fish pier snatching fish out of barrels by their heads or their tails and weighing them in his hands and figuring out in his mind to a fraction of a fraction how much they're worth and shouting and singing and enjoying life, and the face on him, the way he conducts himself, he reminds me so much of my father that sometimes, when I see him, it puts me in a good humor, and sometimes it breaks my heart."[30]

The "rough-edged white ethnic culture" that Helmreich observed, then, was a lasting

culture of perceived familiarities—of habits such as "the way he conducts himself" and of

aesthetics including dressing "like he's on relief," symbolizing to immigrants a particular sense

of community and home. The marketplace connected migrants to the old world, to the ways they

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[28] Mensch, *South Street*, 160.

[29] William B. Helmreich, *The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6000 Miles in the City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 317.

[30] Mitchell, *Up in the old hotel and other stories*, 442.

thought they had to leave behind. In the workforce, in its values, and in its nature, all integral to its longevity and success, immigrants made themselves an inseparable part of Fulton's identity.

The Consumers

The suppliers, the sellers, and finally, the consumers: the instrumental participants in a public market. The ethnic diversity of Southern Manhattan presented itself not only among the workers of the Fulton Fish Market, but in the attending buyers, too. A city attuned to its coast, the average New Yorker eats ten pounds per capita more seafood than the national average, in the twentieth century nearly all of it moving through Fulton, and that consumption has been heavily shaped by immigrant tastes.[31]

The Italians, for example, ate plenty of fish in their seafood-based Mediterranean diets, outstripping Americans in quantity and variety—making some twentieth century Americans believe that for cooking fish, the Italians were a people to learn from.[32] In 1897 *The New York Times* wrote that "to the Italian the tunny fish is the fish of all fish," praising the "peculiar" Italian way of preparing it with olive oil.[33] Known more commonly as the bluefish tuna, the "tunny" was rarely eaten by Americans before the twentieth century, until Italian-American customers made the fish a staple in Fulton stalls.[34] There were also associations between other ethnic groups and fish choices, such as the Irish with cod, the Germans smelts.[35] Ethnic demand pioneered the diversity of products set out in the market, and therefore the seafood introduced to

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[31] Lopate, "Introduction: The Fulton Fish Market,"
[32] Jane Nickerson, "News of Food: Fish Cookery Borrowed from the Italians," *The New York Times,* June 22, 1950.
[33] Unknown, "The Rival Fish Dealers," *The New York Times*, October 11, 1897.
[34] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 204.
[35] Rees, *The Fulton Fish Market*, 204.

native-born Americans. In return, Fulton's world-class selection allowed immigrants to recreate

traditional foodways in a foreign land, a tether that ensured repeat customers.

Vendors at the Fulton Fish Market took note of which groups frequented their stock. In

1975, one seller stated, "The Jewish people is some of our best customers. You better believe

they buy a lot of fish. Carp, buffaloes, sable, whitefish, you name it."[36] Indeed, Jewish

immigrants drove high demands for freshwater fish, especially around religious holidays.

Around Rosh ha-Shanah, for example, where freshwater fish is served as a symbol of

fruitfulness, the Fishery Council and trade spokesmen communicated the readiness of stocks of

popular fish varieties and kosher poultry, implying established, if informal arrangements of

seafood products between suppliers and ethnic communities.[37] Some also forged strong personal

relationships with their buyers. Italian-American Johnny Montauk, owner of Montauk Seafood

Co., gained his reputation as "king of the crabs" in part by selling hard-shell crabs, over 150

bushels a day, to Black, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Greek, and fellow Italian households.[38]

In his own words, he was grateful for "my ethnics, my foreign clientele" —going so far as to

learn several Asian and Mediterranean languages to communicate better with buyers.[39] The

seafood supply networks linking Fulton and its nearby ethnic neighborhoods were founded on

reciprocal trust and loyalties, certainly mutually beneficial.

