

# *The Brunswick & Greenwich Academy Magazine of History*

## *Editor*

Dr. John R. Van Atta

## *Editorial Office*

Department of History  
Pettengill Campus  
The Brunswick School  
100 Maher Avenue  
Greenwich, CT 06830  
e-mail: [jvanatta@brunswickschool.org](mailto:jvanatta@brunswickschool.org)

(Please submit manuscripts for review and any correspondence regarding editorial matters by e-mail to the editorial office)

## *Editorial Board*

Mrs. Margot Beattie	Ali Hindy
Ms. Kristine Brennan	Nikhil Jaismal
Ms. Kristen Erickson	Ecaterina Lungu
Mr. Christopher Forester	Oliver McGovern
Jamison Hesser	Noor Rekhi

## Students

**Violating the Codes: Unethical Medical Research in Twentieth Century America**

by Isabelle Stemerman '19

**Real Pinkertons: Detecting, and Decapitating, the Early U.S. Labor Movement**

by James Galef '20

**The Committee on Public Information and Its Influence on Public Opinion During World War I**

by Anna McCormack '19

**American Foreign Policy Myopia in Twentieth Century Ghanaian Affairs**

by Dylan Ofori '19

**Catherine the Great: A Voice of Reason and Rationality in Eighteenth-Century Russia**

by Cécilia Lux '20

**The History of Audubon Greenwich: The First Nature Center**

by Scott Gibbons '19

**“A lesson that I will not forget very soon”: The Untold Story of Sergeant James McKee**

by Jack Withstandley '19

## Faculty

**Leo**

by Brian G. Freeman

***Nightingales, True Stories of Escape, Hope, and Resilience: A Book Preview***

by Mimi Melkonian

***Charging Up San Juan Hill: Theodore Roosevelt and the Making of Imperial America: A Book Preview***

by John R. Van Atta

## The Editor's Page

Ok, here I go again. Not to be pedantic, but as a sometimes writing teacher, I keep asking “what makes good writing?” or “what makes someone a good writer?” Those questions, which I apply here mainly to expository-style writing, are important for many reasons. For one, this magazine, like all others I know, avoids publishing pieces that come in poorly written. A better reason, of course, is that bad writing just doesn't work: It impresses no one, persuades in no way, fails to captivate readers, advances no understanding, never merits a good grade, won't get you into college, can't land a good job, and is—worst of all—just plain boring. Moreover, bad writing is easy to recognize when one sees it, especially when compared to the better stuff. So, for anyone out there who aspires to be a good writer, or a better one, here are a few collected, revised, and slightly embellished tips.



**Dr. John Van Atta, Editor**

- Keep the reader in mind. As a rule, we write in response to something, as a social act relating to other people and the world around us. That is, written work usually addresses an audience for some particular purpose. It's a way of communicating. So, when you try to write, think that there is someone out there (let's say not just your teacher) to receive and react to your ideas. Know your reader(s), if possible. Be sure, if you can, to have a sense of his/her expectations—not so much with the aim of being pleasing (that's not the point) but to carry the reader along with you, whether or not he/she agrees with your view.
- Be organized. To communicate effectively, you must order words and ideas in ways that make sense to a reader. Aim for a linear effect—or an arc of narrative—featuring a clear beginning, middle part, and end. A logical outline beforehand is wise. Naturally, most people do not think in linear fashion (my own thoughts usually occur in pretty scattered or scrambled form), which is why it's a good idea to brainstorm first, then outline, and then write. Bear in mind, however: The process of writing itself, the act of putting ideas into words and arranging them for a reader, often causes us to discover new connections that may later require some reworking of your original plan.
- Good writing is rewriting. (I'm doing that right now, as I arrange and rearrange these words, hoping they will make sense when I'm through.) Sometimes the rewriting occurs almost unconsciously: the juggling, choosing, deleting, and choosing again of words and phrases—always trying to get it right. Also, the rewriting takes conscious form, as one rereads a paragraph or page for simplicity, clarity, coherence, or just the feeling (sometimes deceptive) that it “works.” The point is that a piece of writing almost never comes out satisfactorily the first time. Be prepared to circle back and

around, over and over again, as needed.

- Good writing takes a while. I constantly tell students not to put off the process until “just before the paper is due.” Granted, every writer has his/her own strategy of thinking, planning, drafting, and revising that may seem to work best. Even so, and for all the reasons given above, dumping a bunch of thoughts onto a laptop page the night or two before a deadline is not well-calculated for best results. My own experience, that of other writers I know, and that of very many students I’ve taught is that we don’t really know what we think until we’ve read over (several times) and really thought about what we’ve written. Therefore, start early, take lots of time, and allow a long period for reflection and revision.

For some examples of the good kind of expository writing we seek, I recommend the seven student articles in this year’s issue. It has now been fifteen years since we established this history magazine back in 2005, almost before our current round of student authors had learned to walk. We trust this current issue will not be the last and that well-crafted work by good writers will continue to reach us.

As always, we encourage students of both our schools to try their luck in submitting their work for this magazine. If you have an essay, written for a history class or not, that you think might be good, let us see it and maybe shepherd it into print. We rely on anonymous refereeing, which is standard practice in the history profession. That means every submission is blind-reviewed by some members of the editorial board. We typically receive more top-notch essays than we have room to publish, but that should not deter anyone from trying. As our past contributors all know, the overcoming of competition makes the final achievement that much sweeter.

Thanks, again as always, to school heads Tom Philip and Molly King, history chairs Kristine Brennan and Kristen Erickson, and the whole Tech Office crew for their help in various ways. Margot Beattie, as usual, deserves special mention as my partner in crime; anyone who may have read this page in previous issues will know how much I think she has contributed to the magazine’s success over the years. Finally, we thank most especially our readers, without whom there would be no point.

\*

## **Violating the Codes: Unethical Medical Research in Twentieth-Century America**

**by Isabelle Stemerman '19**

In order to safely perform medical experimentation on humans, participating countries need to accept a standard set of regulations. Before the United Nations was founded in 1945 and created such a universal policy, every country used its own judgment to preserve the safety of its patients. The United States violated this implied code, however, with the twentieth-century eugenics movement. The federal government used harmful bias to validate exploitative experiments to sterilize populations it deemed unfit for reproduction in order to improve the perceived general health of the population.<sup>1</sup>

The government justified its behavior using the American medical community's common belief that doctors should make unilateral decisions for their patients because their "professional" choices would lead to a better outcome.<sup>2</sup> Despite this ideology of doctors' authority, the United States government concurrently worked to create international policies such as the Nuremberg Code in 1947 and the Declaration of Helsinki in 1964, both of which questioned human medical experimentation and called for stronger regulations. But unbeknownst to the international community, the United States continued to violate the practices it endorsed publicly, allowing morally questionable domestic experiments from the 1930s through the 1970s. While outwardly endorsing international human rights policies, the federal government secretly violated such guidelines domestically in order to maintain its image as an international model of democracy while at the same time pursuing a different notion of scientific "progress."

By supporting international human rights protections as a World War II victor, and as a founding member of the United Nations, the United States government demonstrated its awareness of destructive medical experiments and publicized its stance against them. After the American public became aware of atrocities of the Holocaust, the U.S. took a leading role in punishing Nazi war criminals. In 1946-1947, the United States worked closely with the legal team at the Nuremberg Trials in Germany that prosecuted 23 of at least 350 possible perpetrators of the "racist medical culture" that led to the "mercy killings" of thousands of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and disabled people in order to purify the Volk, that is, the German population and also that of parts of Europe under Nazi control.<sup>3</sup> The United States aided the prosecution in exposing the Nazis for these and other heinous crimes committed during the war. Prosecutors indicted doctors on grounds of conspiracy, war crimes for aiding the Nazi military, crimes against humanity because of the often sadistic nature of their "science," and membership in a criminal organization for using concentration camp members in witness-free experiments.<sup>4</sup> Along with these horrifying charges, the Nazis performed mass killings of the diseased, malnourished, old, and disabled because they needed room in concentration camps for those who were fit for experimen-

tation.<sup>5</sup>

The trials proved advantageous for the United States because Americans were able to sponsor similar experiments domestically while deflecting international focus on Germany and its wartime atrocities. The irony of the United States' spearheading the campaign against Nazi experimentation lay in the



The Nuremberg Trials, 1945-46.