As tastes adapted and expanded, the Fulton Fish Market's diversity became a clear source

of pride in the wider city. In 1956 *The New York Times* reported:

> The market holds its importance because of the average New Yorker's
> sustained taste for fish and other seafood. That may be owing to the
> cosmopolitan texture of the city's population. Where else in the United
> States would there be a large demand for specialties such as scungilli

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[36] William W. Warner, "At the Fulton Fish Market," *The Atlantic,* November 1975, 58.
[37] Jane Nickerson, "News of Food: Festive Fare for Rosh ha-Shanah," *The New York Times,* September 7, 1950, 41.
[38] Warner, "At the Fulton Fish Market," 60.
[39] Warner, "At the Fulton Fish Market," 62.

(conch), squid and whitebait (tiny fish, 5000 to the pound), much favored by persons of Italian ancestry? Many Italian shoppers, incidentally, are also responsible, especially at Christmas time, for the sale of large quantities of eel. Where else are fresh carp, whitefish and pike—the ingredients of gefülte fish, a Jewish holiday specialty—so much sought after? And where else, because of the many persons of Mediterranean or Scandinavian ancestry, is there a ready market for dried codfish, known either as baccalau or lutfisk? There is always, of course, the demand for fresh Dover sole, fresh pompano and red snapper, juicy scallops and tender swordfish.[40]

The writing emphasizes not only Fulton Fish Market exceptionality among fish and public markets, but its ultimate significance as a reflection of the "cosmopolitan texture" of New York City—a boast of the city's unique identity. Another interesting study of the public's fascination with the Fulton Fish Market can be found in a day trip of several dozen dietetics students from the Columbia University Teachers College, who came with "eagerness to see America's largest wholesale fish market in action" and learn about institution management, consisting of students from all over the United States and from regions as far as Shanghai.[41] For the students Fulton represented the alluring hustle of American industry and the working-class, the "weighers… [calling] out in sing-song fashion some strange, inexplicable sounds to the checkers in the booths behind them" as part of the "formal sales procedure" simultaneously practical and charmingly esoteric. While there "they discovered the existence of squid; they were told that eels are sold alive; they found out how to differentiate between bonita and bluefish" —selections heavily influenced by immigrant tastes, on display on behalf of Fulton and New York pride.[42] Indeed, almost all of what the students saw and admired in Fulton, from the productivity, to the insular modes of communication, to the diverse seafood selection, had been touched by the immigrant

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[40] Werner Bamberger, "Fulton Fish Market Becomes an Exchange for Products of the World," *The New York Times,* June 24, 1956, 75.

[41] Unknown, "Fish Market to Host Diet Students," *The New York Times*, October 11, 1897, 21.

[42] Unknown, "Fish Market to Host Diet Students," 21.

presence in some way. Though not always explicitly recognized, their contributions formed the basis of a market New York would proudly display to the world.

Conclusion

Ultimately, it was no surprise to discover a strong immigrant presence in the Fulton Fish market. Its location in the Lower East End, the evidently physical nature of its work, and the well-established relationship between immigrants and the urban consumption networks all placed Fulton in clear proximity to an immigrant blue-collar workforce and community. Uncovering the extent of that relationship, though, by tracing the roles of various ethnic groups in all stages of the marketplace, from supply to waterfront labor to purchase, provides far more robust insight into the specific impacts immigrants had on Fulton Fish Market and the American seafood industry, as well as how their work in the field affected the immigrants in turn. The knowledge they brought from the old world shaped the skills and culture of their labor in America, and their consumption patterns bolstered the profile of New York cosmopolitanism. As with many other traditional New York foodways, Fulton Fish Market would not exist as an American icon without the immigrant contribution—not only because it simply would not have the workforce, but because it would lose so much of the character fundamental to its identity and success. Many of their individual histories may have gone unwritten, but their sum impact was undeniable, and lasting.

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Inclusion and Hegemony: Reading Salmān al-Fārisī's Conversion Story

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Abstract: In the otherwise expansive medieval Arabic literature, the scarcity of information concerning the conversion process of the early Islamic community piques interest in the handful of existing conversion narratives. One particular narrative that stands out is the conversion story of Salmān al-Farisi, recounting his transformation from a devout Zoroastrian to a dedicated companion of Prophet Muhammad. In the compilation of stories of Salmān al-Farisi by Louis Massignon named "Khabar Salmān," the persistence of many plot elements across different accounts of the story suggests a deliberate process of repetition and canonization. Recognizing the Salmān al-Farisi story as a site of memory, curation, and elite intentions, this paper considers the purpose of the story in forging Muslim identity, managing intergroup dynamics, and maintaining political power within the early Islamic community.

Introduction

In his "Conversion Stories in Early Islam," Richard Bulliet notes the glaring absence of information about conversion in the otherwise abundant medieval Arabic literature on the Islamic community. Then, he asks, "How can one explain the peculiar types of information that do appear?"[1]

Salmān al-Farisi's story is a rare and especially prominent conversion narrative widely circulated in the early Muslim community. Having grown up as a devout Zoroastrian, Salmān was recorded to be an early companion of Prophet Muhammad and played a prominent role in helping to defend Muslims in the Battle of the Trench.[2] As a result of its rarity, uniqueness, and wide circulation, Salmān's conversion story invites reflections about the placement and functions of conversion in early Islam. For example, how might we interpret the story's account that Salmān had converted to Christianity prior to Islam, but never Judaism? Why was his only encounter with Judaism through the enslavement of a Jewish person? What might this imply about the intergroup dynamics in the Early Islamic community?

To interpret the story's functions, this essay treats the composition of Salmān's conversion story as a result of curation. Louis Massignon compiled several existing accounts of Salmān's life and conversion to Islam, which he named the "Khabar Salmān."[3] He finds that these accounts only differ in slight details and share the general outline: Salmān's origin as a Zoroastrian; his encounter with an apostle, who on his deathbed encourages him to seek a new mentor; the process of seeking new mentorship repeats; and the last of his mentor tells him of the arrival of a

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[1] Richad W. Bulliet, "Conversion Stories in Early Islam," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 2020), 123.

[2] Montgomery W. Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 168.

[3] Louis Massignon, *Salmān Pāk and the Spiritual Beginnings of Iranian Islam* (Bombay: J.M. Unvala, 1955), 7.

new prophet and ways to identify him. The story also includes Salmān's enslavement by a Jewish person, which ended when Muhammad and his companions helped to purchase his freedom.[4]

This lack of variation in different accounts of Salmān's story suggests some process of repetition and canonization by people across time and space. Thus, repeating elements in the Khabar Salmān must have been seen as important and worthy of recording and circulation, which was often controlled by the bureaucrats and literati elite in early Islamic communities. As Arietta Papaconstantinou argues, any interpretation of late antique sources, such as Salmān's conversion story, must recognize the intentional roles of the governing elite in shaping the story to define their community and religion.[5] Salmān's conversion story is rather unknown in Persian sources compared to its wide circulation in Arabic sources. Thus, the story's wide circulation in Islamic communities suggests that the stories were frequently used and retold by Muslims who found certain value in Salmān's story. As a result, it's unlikely that elements and details that reappear across the Khabar Salmān, such as Salmān's encounter with slavery, were accidental.

Scholars like Savant and Magnusson have suggested looking at highly curated texts related to early Islam as "sites of memory," where people throughout time *choose* to remember certain things and forget other things.[6] The function of forgetting in sites of memory is often done, not by erasure of elements, but by superimposition of new elements. Salmān's conversion story could be read as such a site of remembering, forgetting, and even shaping the evolving Muslim-Zoroastrian relationship during and after conquests. Considering Salmān's story as a "site of memory" calls for interpretations of why these elements were preserved: What functions

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[4] Ibid, 8. Also referred to in Andrew D. Magnusson, *Zoroastrians in Early Islamic History: Accommodation and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 85.