German doctors' citing of the American eugenics movement as inspiration for *their* work.<sup>6</sup> The United States government worked to make sure that "American research and Nazi murder were never mentioned in the same breath" because America could not afford to lose its position as a leading power by being exposed and forced to stop its own experiments.<sup>7</sup> Instead, the United States identified the Nazis alone as the force of true evil. As a result of the Nuremberg Trials, a ten-point Nuremberg Code was published, highlighting the conditions that consent is necessary, experiments need to be performed on animals before humans, there cannot be undue risk to a subject, and that a subject has the right to end an experiment at any time without repercussions.<sup>8</sup> These new international guidelines did not, however, stop the American medical researchers from continuing their own classified, eugenics-based experiments at home, as "the ethical rules of Nuremberg were never really embraced" by the U.S. government.<sup>9</sup>

The United States put forth a similarly duplicitous display 17 years later, this time as a leader of the World Medical Association, as it once again produced

# Nuremberg Code

1. Voluntary human consent is essential
2. Experimental results should results in good for society
3. Anticipated results should justify the experiment
4. Avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering
5. No experiment if there is a chance of death/disability
6. Minimize risk of subjects
7. Proper preparations and facilities to protect subjects
8. Experiments conducted only by qualified persons
9. Subjects can withdraw at anytime
10. Terminate experiment if results are known or with best judgement

an international code of medical regulations that its scientists also secretly violated at home. An association of countries, including the United States, created the World Medical Association at the end of the Nuremberg Trials in 1947 in order to ensure that war crimes like those of the Nazis would never be repeated. In 1964, at the organization's 18th General Assembly, the U.S. clarified its policy that research protocols to advance science are not justified when there is a threat to human beings because the patient's health was more important than scientific development. It also affirmed informed consent, challenging the mentality of the time that doctors had authority over their patients.<sup>10</sup> Another crucial reform was the understanding that patients should be treated with the best current method available throughout a medical study, while being informed of all treatment options. Additionally, this included a protection for vulnerable populations such as children, the terminally ill, incompetent subjects, incapacitated subjects, and the handicapped.<sup>11</sup> Although the WMA hoped that signatory countries already respected these ethical codes, they were in fact often violated, so the organization published an official set of rules to enforce proper human care globally. The WMA was unaware, however, that the United States was blatantly disregarding those rules despite having helped create and disseminate them. This hypocrisy

allowed the U.S. scientists to continue to advance themselves professionally via medical experimentation while simultaneously maintaining their benevolent image as one of the World Medical Association's leaders.

One of the longest running of the inhumane domestic experiments conducted in the United States, in violation of UN and WMA restrictions, was the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, which took place in Macon County, Alabama, from 1932 to 1972. The U.S. Public Health Service ran the experiment in order to "clean up" the country's black population and create a "New Negro" free of syphilis, commonly referred to as "bad blood" and "sanitary sins," in order to protect the rest of the country. That justification bears an eerily similar ring to that of the Nazis and their concentration camps.<sup>12</sup> In an age of eugenics and racial pseudoscience, it was easy for people to swallow this rationale, however. Further justification offered for this racism was the fact that the PHS had decided to perform a study similar to one performed in Norway from 1890 to 1910. That earlier experiment concluded that it was better for syphilis patients to be treated, but the PHS performed their experiment while withholding treatment on the black population because the organization saw the white and black races as distinct and unequal.<sup>13</sup>

In this newer U.S. version of the experiment, starting in the 1930s and continuing through the publication of both the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki, 400 infected blacks and 200 control subjects were chosen from poor and rural Macon County, Alabama, to participate in a study called "Untreated Syphilis in the Male Negro."<sup>14</sup> To convince people to participate in the study, the PHS initially "treated" them with placebos in order to gain their trust.<sup>15</sup> The subjects were unaware that they were in fact being denied treatment so that their infected bodies could be autopsied later.<sup>16</sup> Instead of being forthright with their subjects, the government concealed the truth from them in order to motivate their participation in an unethical study.

When, in 1972, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment was finally exposed to a shocked American public, the government actively worked to hide further incriminating information. Peter Buxton, a PHS investigator, became aware that subjects were not informed of the details of the experiment and were simply being used as data, not human beings.<sup>17</sup> Deeply disturbed, he raised the issue to his friends at the Associated Press, and on July 26, 1972, Jean Heller wrote the article "Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years," in which she called the largely poor and uneducated subjects "guinea pigs" for the manipulative U.S. government who gave them placebos instead of an actual cure.<sup>18</sup> The Tuskegee experiment was unique because "nowhere else. . . were patients denied treatment and lied to for so long," and it was "astounding . . . [especially because]



it was conducted by an arm of the United States government.”<sup>19</sup> Scientists argued that their actions were justified because their patients were not denied treatment but that such treatment was simply not available.<sup>20</sup> During the time of the Tuskegee experiment, however, penicillin had become a known and easily available treatment for syphilis,<sup>21</sup> and between 28 and 107 patients involved could have been cured had the scientists revealed to them its existence.<sup>22</sup>

This experiment violated the Nuremberg Code because the PHS did not present the patients with informed consent, and there was undue risk to them. By denying patients penicillin, the experiment also disobeyed the Declaration of Helsinki, which insisted that patients be treated with the best medication available and also be informed of all types of possible treatment. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare’s subsequent review of the experiment agreed, calling the experiment “ethically unjustified” not only because of its lack of informed consent and proper treatment but also because the experiment did not officially end until March 1973, when Senator Ted Kennedy intervened.<sup>23</sup> Even though the government had been exposed for its wrongdoing, it was still reluctant to end its scientific experimentation because data collection for so long had become prioritized over the health of human beings.

Unfortunately, the Tuskegee experiment was not an isolated case of code violation. In the 1940s, the government continued to flout its own international policies through continuing mustard gas experiments. Without informing sailors, government experimenters exposed them to mustard gas in “man-break tests” that caused sneezing, vomiting, reddening, blistering, and ultimately left approximately 60,000 subjects temporarily blinded and unconscious. Not only were the

# The New York Times

## Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years

By JEAN HELLER  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, July 25—For 40 years the United States Public Health Service has conducted a study in which human beings with syphilis, who were induced to serve as guinea pigs, have gone without medical treatment for the disease and a few have died of its late effects, even though an effective therapy was eventually discovered.

The study was conducted to determine from autopsies what the disease does to the human body.

Officials of the health service who initiated the experiment have long since retired. Current officials, who say they

have serious doubts about the morality of the study, also say that it is too late to treat the syphilis in any surviving participants.

Doctors in the service say they are now rendering whatever other medical services they can give to the survivors while the study of the disease’s effects continues.

Dr. Merlin K. DuVal, Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for Health and Scientific Affairs, expressed shock on learning of the study. He said that he was making an immediate investigation.

The experiment, called the Tuskegee Study, began in 1932 with about 600 black men,

experiments themselves atrocious but the government repeated them on the same untrained and uninformed subjects until they had developed health problems—another case of repeatedly violating both the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki by failing to obtain prior informed consent and endangering human beings.<sup>24</sup>



AUTH, copyright 1972, *The Philadelphia Enquirer*

Further, in 1945, 800 volunteers signed up to be infected with malaria to test a drug for the military, even signing a consent form. The government, however, often paid “volunteers” to do so, or they were prison inmates at the U.S. Penitentiary in Atlanta, the Illinois State Penitentiary, or the New York State Reformatory. A 1945 *Life* magazine article featured a photo of the deliberate infection of these unknowing subjects, while the U.S. government authorities asserted their belief that “prison life [was] ideal for controlled laboratory work with humans” and that they had nothing to hide.<sup>25</sup> This explanation backfired, however, as the article explained that experimenters often “allowed [cases] to progress considerably before [subjects were] treated with drugs.”<sup>26</sup> Nazis on trial at Nuremberg cited this article in defense of their wartime actions, arguing that the United States unethically manipulated its prisoners in the same way as the concentration camp population during Hitler’s Third Reich.<sup>27</sup> The United States sent similar drugs to Australia to be tested against even higher levels of malaria inoculation on equally uninformed and unaware participants, demonstrating a willingness to violate international codes both at home and abroad.<sup>28</sup> Even though the United States entered the Nuremberg Trials and World Medical Association’s 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly claiming to help create a model for the rest of the world, American scientists themselves, with the sanction of the U.S. government, already were

committing similarly heinous crimes on a global scale.

Even after the publication of the Nuremberg Code in 1947, the United States continued its own pattern of unethical experiments. Operation Top Hat, a 1953 experiment at the Chemical Corps School in Alabama, tested biological warfare agents on uninformed military subjects. The government attributed the lack of consent of its patients as being in the “line of duty”—yet another improper justification of the United States’ failure to follow its own rules. The government applied the same racist ideology that allowed the Tuskegee experiment to flourish in its execution of Operation Top Hat, excluding Puerto Rican and black personnel from a subsequent test regarding cold environments and vitamin supplements because, once again, non-white people were perceived as biologically different.<sup>29</sup>

Still further, the government also targeted young people, experimenting in upstate New York in the 1960s at the Willowbrook State School for “mentally defective” children. Many of the children had contracted hepatitis because of the poor sanitary conditions at the school, so experimenters exploited this circumstance by separating the newly admitted children from those already with hepatitis and infecting the non-infected children with the disease in order to study it. The experiment was met with outrage, so scientists defended their work by explaining that the children would have gotten the disease anyway but now were under better care. This was a common justification for experimentation at the time, as it had been used for both Tuskegee patients regarding syphilis and by the Nazis when testing populations they perceived as different from and inferior to “the master race.” The Willowbrook scientists also claimed that the parents had consented but did not mention that such consent had been a condition of immediate acceptance into the competitive school.<sup>30</sup> Scientists argued that they had helped society by generating more knowledge about the disease—an outdated justification, because international codes had already prioritized human wellbeing over scientific advancement.

<b>November 15, 1958</b>	<b>Willowbrook Study Staten Island, New York</b>
Dear Mrs. _____:	
We are studying the possibility of preventing epidemics of hepatitis on a new principle. Virus is introduced and gamma globulin given later to some, so that either no attack or only a mild attack of hepatitis is expected to follow. This may give the children immunity against this disease for life. We should like to give your child this new form of prevention with the hope that it will afford protection.	
Permission form is enclosed for your consideration. If you wish to have your children given the benefit of this new preventive, will you so signify by signing the form.	

Regard for human life similarly fell by the wayside at Cincinnati General Hospital from 1960 to 1971, where ninety patients were irradiated in order to prepare for the possible nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and twenty died from that brutal experience. The patients thought that they were being treated for their illnesses, unaware they were receiving radiation treatment.<sup>31</sup> This report and all of the others represent only a few examples of domestic experiments undertaken with the blessing of the United States government in violation of codes that emphasized human life over science and the importance of informed consent.

The U.S., worried that its nefarious experiments would damage its prominent position in the world, went to extensive lengths to keep them secret. In another example of such hypocrisy, during the Sino-Japanese War of World War II, from 1936 to 1945, Japanese forces invaded China and occupied Manchuria, where they carried out horrifying biological warfare experiments. Members of the Japanese Unit 731 caused epidemics by air-dropping plague infected fleas over Chinese cities, infected drinking wells with cholera and typhoid, dissected prisoners alive, exploded bodies with extreme pressure changes, and planned to send germs to the western United States via air balloons.<sup>32</sup> Even though these crimes occurred before the passage of the Nuremberg Code and subsequent international human rights agreements, the United States, as a champion of good and leader of democracy, should have worked with other countries in order to prosecute the Japanese leaders of Unit 731. The United States, however, prioritized its pursuit of scientific advancement and took more interest in the findings of these deadly experiments than in punishing their perpetrators. So, instead of a trial, the government exempted the Unit 731 leaders from trial by downplaying their crimes and ultimately employing them for purposes of American military advancement.<sup>33</sup>

While the government's eventual report on Unit 731 contained elements of truth, its use of medical ethics expert Andrew Ivy in the Nuremberg Trial escalated to complete misrepresentation. After Germany questioned United States' medical practices such as the malaria experiment featured in *Life* magazine in 1945, U.S. officials summoned Ivy to testify on their behalf.<sup>34</sup> The Nazi government was not wrong about United States malpractice, as the government had infected its own citizens with malaria and then did not punish the consequences. Ivy knew that the United States' case would have been substantially weakened against the Nazis if this truth had been uncovered, so instead of admitting the government's fault, he "was prepared to say whatever was needed to ensure that the actions of the Nazi experimenters would be viewed as isolated" and not compared to those of the United States.<sup>35</sup> In effect, Ivy perjured himself, explaining that the United States had a committee in place that was dealing with the consequences of the experiment when such a committee had not even met. By lying at Nuremberg, Ivy contributed to maintaining the U.S. reputation as a country of

good, working to rid the world of evil. The lie had been necessary for the United States to reinforce this position internationally.

The United States seemed to have further asserted this position in 1953 by incorporating the Nuremberg Code into U.S. policy via the Wilson memorandum designed to enforce voluntary consent, injury prevention, and an experiment's termination at any point if necessary.<sup>36</sup> It was originally difficult for the bill to be passed into law because doctors did not want their role in experimentation to be questioned. However, the code ultimately did not have its intended effect because the government classified it as top secret, so scientists were unable to see or follow it.<sup>37</sup> Because the government was not forthright with the public about its new policy, experiments like Operation Top Hat, the Willowbrook State School, and the Cincinnati General Hospital were able to occur on U.S. soil after the memorandum's passage, without federal punishment. By the time the protections were publicized in 1973, experimenters had permanently damaged patients who could have been saved had the policy been adopted earlier. By keeping its regulatory code top secret, the government did not have to acknowledge its own violations and thus expose itself.

Instead of following the protocols it outlined internationally, the United States government continued quietly to execute its experiments for years, while at the same time asserting its reputation as a morally flawless international leader. Doctors involved in unethical projects felt that they could act without consent or discretion because there were no explicit regulations against this behavior. Even if they did get consent from their patients, it was often coerced or obtained improperly because at the time, consent was seen as a "matter of debate."<sup>38</sup> The widely accepted view of doctors as "capable investigators" with "scientific merit" was dangerous because it allowed them to view their patients as subjects instead of people, even after the passage of the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki.<sup>39</sup> Although the arrival of the Nuremberg Code inspired change in U.S. policy through the Wilson memorandum, no effective action took place until 1974. Through its various self-justifications, the United States government was able to convince the international public that both ethics and science supported the actions of the scientific researchers whose sometimes unethical studies it sanctioned.

By 1974, the government could no longer ignore its lack of self-regulation, so the National Research Act and the subsequent Belmont Report in 1979 attempted to create a future significantly different from its unethical past. After the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, Senator Kennedy sponsored the National Research Act which required institutional review boards to rule on protocols for federally funded medical research. One of these committees, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, established the Belmont Report in 1979 that enforced informed con-

sent and patient autonomy, termination of an experiment if necessary, minimized risk, and special protection for vulnerable populations.<sup>40</sup> The adoption of his policy proved, in itself, that the United States had not followed prior regulations, which had already been included in the Nuremberg Code, the Wilson Memorandum, and the Declaration of Helsinki. But because United States researchers were not following these codes, the government needed an additional reform. Although the Belmont Report report did not completely end questionable experimentation in the United States, it finally did hold doctors responsible for the ethical and medical implications of their actions.

To maintain its image as a world leader and proponent of ethical scientific progress, the United States government openly promoted international policies for human rights in medical experimentation but covertly disregarded its own protocols. As a result, people were injured, disabled, and killed in the name of science without consenting to the experiments that hurt them. The U.S. government wanted to advance scientific knowledge by any means necessary while also appearing ethically superior, but the two aims proved mutually exclusive. It took multiple international agreements, along with years of unethical domestic experimentation, for Americans to realize that it was unacceptable to project a positive moral image on the one hand but to act hypocritically on the other. In 1997, the United States pledged that it would thereafter follow international rules, with President Bill Clinton's acknowledging of past violations and guaranteeing that his nation would not accept such behavior.<sup>41</sup> With that new outlook on medical experimentation and its promise to act transparently, America may finally have achieved what it had only pretended for almost half a century.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>"Eugenics," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (2008): 21-22, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3045300754/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=a8f7bcc1> (accessed December 18, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan D. Moreno, *Undue Risk: Secret State Experiments on Humans* (New York, 2000), 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55, 58-59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

<sup>5</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "Nazi Doctors' Tests Scored as Inhuman," November 21, 1946, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX-K12&p\\_theme=ahnp\\_k12&p\\_nbid=Y68W62YVMTUxMzY0NDYyMi42OTYwMTE6MT0xNjpcnVlbndpY2hhY2FkZW15](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX-K12&p_theme=ahnp_k12&p_nbid=Y68W62YVMTUxMzY0NDYyMi42OTYwMTE6MT0xNjpcnVlbndpY2hhY2FkZW15) (accessed December 18, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> "Sterilization, Involuntary," *Violence in America* (1999), <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/BT2350011399/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=7e507ed1> (accessed December 18, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Susan M. Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 66, <https://www.questiaschool.com/library/120077289/> (accessed December 18, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Moreno, 80.

- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 180.
- <sup>10</sup> “World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki,” *Medicine, Health, and Bioethics: Essential Primary Sources* (2006): 440-444, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3456500165/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=63dc3d31> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 440-444.
- <sup>12</sup> Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee*, 16, 20, 22, 26.
- <sup>13</sup> Allan M. Brandt, “Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study,” *The Hastings Center Report* (1978): 21-23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3561468> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>14</sup> Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee*, 29-30, 33, 55.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34, 73.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 46-48.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 79-81.
- <sup>18</sup> Jean Heller, “Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years,” *New York Times*, July 26, 1972, <http://www.nytimes.com/1972/07/26/archives/syphilis-victims-in-us-study-went-untreated-for-40-years-syphilis.html> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>19</sup> Susan M. Reverby, “More Than Fact and Fiction: Cultural Memory and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study,” *The Hastings Center Report* (2001): 26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3527701> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>20</sup> Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee*, 87.
- <sup>21</sup> “Penicillin,” *American Decades* (2001), <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3468300950/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=2cb1c619> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>22</sup> Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee*, 90.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 92-93, 99.
- <sup>24</sup> Moreno, 37, 40.
- <sup>25</sup> “Prison malaria: Convicts expose themselves to disease so doctors can study it,” *Life Magazine* (1945): 43, 46, <https://books.google.com/books?id=h0gEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA43&pg=PA43&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Moreno, 34-35.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 49-50.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 179-180.
- <sup>30</sup> Arthur Zucker, “Medical Ethics,” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2006): 92-98, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3446801283/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=f995de2d> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>31</sup> “Wilson Memorandum,” *Medicine, Health, and Bioethics: Essential Primary Sources* (2006): 438-440, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3456500164/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=3952d8b9> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>32</sup> “The Crimes of Unit 731,” *New York Times* (1995), <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A155489112/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=5e5849c4> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Moreno, 66.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 68.
- <sup>36</sup> “Wilson Memorandum,” 438-440.
- <sup>37</sup> Moreno, 173.
- <sup>38</sup> “Tuskegee and the Ethics of Medical Experiments on Humans,” *America’s Historical Newspapers—1690-2000*, [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p\\_product=EANX-](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX-)

K12&p\_theme=ahnp\_k12&p\_nbid=Y5AS54PHMTUxMzY0MzQzOS44MDY2Njc6M  
ToxNjpncmVlbndpY2hhY2FkZW15 (accessed, December 18, 2017).

<sup>39</sup> Moreno, 168-169.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth A. Wallston, "Human Subjects, Protection of," *Encyclopedia of Education* (2002):  
1091-1093, [http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3403200301/UHIC?  
u=s057k&xid=c196be03](http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3403200301/UHIC?u=s057k&xid=c196be03) (accessed December 18, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> Moreno, 225.