[5] Arietta Papaconstantinou, "Introduction," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond, eds.* Arietta Papaconstantinou, Neil McLynn, Daniel Schwartz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 24-25.

[6] Sarah Bowen Savant, "Muḥammad's Persian Companion, Salmān Al-Fārisī." Chapter. In *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*, 61-89. (New York, NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015). Also Magnusson, *Zoroastrians*, 78-80.

did the elements serve? How could they be interpreted by different groups of people in conquered Persia, where the text was circulated? What can the story of Salmān tell us?

An understanding of the Salmān's story as both a site of memory and manifestation of elites' intentions gives us a framework to learn about the religious and political identities and communities in early Muslim conquests. Before going into that, we look at what we know about conversions in Islam to better understand the context and spot irregularities in Salmān's conversion story.

Conversions in Early Islam

Studies of conversion have sought to understand temporal and geographical trends of conversion as well as causes for individual or mass conversions.[7] Generally, religious conversion to Islam was usually not coerced, nor was it binded to acceptance of Arab rule for the conquered communities.[8] In fact, mass conversions to Islam in most communities did not occur for a few decades under Arab rule, and many elected to pay the non-Muslim tax instead.[9] Richard W. Bulliet theorized that conversions to Islam after Muslim conquests followed an S-shaped "conversion curve."[10] According to the curve, the rate of conversion immediately after conquests was low and increased slowly; after the converted population reached a critical mass, conversion rate increased dramatically. Bulliet suggests that early converts were often those of lower class that had less to lose in terms of social status and familial connections.[11]

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[7] Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 9-10.
[8] Papaconstantinou, "Introduction," 1-3.
[9] Choksy, *Conflict*, 75.
[10] Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Books on Demand, 2006).
[11] Ibid.

Reasons for conversions in early Islam were various and could depend heavily on the time of one's conversion relative to the conversion curve. Scholars have suggested that conversions to Islam at this time were often more of a social behavior than a shift in religious belief, motivated by potential social and economic benefits of lessened taxation, social mobility, increased social status, and even manumission from bondage.[12] Simultaneously, the disincentives for conversions were also often socially related. Conversions early in the conversion curve usually meant severing ties with one's existing political and religious communities. Choksy also found that early Zoroastrian converts to Islam often found themselves still not as equals with Arabs in the Islamic society and often subjected to discrimination, which further discouraged conversions.[13]

While scholars have inferred that both non-Muslims and Muslims likely understood conversions in this social context at the time, we do not know much about the actual process of conversion: how does one declare their conversion, what was required of one to convert, how were the converted and unconverted differentiated in society, etc.

After reviewing our knowledge of conversion, we move to look at Salmān's story.

Rewriting Memories of Conquests

As seen from earlier, most conversions in early Islam have been motivated by social reasons and rarely were conversions out of "genuine faith" recorded. However, the story of Salmān especially emphasizes the spiritual conviction that drove Salmān's self-directed journey from Zoroastrianism to Islam. I argue that the emphasis on Salmān's motivation could have helped to reinterpret the role of Islam as a religion in Muslim conquests and justify its violence.

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[12] Bulliet, "Conversion Stories," 125-127. Choksy, *Conflict*, 75-80.
[13] Choksy, *Conflict*, 79.

Similar to other accounts in the Khabar Salmān, Ibn Ishaq recorded that Salmān's initial

divergence from Zoroastrianism comes when he instinctively "felt drawn to [the Christians']

worship."[14] Salmān jumped through many hurdles in seeking the true Abrahamic religion: fleeing

from his father's "detainment," repeatedly looking for new Christian mentors, and toiling through

his enslavement. Salmān's willing acceptance and conviction of Islam comes into comparison

with Zoroastrians' experience of Islamic conquests and conversions. Of course, conversions were

rarely coercive; many people converted for social reasons out of their own volition. However,

with their conquests of Persia and the fall of the Sassanian empire, Islam and Arab rule was

likely still associated with violence, suffering, and drastic cultural and political changes in the

collective memory of the newly conquered people. These experiences and memories likely

impacted the ways Muslims and Zoroastrians' understanding of their political relationships and

the nature of their community.