\*



**Real Pinkertons:  
Detecting, and Decapitating, the Early U.S. Labor Movement**

by James Galef '20



Logo for the Pinkerton National Detective Agency (PNDA)

In the mid-18th century, a British “thief-taker” – precursor to private detective – captured two highway robbers and accepted the bounty for their capture. It was soon revealed that the thief-taker and the robbery victim had actually conspired to split the bounty with a third accomplice, who had urged the robbers to commit the crime.<sup>1</sup> Though a century before, this episode foreshadows practices of private detective agencies in the late 19th-century United States. The relationship between the characters in that story parallels those between private detective agencies, industrial corporations, and the labor movement: The detective agency is the thief-taker, the corporations are his accomplices, and the laborers are the tricked robbers.

In popular fiction, Pinkerton detectives are sensationalized crime stoppers, but it seems that these depictions of Pinkertons are, for the most part, just fiction. Rather than being the greatest private crime stopping institution in the world, the Pinkerton National Detective Agency (PNDA) and other agencies like it were mostly occupied with protecting the interests of corporations and defeat-

ing the labor movement through unethical tactics. The rise of the PNDA in the 19th century was always fueled by demand for industrial profits, and when workforces threatened those profits, the PNDA would stop at nothing, including violence, to fight against that threat.

The industrial revolution and rise of labor activism in the United States went hand in hand with the rise of the private detective. Before then, private citizens did most policing. In the early 1800s, when, according to historian Robert Weiss, “most people were self-employed and, comparatively speaking, general equality prevailed,” crime was limited, so vigilantism, sheriff-led posse comitatus, and bounty hunters served to maintain order.<sup>2</sup> Even as police departments began forming in the large cities and towns, instead of pursuing criminals and protecting life and property, these organizations only provided such “general welfare duties as reporting time, spotting fires and observing weather conditions.”<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in the 1840s, industrial growth increased the need for more crime prevention. Urban populations exploded as immigrants became the fundamental manpower base for industry.<sup>4</sup> Existing police forces were not prepared to answer the demand for property protection and public safety that came with so many new citizens. Industrialization also created a problem of economic inequality. As the early 19th-century French observer Alexis de Tocqueville noted, industrial manufacturing “first impoverishes and debases the men who serve it and then abandons them.”<sup>5</sup> The labor force tried to improve its situation by organizing. Acts of organized labor sometimes led to civil disorder, which the police departments of that day proved incapable of handling. As Weiss asks, “What was a sheriff to do when faced not by a relatively small number of criminals whom everybody recognized for what they were but by hundreds and sometimes thousands of striking workers who were ordinarily peaceful, law-abiding citizens of a community?”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, by the mid-1800s, cities began remaking their police forces with more funding and manpower. These modern public police agencies emerged as America’s first “class control apparatus designed to regulate working class social and political activities.”<sup>7</sup>

The job of private detective was made possible by the new class-control function of modern public police forces. With municipal police directing so much attention to patrolling the “dangerous classes,” they put less effort into stopping and solving property crimes.<sup>8</sup> Private detectives began doing that work. The first private detectives, according to historian Wilber Miller, “were hired by people seeking divorce to discover acts of infidelity,” tracked down “stolen goods for people who had little confidence in the police,” and served “bank and railroad victims of robbery.”<sup>9</sup> Even though private detectives’ crime-solving work came to be an “insignificant percentage of their business,” judges Weiss, it solidified the glorified image of private detectives. It also established the private detective as an ally to corporations.<sup>10</sup>



Portrait of Allan Pinkerton,, circa 1861.

Corporate demand for private detective services led various private detectives to form agencies. Demand was growing because immigrants, who as laborers were organizing against corporate oppression, also constituted the basic manpower source for urban police departments.<sup>11</sup> City police forces originated to combat class warfare, but their officers were increasingly from the same communities as those they were supposed to be controlling. This represented “a thorn in the side” of business.<sup>12</sup> Sensing the unwillingness or inability of the state to uphold law and order, corporate interests, according to Historian Bruce Johnson, “began to place their reliance upon police forces of their own creation, private ones.”<sup>13</sup>

Though it was not the first private detective agency, the one that Allan Pinkerton founded in 1855, with the sponsorship of several mid-western railroads, became the nation’s most powerful, influential, and controversial one. Allan Pinkerton was not always an ally of the elite. An immigrant, he had fled Scotland because he was wanted there for involvement in a liberal, working-class reform movement.<sup>14</sup> Having settled in Chicago, he began working as a deputy sheriff and, in 1850, became the city’s first police detective. He was, according to historian Lawrence Friedman, “undoubtedly a very talented detective, and far above the ordinary person in foresight and intelligence.”<sup>15</sup> That same year, he began taking various private detective jobs to help corporations uncover mail theft and embezzlement.<sup>16</sup>

Pinkerton’s early corporate work made him an enemy to labor. For his first railroad client in 1854, he uncovered fraud among employees aboard its trains. The next year, Pinkerton opened a detective agency, which handled a few major robberies but mainly protected railroads from property crimes, employee laziness, and theft, as well as identifying “troublemakers” among the workers.<sup>17</sup> He accomplished this with “spotters” and “testing programs.” His agents would observe and evaluate the honesty of rail workers. Meanwhile, Pinkerton opened another business providing guards to companies to deter crime and stop criminals in the act.<sup>18</sup> He had not begun his work combatting strikes and union organizational efforts, but with his guard business and labor espionage efforts, Pinkerton was honing the tactics that he would use later against organized labor.

In 1860, Pinkerton consolidated his businesses under the Pinkerton National Detective Agency name. Though his development stalled the following

year when the Civil War began, this proved to his benefit, as Pinkerton was appointed to head the Union Intelligence Service, a job which allowed him to develop his administrative and organizational espionage abilities.<sup>19</sup>

Pinkerton and his agency found an opportunity in increasing conflict between corporations and their labor force that followed the Civil War. During the war, Pinkerton had been criticized for his “capacity to persuasively exaggerate” enemy numbers, but this “capacity” now allowed him to take advantage of, in the words of PNDA whistleblower Morris Friedman, “an inexhaustible gold mine in man's jealousy and suspicion of his fellow-man.”<sup>20</sup> Faced with postwar economic uncertainty, industrial capitalists wanted to maximize profits by lowering employee wages from their high wartime levels. Workers, on the other hand, saw the high postwar industrial output and demanded improved working conditions, reduced hours, and *higher* wages.<sup>21</sup> This led to the suspicion and jealousy between employers and their employees that became Pinkerton's investigative stock and trade. Industry leaders, fearful of unionization and strikes, eagerly sought information on employee sentiments and job performance. Pinkerton operatives gathered that information through “testing” operations which sought to expose “expressions of discontent.” They used espionage to infiltrate the ranks of labor and to determine whether there was talk of striking.<sup>22</sup> Possibly this worked, if the evidence is that few significant strikes occurred or major unions became established in the 1860s.

By the 1870s, however, as labor activity increased, Pinkerton's mostly passive anti-labor methods became proactive. The “Paris Commune”—a failed socialist revolt in 1871—terrified Allan Pinkerton. As his book, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives*, reveals, that event solidified his anti-union beliefs and inspired him to advocate for new forms of labor espionage that “went beyond the shop-floor.”<sup>23</sup> Information from “shop-floor” spies allowed employers to undermine the formation of unions or take action to prevent strikes from occurring, but it was not very helpful when a union already existed or a strike already loomed. Citing the Paris Commune to scare his clients, Pinkerton began providing the services of spies who would infiltrate “radical” political groups and penetrate the inner circle of labor organizations to find information employers could use to outmaneuver employees and anticipate strikes.<sup>24</sup>

This was an anti-labor tactic that Pinkerton continued to use for decades, but it created a problem. Its aggressiveness brought attention to what his agency was really doing. The revelation that Pinkerton “detectives” were actually performing the dirty work for big business made the agency's work more difficult from the standpoint of public relations, as did the fact that labor became more suspicious and, therefore, harder to infiltrate.

The PNDA was nearly ruined by negative publicity at times during the 1870s, but it survived because of a combination of Pinkerton's concerted effort to rehabilitate the agency's public image and his advocacy of violence to combat labor unrest during the Panic of 1873. Until the early 1870s, the PNDA was seen

as a glamorous operation responsible for apprehending such celebrity outlaws as Jesse James, Cole Younger, and Butch Cassidy and his “Wild Bunch.”<sup>25</sup> When wide public exposure of his “spotter” activities resulted from several widely-publicized embezzlement trials, Pinkerton worked quickly to reestablish the glamorous image by writing books about his “real life” as a crime-fighter.<sup>26</sup> That effort succeeded in the long run, but at the time, public and labor awareness of the real nature of Pinkerton detective work made PNDA clients uncomfortable, especially when the financial panic and ensuing recession of 1873 had made it hard anyway for clients to pay for PNDA services. By 1880, the PNDA, so successful just a few years before, would find itself near bankruptcy along with many other businesses of that time.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, as Pinkerton worked to fix the PNDA’s image, he also developed a new labor-fighting strategy that would make corporations want to hire him again. This strategy grew from Pinkerton’s own fear of “the deadly spirit of Communism” and his belief that “every trades-union” was “an enemy to all law, order, and good society,” as he wrote. He believed that unions should be “met with complete extermination as punishment.”<sup>28</sup> That is what his new strategy aimed primarily to achieve. In 1872, he had presented these views for the first time when he approached Franklin Benjamin Gowan, president of the Reading Railroad, to suggest an internal espionage operation for Gowan.<sup>29</sup>

Gowan, in turn, hired the Pinkerton Agency to investigate the Molly Maguires—an Irish secret society supposedly engaged in anti-capitalist terrorism in Reading’s coalfields. The highly publicized trials, following a four-year PNDA investigation, led to hangings and incarceration of a number of miners.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the Agency’s reputation skyrocketed. At the same time, labor strikes, rioting, and radicalism spread far and wide due to depression-related losses of jobs and lowered wages. Corporations that had been hesitant to hire Pinkertons were now eager to employ the PNDA to use the same methods that had taken down the Maguires.