Read in this context, Salmān's conversion story could have helped to justify Muslims'

conquests to both its Muslim and non-Muslim audiences and superimpose memories of the

violence through a narrative that emphasizes the justice and triumph of Muslim conquests. In the

story, Salmān *chose* Islam despite having lived in perfect peace as a highly-trained Magian.

Salmān's spiritual conviction and natural attraction to Islam also establishes the obviousness of

the superior message of Islam. The story likewise hinted at the pagan nature of Salmān's

Zoroastrian origins by evoking imagery of "the sacred fire," further emphasizing a dramatic

religious progression from Zoroastrianism to Islam. Emphasis on Salmān's spiritual connection

can indeed be understood as a message to promote genuine faith rather than social pressures as

causes for conversion. However, the tight connections it draws between Islam and divine truth,

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[14] Ibn Isḥāq, "How Salmān Became a Muslim," essay, in *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. A. Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 95–98, 95.

and between Zoroastrians and religious untruth, more likely was intended to help shape memories about Muslim conquests and Persia's pre-Islamic past. In a study of memory of the former Sasanian capital, Ctesiphon, Sarah Bowen Savant argued that the pre-Islamic past of Ctesiphon and Persia was actively erased from Arabic sources, and that the cause of Ctesiphon's fall was often reduced to the superiority of caliphs over Iran's ancient kings.[15] Salmān's ready motivation to move away from Zoroastrianism thus served a similar purpose of estranging Zoroastrians' pre-Islamic past while justifying Muslim conquests. If Islam was considered clearly superior and liberates those who convert, Muslim conquests could be considered as triumphs of religious truth and as punishment for those who refused to accept Islam. For Arab Muslims and the new converts, Salmān's story did not simply erase the violence in Muslim conquests but superimposed their memories by conversely celebrating and reinterpreting violence as an epic tale of the divinely guided defeating the religiously insubordinate.

Appeals for Conversions

Salmān's literature perhaps also sought to address Arab anxiety of asserting legitimacy and hegemony of their rule to the monotheist communities in Persia. Positioned along the Abrahamic tradition, Islam runs into the theological problem of explaining the decline of Judaism and Christianity and the very practical problems of convincing monotheists to convert. Hence, Salmān's literature can be seen as walking a fine line between explaining the corruption of the monotheists' faith without alienating the monotheists themselves.

In the conversion narrative, Salmān initially was attracted to Christian prayers and was subsequently mentored by a series of Christian monks, who eventually pointed him to Prophet

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[15] Sarah Bowen Savant, 'Forgetting Ctesiphon: Iran's Pre-Islamic Past, c. 800–1100', in *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East*, *ed*. Philip Wood (Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Muhammad and Islam. Among the three Christian teachers that Salmān had, his first Christian

teacher was described as "a bad man" that embezzled alms for himself.[16] Jaakko

Hammen-Anttila pointed to the corruption of this teacher and analyzed that it provides a

paradigm for interpreting Christian corruption.[17] Interestingly, however, when Salmān revealed

his corruption to other Christians after the death of the corrupt teacher, the Christians agreed in

unison to stone and crucify the teacher instead of a proper burial. Here, we see that the lay

Christians recognized the corruption of their previous teacher and decided to punish evil,

demonstrating their orientation toward what is Good. Salmān's story thus explains Christian

corruption through the depletion of faithful and worthy Christian leaders. However, it

emphasizes Christians' capacity for and theological proximity to Truth. By distinguishing corrupt

Christian leadership and faithful lay Christians, Salmān's story provides both reasons and space

for monotheists to convert to Islam.