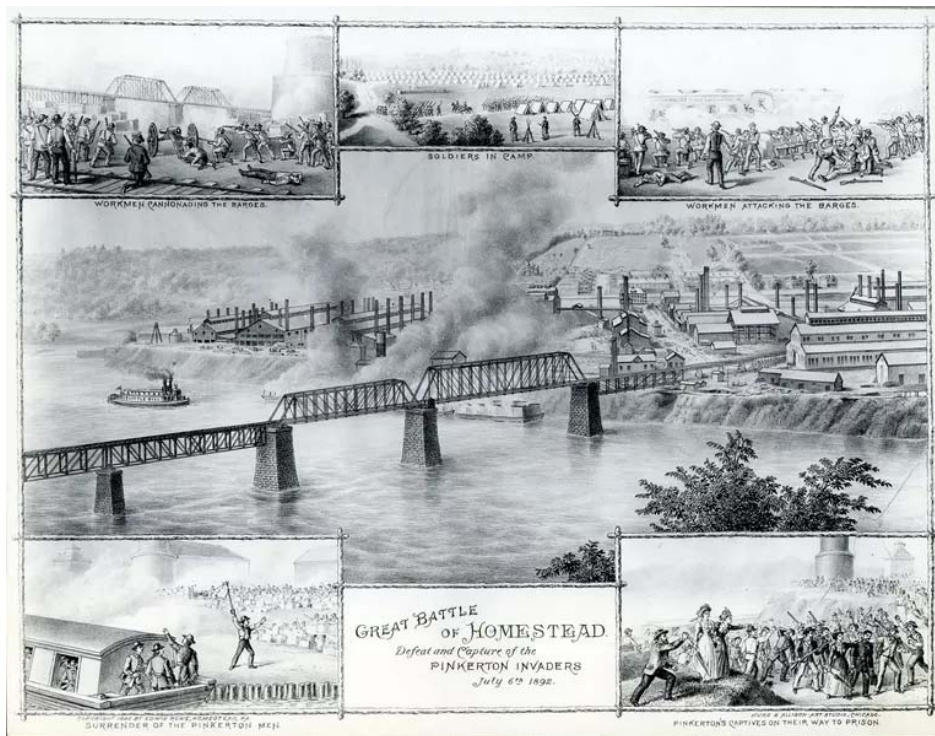
The methods of the particular spy in Pinkerton’s employ, whose testimony led to the Molly Maguires convictions, represented the PNDA’s new use of dirty tricks and violence against labor. He had infiltrated the Maguires, then instigated them to violence, planted evidence, elicited false confessions, and made false testimony.<sup>31</sup> Further, Pinkerton used the Great Railroad Strike of 1877—an “uprising” that he claimed “was so alarmingly sudden that it seemed like the hideous growth of a night”—to heighten corporations’ fear of unions. As anti-Pinkerton whistleblower Morris Friedman explained years later, Pinkerton “studiously fanned [that fear] into flames of blind and furious hatred,” provoking more conflict between business and labor, “to the satisfaction and immense profit of the Pinkerton Agency.”<sup>32</sup>

Among people in the labor movement, the word “Pinkerton” had become synonymous for management-inspired violence and worker oppression. In

addition to its unethical and violence-provoking services, the PNDA began providing special “guards” during labor disputes. These guards were not like the ones who protected trains, banks, and jewelry stores in the agency’s early days. According to the *New York World*, they were “ragtails and desperate men, . . . criminals of the lowest order—men who were not allowed to live in civilized society.” When they “entered upon the scene of a strike, violence could be expected.”<sup>33</sup> Four years after Allan Pinkerton’s death in 1884, the agency, now led by his sons, finally gave up any claim as a police-type organization when it began supplying strikebreakers to companies during strikes. In all, the PNDA’s tactics help to explain why the United States experienced what has been called “the bloodiest and most violent labor history of any industrial nation in the world.”<sup>34</sup>

The PNDA’s role in violent labor repression ended in 1892, after the Homestead Strike of that year in Pennsylvania. On that occasion, when Pinkerton agents arrived at the Carnegie Steel plant to break a strike, the steelworkers met them with armed resistance. A furious gunfight ensued and the Pinkertons were turned away. It was the last event of its kind involving Pinkertons, but it still did not turn out as a victory for the steelworkers’ union, which did not survive the strike. Even so, the PNDA, a vehicle of oppression that had chased labor through the latter half of the 19th century, had been disabled. The corporate powers that had employed them, with help of their political allies, went on to rely on national guard units to do much of the work that Pinkerton agents once had furnished.

The Homestead Strike of 1892 proved to the public once and for all that the PNDA and other agencies like it had played a key part in preventing America’s industrial workers from successfully organizing. Public outrage over the Homestead violence, however, mostly focused on federal and state governments for having passed off their job of maintaining law and order to private forces. Though the PNDA no longer represented the primary counterforce against organized labor, the agency’s violent and repressive tactics would live on. The Pinkerton agency did not disappear entirely. It simply returned to employing the subtler anti-labor tactics of its early years. Looking back, however, Pinkerton detectives rarely resembled anything like the image that thrives in popular fiction. In fact they almost always served as corporate America’s malicious defenders against its organizing labor—and rarely just clever gumshoes recovering stolen rubies or brave bounty hunters tracking down notorious outlaws.



“Great Battle of Homestead: Defeat and Capture of the Pinkerton Invaders, July 6, 1892”

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Frank Morn, *“The Eye That Never Sleeps”: A History of Pinkerton National Detective Agency* (Bloomington, IN, 1982), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Robert P. Weiss, “The Emergence and Transformation Of Private Detective Industrial Policing In The United States, 1850-1940,” *Social Justice: a Journal of Crime, Conflict and World Order*, issue no. 9 (Spring 1978), 35-48, esp. 35; Wilber R. Miller, “A State within ‘The States’: Private Policing and Delegation of Power in America,” *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 17 (2013), 125-135, esp. 128.

<sup>3</sup> J. Bernard Hogg, “Public Reaction to Pinkertonism and The Labor Question,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, 11 (July 1944), 171-199, esp. 171; Weiss, “Emergence and Transformation,” 35.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce C. Johnson, “Taking Care of Labor: The Police in American Politics,” *Theory and Society*, 3 (Spring 1976), 89-117, esp. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 2, (reprinted, New York, 1899), 648.

<sup>6</sup> Hogg, 171.

<sup>7</sup> Robert P. Weiss, “Private Detective Agencies and Labour Discipline in the United States, 1855-1946,” *The Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), 87-107, esp. 87.

<sup>8</sup> Weiss, “Emergence and Transformation,” 35, 38.

- <sup>9</sup> Miller, 130.
- <sup>10</sup> Weiss, "Emergence and Transformation," 35.
- <sup>11</sup> Johnson, 93.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 94.
- <sup>13</sup> Miller, 125; Johnson, 94.
- <sup>14</sup> Morn, 19.
- <sup>15</sup> Lawrence Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York, 1993), 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Morn, 23.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 23, 25; Miller, 131.
- <sup>18</sup> Johnson, 95-96.
- <sup>19</sup> Morn 45; Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 88.
- <sup>20</sup> Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 89; Morris Friedman, *The Pinkerton Labor Spy* (New York, 1907), 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Miller, 131.
- <sup>22</sup> Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 89; Friedman, *Pinkerton Labor Spy*, 9-10.
- <sup>23</sup> Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 89.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.; Friedman, *Pinkerton Labor Spy*, 10.
- <sup>25</sup> Weiss, "Emergence and Transformation," 35.
- <sup>26</sup> Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 90; Morn, 83-85.
- <sup>27</sup> Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies," 90.
- <sup>28</sup> Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives* (New York, 1878), xi-xii, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Weiss, "Emergence and Transformation," 39.
- <sup>30</sup> Friedman, *Pinkerton Labor Spy*, 2.
- <sup>31</sup> Joseph G. Rayback, *A History of American Labor* (expanded and updated edition, New York, 1968), 126.
- <sup>32</sup> Pinkerton, 14; Friedman, *Pinkerton Labor Spy*, 21.
- <sup>33</sup> Hogg, 176, 178.
- <sup>34</sup> Morn, 101; Johnson, 96.