Salmān's story further helps appealing monotheists to convert by providing a paradigm of

rethinking "conversions" as "transitions." Montgomery M. Watt has shown that during Prophet

Muhammad's time, "conversion" as we understand it did not yet exist in Islamic thought.[18]

Instead, new religious affiliation with Islam was described as *islām* (surrender to God) and *ihtidā*

(following guidance). Thus, the relevant question, Watt says, was whether one will respond or

fail to respond to God's message. Compared to Watt's investigation of religious change during

the life of the Prophet, religious change in Persia after Muslim conquests was of course, at a

different time and place. With the clear violent nature of conquests and political hegemony of

Arab Muslims, there's little doubt that tensions existed between Muslims and non-Muslims. As

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[16] Isḥāq, "How Salmān became a Muslim," 95-96.

[17] Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila. "The Corruption of Christianity: Salmān Al-Fārisī's Quest as a Paradigmatic Model," *Studia Orientalia Electronica* (2014).

[18] Montgomery W. Watt, "Conversion in Islam at the Time of the Prophet," essay, in *Early Islam: Collected Articles* (Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1990), 34.

mentioned earlier, earlier conversions after Muslim conquests were often indeed understood as "abandonment" of one's community and carried risks of severing social ties. Salmān's story can be seen as an attempt to re-interpret "conversion" as a response to God's message, similar to the paradigm Watt describes as the default during the Prophet's time. This reinterpretation could reduce the social risks of conversion to Islam and make it an imperative for monotheists to convert.

Consider Salmān's progression from Christianity to Islam: After finding wisdom from his Christian teachers, Salmān was told that there are no more worthy Christian teachers. However, the last Christian teacher also possessed knowledge of and pointed Salmān to the rise of Prophet Muhammad who supposedly, would carry the baton of true Abrahamic faith. In the story, Islam is seen as succeeding the declining Christianity in passing on God's message, and Salmān's religious change from Christianity to Islam as continuation, transition rather than conversion. By emphasizing the continuity between the two religions, Salmān's story perhaps aimed to change Christians' conceptions of Islam, not as an alternative or compromise to their truth, but as a continuation of true God's words. If this were the case, conversion to Islam can be considered an imperative for Christians if they were to truly follow God's words, rather than its relic form of Christianity.

Of note, the story is titled "How Salmān became a Muslim," rather than "How Salmān converted to Islam." In other words, Salmān did not simply sign up for something abstract called Islam, he as a person was changed (to a Muslim) in the process of seeking Islam. We also do not know exactly when Salmān became a Muslim. Was it when he began following the Prophet? Was it when he began learning from the Christian teachers? As a result, the title provides the space where Muslim identity is relatively fluid, and that it is generally inclusive of non-Arabs. The title

also emphasizes Salmān's personal transformation over Islam's religious superiority. But what exactly constitutes a personal transformation? Is it genuine faith? If Bulliet is right that most conversions in Early Islam were motivated by social and economic reasons, why would the storyteller want to emphasize personal transformation as an important component of being a Muslim?

It's hard to tell if generations of readers later on find genuine belief to become an important component of the Muslim identity. However, like the story's distinction of Christian teachers and lay Christians, the emphasized terminology of "Muslim" over "Islam" helps to detach individuals from their religious, ethnic, or general community affiliations—despite clear religious hierarchy, it's up to the *individual* to detach themselves and to form a better relationship with God. This title could thus serve two functions for two different audiences: expressing to Arab Muslims and new converts that more personal work must be done beyond affiliation with Islam, and empowering individuals to convert by allowing their capacity to transcend beyond the affiliation and identity they were born with, regardless of how "religiously inferior" that identity might be. Regardless of the function of the title, the terms hint at attempts to think and define the identity of "Muslim" that's ethnically inclusive and demands personal faith.