\*

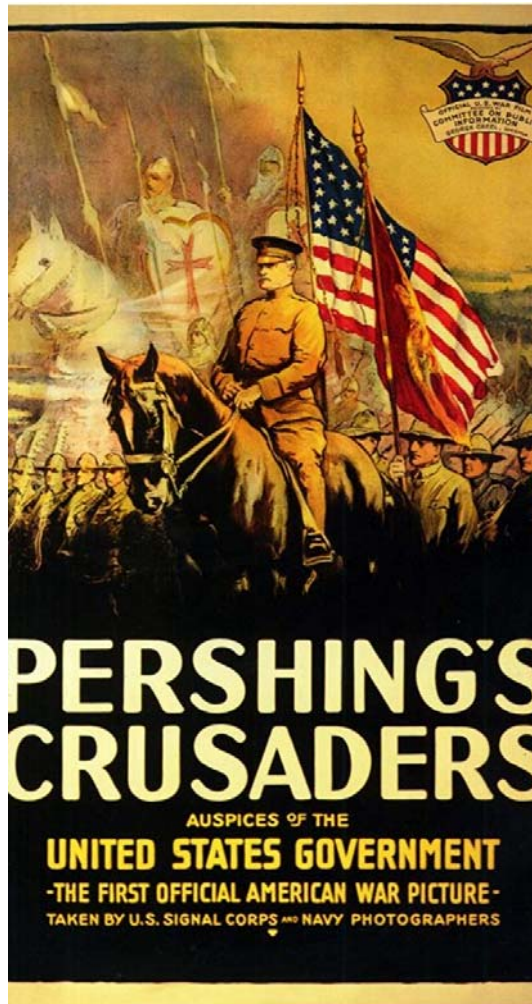


## The Committee on Public Information and Its Influence on U.S. Public Opinion During World War I

by Anna McCormack '19

The entrance of the United States into World War I demonstrated a marked departure from the country's previous policy of isolation and neutrality. The First World War began in Europe in 1914, but the American government resisted all involvement in the conflict until three years afterward, only joining the Allies on April 6, 1917, after facing overt displays of German aggression. Due to the previously anti-war attitude of the American public, the U.S. government began an intense and occasionally propagandistic campaign to galvanize support for entering the conflict. The predominant organization of that effort was the Committee on Public Information (CPI), a government bureau led by George Creel. It sought to generate support for the war by issuing pamphlets, posters, and films that would reach a vast audience. Two of the most important organizations within the CPI were the Film Division, which released newsreels and motion pictures, and the Division of Pictorial Publicity (DPP), which created posters. These two divisions contributed vitally to the work of the CPI, pursuing different goals that would influence the American public in distinctive ways. In order to achieve their separate agendas for the CPI, the two divisions used propagandistic devices, but to varying degrees. While both the Film Division and the Division of Pictorial Publicity utilized propaganda to influence public opinion, the DPP was forced to use it to a greater and more sensationalist extent in order to achieve its goals.

The primary goal of the Film Division was to boost public morale by informing and entertaining a wide audience with news on the war. In order to fulfill this agenda, the Film Division sought to create films and newsreels that simply educated the public on the state of the conflict. The Division's *Official War Review*, a weekly newsreel released by the CPI, attempted to explain the U.S. involvement in the war by showing the public exactly what the American army was doing in Europe. A September 1918 advertisement for the *Review*, published by the CPI, asked, "What is he doing over there? That's the question being asked today in a million American homes. . . . Every member of those million families may find those questions answered in *Official War Review*."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the feature films created by the Film Division sought to educate the public on both internal contributions and foreign involvement in the war, showing the ways that the United States was contributing to the war effort, concentrating on America's industrial power by depicting its railroads, dockyards, and production of food and supplies. *Pershing's Crusaders*, the first full-length film released by the Film Division, focused on U.S. preparation for the war, showing liberty loan rallies, the production of supplies such as army shoes and clothing, and the training of American soldiers. The other films released by the Film Division, especially



Poster for *Pershing's Crusaders*.

*America's Answer* and *Under Four Flags*, sought to inform the public on the state of the war abroad, giving updates on major battles and developments in Europe. *America's Answer* reported on the arrival of the American troops in France and the first battles they fought there, while *Under Four Flags* covered the war from the point when General Foch became the commander of the Allied forces until fighting ceased in 1918.

Aside from informing the public on the course of the war, the goal of the Film Division was to boost the morale of the American people by depicting the conflict as interesting and entertaining. The CPI sought to release films that not only informed but also were dramatic and exciting. The footage released by the Film Division encouraged the public to romanticize the war, and many supported the conflict because they saw it as exciting and perceived it to be an adventure.<sup>2</sup> The American public had been fascinated by footage from the Mexican Revolution, which had occurred between 1910 and 1920 and took place in a geographically

interesting area, with charismatic leaders and dramatic cavalry charges.<sup>3</sup> World War I, however, was fought on battlefields obscured by smoke. Homer Croy, a movie magazine contributor, explained that "The air may be as full of motes as a hayloft is full of bullets, but you can't see them. They don't show on the film."<sup>4</sup> Because of this issue, the Film Division often sought in its newsreels and motion pictures to include unexpected or visually appealing material. They featured footage such as cable cars moving through the Alps and dogs bringing ammunition to Italian troops.<sup>5</sup> Creel explained in his book *How We Advertised America* that "*Pershing's Crusaders*, *America's Answer*, and *Under Four Flags* are feature films that will live long in the memory of the world, for they . . . epitomized in thrilling, dramatic sequence the war effort of America."<sup>6</sup>

Unlike posters, the movies and newsreels created by the Film Division did not exaggerate or give a false representation of the war. For its purposes, it was only necessary for the Film Division to regulate the footage that it released. Even before the Film Division was able to edit and produce its films, the government decided what could or could not be shown to the American public. Footage taken overseas in Europe by the Signal Corps was always filtered by the government before being given to the CPI to ensure that everything would be suitable for public viewing. As Creel described the process, “the material was ‘combed’ and such a part as was decided to be proper for public exhibition was then turned over to the Committee on Public Information.”<sup>7</sup> As a result, the material shown to the American public was always specifically selected in order to have the desired effect. To achieve its goal of boosting morale, the footage published by the Film Division consistently omitted military losses or serious issues that the U.S. army faced. Films never depicted the supply shortages experienced by the American Expeditionary Force or difficulties with ammunition production at home. In addition, because General Pershing wanted to show the American army as an independent force, the mixing of French and American troops was never shown, and the AEF’s use of foreign military equipment was never mentioned. Instead, the films and newsreels released by the Film Division focused on positive footage in order to boost morale. They showed soldiers playing baseball, listening to music, and receiving medals—and always emphasized the humane treatment of prisoners of war.<sup>8</sup>

The policies of regulation and omission used by the Film Division were certainly propagandistic, but the films and newsreels created did not, as a rule, sensationalize information they presented. The Film Division only resorted to sensational propaganda that appealed to the public’s sense of patriotism when advertising its films in order to reach a wide audience. Unlike posters, which could easily be displayed everywhere and were highly visible, the Film Division had to advertise and distribute its films and newsreels for them to be seen by as many people as possible. In order to encourage actual physical action, rather than just influencing public opinion, the Film Division and the CPI had to employ intense advertising campaigns. It featured advertisements in stores and hotels, published in newspapers, and printed on banners. Each major film released by the Film Division had a two-week press campaign, accompanied by numerous posters. In these posters, and in its advertisements, the CPI and the Film Division made the most of emotional propaganda. One advertisement for the *Official War Review*, published by Pathé and the CPI, claimed: “The sort of enemy we are fighting; you may see him as he is in *Official War Review* No. 10. Upon a German officer captured during the latest drive by the Allies in France was discovered an order commanding the Hun armies to ‘destroy everything.’”<sup>9</sup> Here, the CPI used the stereotypical and derogatory term “Hun” to refer to the Germans, even though many Americans (and not a few of German ancestry themselves) disapproved of the use of that term. In its posters, the Film Division influenced the public by invoking the idea that the war was a fight for the preservation of de-

mocracy. A poster for *America's Answer*, released by the Film Division and the CPI, featured Lady Liberty standing with a large American flag over soldiers wounded in battle, appealing to the public's sense of patriotism.<sup>10</sup> Emotional tactics such as these more often found expression in other branches of the CPI, such as the Division of Pictorial Publicity. Unlike the films, which simply sought to inform the public and boost morale, the DPP advertisements encouraged the active participation of Americans in the war effort.

The propagandistic tactics used in the advertisements released by the Film Division undoubtedly succeeded, as the division's films reached an extremely wide audience. The CPI claimed that the films and newsreels released by the division had a rate of almost 100% distribution in the United States. The profit generated by the Film Division from its films totaled \$852,744,<sup>11</sup> that figure itself suggesting extensive success.<sup>12</sup>

Because the Division of Pictorial Publicity was attempting to galvanize active participation in the war effort through enlistment, food conservation, and purchasing of liberty bonds, the posters far exceeded the Film Division in sensationalistic propaganda. The DPP often depicted in America the form of Lady Columbia or the Statue of Liberty, and many women also appeared in posters wearing classical robes with sashes bearing words such as "freedom." In Albert Edward Sterner's poster, titled *Over There*, a woman interpreted to be Lady Liberty directs a sailor to fight, which refers to the idea that Americans were fighting to preserving democracy in the world. The woman in Sterner's poster is also wearing a Phrygian Cap, a symbol of liberty indicative of American democratic ideals.<sup>13</sup>

The DPP not only appealed to the public's patriotism, but also went further, creating propagandistic posters that would appeal to the American sense of duty regarding the war effort. The artists working for the DPP understood that Americans would only volunteer for this particular cause if they felt moved enough to do so. Hence, they created emotional posters urging the public to conserve food and buy liberty bonds. In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1918, Charles Dana Gibson, the head of the DPP, said the division "would waste little time in the picturiza



Poster for "America's Answer"