Treatment of Judaism

One might think that Islam's positioning in the Abrahamic tradition makes Muslims naturally more friendly to both Christians and Jews. However, the two groups of monotheists seem to receive vastly different portrayals in Salmān's conversion story. While one Christian teacher out of the three that Salmān encountered was corrupt, the other two Christian monks were described as virtuous and in clear possession of truth (especially the last monk's knowledge of the arrival of a prophet). Christian prayers also were portrayed to have an innate beauty that

attracted Salmān initially. However, in Salmān's truth-seeking journey from Zoroastrianism

through Christianity to Islam, Judaism seemed to have been oddly cast out of Salmān's

progression. In fact, Salmān's only encounter with Jews was when he was betrayed by his

Kalbite companions and sold to and enslaved by a harsh Jewish owner.

It might be tempting to conclude from the position of Jewish actors in Salmān's story

that, for whatever reasons, the early Islamic community was hostile to Judaism. Considering the

historical context, how unfavorable of a portrayal of Jews did the Salmān's story really give its

audience? Slavery in its form at the time was likely not considered a moral failure by both its

Muslim and non-Muslim audience. Furthermore, the Jewish owner was not at fault for the

Kalbites' betrayal of Salmān and his unfortunate fate in enslavement. However, the text still

clearly described the Jewish owner in a negative light — it included details of the ill treatment of

Salmān by his Jewish owner and, as Hämeen-Anttila noted, the Jew's exaggeration of the three

hundred palm-trees and forty ounces of gold needed to purchase Salmān's freedom.[19] While

slavery was likely not directly viewed adversely, the Jewish enslaver's obvious mistreatment of

Salmān and greed in exaggerating the worth of Salmān's freedom show intentional efforts in

painting Jews poorly. What could this mean?

A likely explanation is that the story's targeted audience was largely Zoroastrians, and

Jews' lower status in Salmān's story was exploited to appeal to local Zoroastrians who held more

social and political power. Under Sassanian rule in the early Islamic period, Jewish communities

held a subalternized status. Subjugated to Sassanid rulers, Jewish communities were largely

suppressed while several Jewish religious figures were executed.[20] Because of this, Jews in

Persia likely welcomed Arab rule in the area. If this was the case, Muslims did not need to spend

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[19] Hämeen-Anttila," The Corruption of Christianity," 120.
[20] Michael G. Morony, "Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Iraq," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17, no. 2 (1974): 113, https://doi.org/10.2307/3596328.

as much effort trying to convert the already-subalternized Jews as converting the Zoroastrians who still wielded much power. The lowered status of Judaism is also contrasted with Zoroastrianism's placement as Salmān's religious background. His Zoroastrian origins, despite being portrayed with its pagan nature, could show that Zoroastrians do have a place in the Islamic society and religion, which seem less clear for the Jews according to this narrative. Possibly a political move by the Muslim rulers, this contrast between Jewish subaltern status and Salmān's elevated portrayal as a Zoroastrian could convey to the Zoroastrian elite their hierarchical positions over Jews within the Islamic community. This could reassure them their power and legitimacy in their local communities, whether they convert to Islam or remain Zoroastrians. In fact, Jamsheed K. Choksy explains that the Muslim bureaucrats ensured relative harmony by granting magi authority over other Zoroastrians after the conquests.[21] In their poor treatment of Judaism, Muslim elite might not have meant explicit hostility to Judaism. Instead, it might have been a political chess move to stabilize the expanding empire by keeping the subaltern marginalized and allowing the powerful to hold onto much of their power.

Conclusion

Salmān's story reflects the elite's careful management and political balance of the conquered territories. While Muslim identity seemed highly inclusive, non-Muslim religious communities were clearly demarcated and retained a hierarchical relationship. Salmān's conversion story perhaps gives us little accurate information about the actual process of conversion. However, the story served to define Islamic identity and community to both Muslims and non-Muslims and hint at the elite's political maneuvers to justify and maintain Islam's hegemony. Moreover, by employing religious language to define and justify political dynamics,

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[21] Choksy, *Conflict*, 30-35.

Salmān's story shows us the rhetorical power of the elite to operate between political and religious definitions of Islam and Muslim identity.

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