Albert Edward Sterner,  
“Over There”

tion of coal, wheat. . . and the thousand other things that must be conserved, . . . [as] these were not the things with which to fire the imagination and stir the heart of the great American people. There must be drawn for them pictures that would cause the same emotions as are felt when one sees a Belgian child dying for want of food.”<sup>14</sup> Henry Patrick Raleigh’s poster, titled *Hunger*, exemplifies this exact strategy by depicting a starving Belgian mother and her children and entreating Americans to save food. It appeals to the basic humanity of Americans in getting them to contribute to the war effort.<sup>15</sup> James Montgomery Flagg’s poster, titled *The Navy Needs You! Don’t Read American History – Make it!*, invoked a sense of guilt by making those who were not fighting seem unpatriotic and indifferent toward the conflict.<sup>16</sup> It depicts a sailor entreating a civilian to enlist. By ordering citizens to “buy liberty bonds” or “save food,” DPP posters made matters such as food conservation and purchas-

ing liberty bonds, which were optional, seem just as important as enlisting in the army.<sup>17</sup>

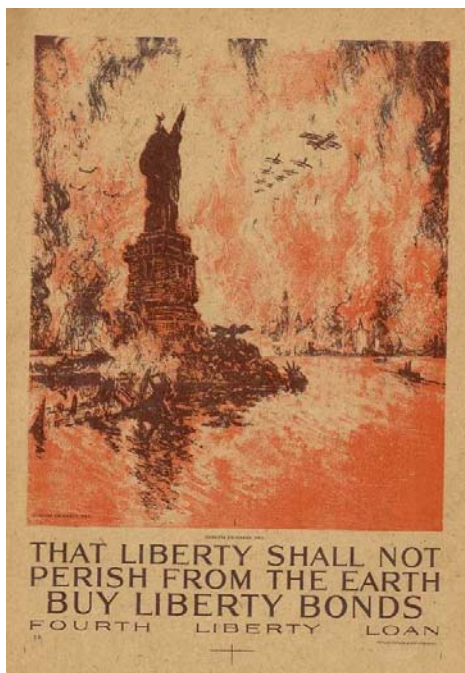
In some of its posters, created primarily for the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive, the DPP called upon public fear of a German invasion of the United States to encourage the purchasing of war bonds. The threat of German invasion was a gross exaggeration and was never mentioned in the films.<sup>18</sup> In 1915, historian Roland G. Usher of the University of Washington rightly stated that “in no event is a German army likely to set foot on the soil of the North America to attack the United States, Canada, or Mexico.”<sup>19</sup> But the inaccuracy of the idea did not stop the DPP from creating posters that capitalized on this fear. In a poster created for the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive called *That Liberty Shall Not Perish From the Earth*,



Henry Patrick Raleigh, “Hunger”



Joseph Pennell, the associate chairman of the DPP, illustrated a headless Statue of Liberty engulfed in fire—the idea that the arrival of the Germans would destroy American democracy.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Fred Strothmann’s *Beat Back the Hun* pictures a menacing German soldier threatening to invade, drawn to take advantage of American stereotypes and misconceptions of the enemy.<sup>21</sup> The poster shows a German soldier wearing a *Pickelhaube*, a helmet that Americans recognized as a sign of the Prussian military, even though the German army no longer actually used it.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Strothmann uses the derogatory word “Hun,” as had the Film Division’s advertisements, appealing to the American hatred of Germans that had grown rampant during the war. Another poster, by John Norton, titled



Joseph Pennell, “That Liberty Shall Not Perish from the Earth”



James Montgomery Flagg, “The Navy Needs You! Don’t Read American History—Make It!”

*Keep These off the USA*, depicts a pair of bloodstained German boots, threatening to land on American soil if liberty bonds were not purchased to protect the country.<sup>23</sup> The DPP’s exploitation of these American fears and stereotypes contributed to the extreme success of the liberty loan fundraisers. 20 million people purchased bonds during the Fourth Liberty Loan drive, which raised almost seven billion dollars, and the five drives together over the course of the war raised a total of over 20.5 billion dollars.<sup>24</sup>

Because of their differing goals, the CPI’s Film Division and Division of Pictorial Publicity used propaganda to varying degrees and in different ways. The Film Division, with its goals of in



Fred Strothmann, "Beat Back the Hun"



John Norton,  
"Keep These off the USA"

forming the public and boosting morale, simply regulated news of the war to influence public opinion. Only in its film advertisements did it resort to sensational propaganda, because these advertisements encouraged Americans to actively go and watch the division's films and newsreels. The DPP's goal, however, of encouraging contributions to the war effort, such as enlistment, conserving food, and purchasing liberty bonds, forced it to resort to sensational techniques far more often, capitalizing on the emotions and irrational fears of the American public. The tactics used by both divisions of the CPI demonstrated that the American government would not shy away from using propaganda to galvanize public support and provided a model for the government strategies that influenced public opinion in future conflicts, particularly the Second World War.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> David Mould, "Washington's War on Film: Government Film Production and Distribution 1917-1918," *Journal of the University Film Association*, 32 (1980): 17, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20687523> (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Clayton Funk, "Popular Culture, Art Education, and the Committee on Public Information During World War I, 1915-1919," *Visual Arts Research*, 37 (2011): 67-78, doi:10.5406/visuartsrese.37.1.0067 (accessed January 7, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Mould, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>6</sup> George Creel, "Battle of the Films," in *How We Advertised America*, (New York, 1920),

117, <https://archive.org/stream/howweadvertameri00creerich#page/132/mode/2up> (accessed November 18, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>8</sup> Mould, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Committee on Public Information, World Film Corporation, “America's Answer: Second United States Official War Picture Presented by the Division of Films,” poster, NY; Chelsea Litho. Co., Inc., retrieved from the University of Minnesota Libraries, [http://library.artstor.org/asset/AMINNESOTAIG\\_10311393180](http://library.artstor.org/asset/AMINNESOTAIG_10311393180) (accessed January 3, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Larry Wayne Ward, “The Motion Picture Goes to War: the US Government Film Effort During World War I,” (Ann Arbor, MI, 1985), 110, <https://archive.org/stream/motionpicturegoe00ward#page/n7/mode/2up> (accessed January 2, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Creel, 125.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Edward Sterner, “Over There—U.S. Navy, 1917,” poster, American Lithographic Co., NY, United States, 1917, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712073/> (accessed January 3, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> “C. D. Gibson’s Committee for Patriotic Posters,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1918, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1918/01/20/98258194.html?Login=email&pageNumber=63> (accessed November 18, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Henry Patrick Raleigh, “Hunger,” poster, retrieved from the De Young Museum, <https://art.famsf.org/henry-patrick-raleigh/hunger-world-war-i-poster-19771249> (accessed January 4, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> James Montgomery Flagg, “The Navy Needs You! Don't Read American History—Make It! U.S. Navy Recruiting Station,” poster, Miner Litho. Co., New York, retrieved from the Museum of Modern Art, [http://library.artstor.org/asset/MOMA\\_9630002](http://library.artstor.org/asset/MOMA_9630002) (accessed January 3, 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Pearl James, “Citizen-Consumers in the American Iconosphere During World War I,” in *World War I and American Art*, (Princeton, NJ, 2017), 50.

<sup>18</sup> Eric Van Schaack, “The Coming of the Hun! American Fears of a German Invasion, 1918,” *Journal of American Culture*, 28 (2005): 284, <http://www.historystudycenter.com/search/proxyProquestPDF.do> (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Pennell, “That Liberty Shall Not Perish From The Earth,” poster, Ketterlinus Phila. imp. United States, 1918, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712077/> (accessed January 4, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> Fred Strothmann, “Beat Back the Hun with Liberty Bonds,” poster, 1918, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94505100/> (accessed January 4, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Eric Van Schaack, “The Division of Pictorial Publicity in World War I,” *Design Issues*, 22 (2006): 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25224029> (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> John Norton, “Keep these off the U.S.A. - Buy more Liberty Bonds,” poster, United States, 1917, Cincinnati: The Strobridge Litho. Co, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002722447/> (accessed January 4, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> Van Schaak, 43; George L. Vogt, “When Posters Went to War: How America's Best Commercial Artists Helped Win World War I,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 84 (2000): 44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4636901> (accessed January 2, 2018).

\*



## American Foreign Policy Myopia in Twentieth Century Ghanaian and African Affairs

by Dylan Ofori '19



The latter half of the twentieth century brought about a focus and challenge for U.S. foreign policy. With the onset of the Cold War following the conclusion of World War Two, the United States became engaged in a competition for social and economic influence with the Soviet Union. Beginning with the policy of “Containment” as laid out in the postwar Truman Doctrine, the U.S. extended its reach outside of Europe and Latin America to other regions traditionally considered backwaters of foreign policy. Equally significant during this period was the process of decolonization of Africa by European empires and the foundation of the first modern, independent African nation-states in its wake. In establishing relations with the regionally significant nation of Ghana, the United States hoped to partner with that and other African nations in order to open economic ties and counter Soviet influence on the continent.

What once seemed promising foreign policy objectives for the continent, however, never came to full realization, and relations with Ghana became more tenuous by the end of the 1960s. Reflecting on the evolution of these relations, it is evident that the complications in implementing foreign policy in Africa arose due to a miscalculation made by U.S. presidents, especially Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, in their ascertaining of the limits of American power and skill as well as their misunderstanding of variations in African politics.

Beginning with the broad characteristics of American foreign policy during the mid-20th century, certain key objectives that the U.S. had achieved globally did not fit for the African continent. Africa's entrance into global politics during the latter half of the 20th century was unprecedented in many respects. The region stood in contrast to the remainder of the world in that its history and development had been shaped by its longstanding and also more recent experience of European colonialism. Its long time under European influence during the 19th and 20th centuries largely accounted for Africa's sharp departure from global political trends following its decolonization beginning in the 1950s. In the case of the West African nation of Ghana, the U.S. relationship "arose primarily out of necessity and not choice."<sup>1</sup> President Eisenhower viewed American partnership with Ghana as a vital opportunity to establish an increased American political and economic presence in Africa, in the face of rapidly growing Soviet influences in the region and the world at large. The United States ultimately envisioned for Ghana to lead Africa in embodying and promoting democratic and capitalist political values.<sup>2</sup> The Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah, likewise viewed the United States as a potential source of developmental assistance. To the United States, Ghana was one of the few independent African states with which to partner in the 1950s and 60s, whereas to Ghana following its independence in 1957, the U.S. was one of the few non-European potential allies.



Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah.

The downturn in United States-Ghana relations began with Nkrumah's development of his own foreign policy, which took on both a unique international and regional character. His objectives prioritized pan-Africanism and African unity through social, political, and economic co-operation as a means of combating colonialism and neocolonialism on the continent. Most importantly, Nkrumah envisioned Ghana as commanding a central role in African politics in the place of a foreign power. The Ghanaian president opted for a stance of positive

neutrality with regard to outside powers and promoted non-alignment on the continent to complement his African-oriented foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> That is to say Nkrumah refused to get involved in the East-West dichotomy as represented in the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The growing divergence between Ghanaian and American visions for Africa created a rift between the two nations in future matters, notably when it seemed Nkrumah showed sympathies towards Marxism in implementing what he called “African Socialism.”<sup>4</sup> Regarding his policies of state-control and the fact that he surrounded himself with officials on both ends of the political spectrum, the U.S. State Department privately became suspicious of Nkrumah’s political actions, fearing the increase of communist sympathizers in his government. Additionally, American journalists tried to label Nkrumah as a “communist,” which he denied in a 1961 White House news briefing:

Why do they say I am pro-communist? That’s what I don’t understand. It depends upon what they mean. I think all along I have made it quite plain that the social set on the continent of Africa is such that African socialism has been a program. And I think I have been able to define that quite clearly to the world, in all the statements I have made that in Africa we are trying to create a society in which private capital and state-controlled certain agencies can also apply. Don’t equate communism or being communist with African socialism. We are anti-nationalist and we shall ever remain anti-colonialist, and we shall ever remain so until all the colonists, those who hold colonies in Africa, are no more there. So, in our attempt to see that these people don’t get control of the African continent, I don’t think we should try to label us.<sup>5</sup>

The opening of a Chinese embassy in Accra in 1960, rumors of Soviet interest in the Volta Dam Construction Project and steel industry, and the alleged Ghanaian purchase of Soviet aircraft only served to fuel the State Department’s, and the American media’s, suspicions of the Ghanaian leader. American Secretary of State Christian Herter’s 1960 speech before the United Nations General Assembly marked the beginning of the United States’ transition away from publicly supporting Ghana, as Herter arraigned Nkrumah for “mark[ing] himself as very definitely leaning toward the Soviet bloc.”<sup>6</sup> The breakdown of U.S.-Ghana relations in the 1960s and 1970s was not owed to a growing Ghanaian sympathy towards the Soviet Union. Rather it resulted from the mischaracterization of Ghanaian anti-colonial and anti-neocolonial sentiment by U.S. officials that would prevent the realization of a democratic-capitalist Africa. Although President Eisenhower correctly viewed anti-colonialism as a potential vehicle against growing Soviet influences in Africa, this sentiment later posed one of the biggest challenges when trying to promote American ideals on the continent. Africa remained open to the political influence of both sides, while leaders like Nkrumah

equally asserted a significant degree of independence from both the USSR and the U.S. His policies not only brought unfavorable consequences within Africa for the United States but also for America's global objectives. At the 1961 Belgrade conference of the international Non-aligned Movement, wrote historian Thomas Noer, Nkrumah as one of the movement's founders and leaders, "not only repeated his demands for a troika and recognition of China, but also called for acceptance of two Germanys, a complete end to colonialism within one year, and total disarmament."<sup>77</sup> Thus, the shift of Ghana away from the politics of the Cold War provided a shocking blow to U.S. "containment" interests, not only in Africa but internationally as well.

The trend of American international foreign policy objectives falling short in Africa also carried into its failures to achieve positive outcomes in significant regional political events. Rather than direct involvement in African affairs, the U.S. opted to rely heavily on the support of its regional allies, particularly Ghana. This attitude reflected a belief on the part of U.S. that its investment in African affairs need not be long-lived in order to accomplish the desired results. In relying heavily on its regional allies, however, Ghana saw its own ambitions as taking precedence over those of the United States, bringing about complications for the United States in pursuing its interests in Central Africa.

Further, the onset of the Congo Crisis in 1960 exacerbated the already growing breach of relations between the United States and Ghana. Beginning in July 1961, this crisis erupted with Moise Tshombe's announcement of the secession of Katanga, Congo's richest province, with the backing of rebel forces and Belgian troops. Lacking the necessary assistance needed from the United Nations to expel the Belgians, Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba sought aid from the Soviet Union in the form of aircraft, trucks, weapons, and military advisers for his government. Lumumba's actions prompted the United States and Ghana to respond in ways divergent from each other and in accordance with the differing regional policies of the two nations. In the view of Ghana, the provision of military aid to the Katanga rebels was an act on the part of the Belgians to undermine the independence and newfound sovereignty of its former colony. In response to this move by a European power, Ghana, remaining firm on its policies of anti-colonialism and anti-neocolonialism, became a staunch supporter of Lumumba's efforts to regain Congolese control of Katanga and provided his government with soldiers and physicians.

Contrarily, the United States reacted with alarm at Lumumba's acceptance of Soviet aid and outreach. As historian Ebere Nwaubani claimed,

In this setting, Lumumba immediately fell out of favor with Washington. CIA Director Allen Dulles informed the NSC on 21 July 1960 that Lumumba was 'a Castro or worse,' an agent for the Soviet penetration of Africa. Eisenhower himself hardly disguised his antipathy to Lu-

mumba. On one occasion, he wished that 'Lumumba would fall into a river full of crocodiles.' . . . There was general agreement in Washington that Lumumba was the obstacle to national reconciliation and stability in the Congo.<sup>8</sup>

To the president's relief, the Congolese prime minister was eventually removed from power in a coup by General Joseph-Désiré Mobutu. Lumumba was subsequently handed over to rebel forces in Eastern Congo, where they assassinated him in 1961. A Central Intelligence Agency report, declassified in 2000, held that:

There is evidence that prior to Lumumba's death some CIA personnel and others discussed the possibility of undertaking a plan to assassinate Lumumba. In an affidavit, C. Douglas Dillon, a member of this Commission, stated that while he served as Under Secretary of State from June 1959 until early January 1961, he heard no discussion of assassination attempts against anyone, except discussions which occurred in late July or early August of 1960 at a meeting at the Pentagon which covered a great variety of matters in which a question regarding the possibility of an assassination attempt against Lumumba was briefly raised. According to Richard Bissell, who was the CIA Deputy Director of Plans at the time, he was aware of discussion of plans within the Agency concerning the possible assassination of Patrice Lumumba and that a case officer was directed to look into the possibilities.<sup>9</sup>

Despite evidence of potential assassination plots having been circulated amongst officials at the CIA, the report officially denied claims of U.S. involvement in the murder of the Congolese prime minister. Additionally, in 1975, the U.S. Senate had appointed a Select Committee of Intelligence, under the Chairmanship of Idaho Senator Frank Church, to inquire into the allegations of CIA involvement in the assassination plots against five leaders of third world countries, including Lumumba. According to historian Fasih Gauhar, "The Committee in its report had stated that there had been strong evidence to indicate that the CIA had taken an initiative under the direction of its Chief, Allan Dulles, to procure poisonous substances as well as other instruments to be employed for the purpose."<sup>10</sup> Nwaubani additionally stated in his journal that President Eisenhower "gave executive authorization in the masterminding of Mobutu's coup in addition to the plot to assassinate Lumumba."<sup>11</sup>

The Congo Crisis produced many significant consequences for United States-Ghana relations. Each government felt betrayed by the actions of the other. Lumumba's death sparked Nkrumah's harshest criticisms of the U.S., accusing it of having aided in the installation of a "puppet regime" in the Congo. A posi-

tive perception of the U.S. waned among the Ghanaian public, historian Thomas Noer explained, as a “mob of over five hundred people marched on the American embassy in Accra, shouting ‘down with U.S. imperialism in Africa’ and ‘America murdered Lumumba.’”<sup>12</sup> In response to Nkrumah’s public criticisms of the U.S. during the Congo Crisis, a report from the U.S. State Department noted a desire amongst its officials to distance America away from relations with Ghana, going on to state that the U.S. was “disinclined to take any action which would ‘encourage Nkrumah’s role in Africa unless and until he shows greater signs of stability and that his actions are not furthering Soviet objectives in such matters as Congo and U.N. machinery.’” Nkrumah, it was stressed, “has a grandiose view [of the] part he is to play in future Africa.”<sup>13</sup>

An argument could be made that a positive outcome of the Congo Crisis was the installation of a Mobutu-led, pro-western unitary state. Yet, the crisis had the unanticipated effect of creating factionalism in African politics, with certain nations in support of Lumumba, including Ghana, all joining in a Ghanaian-led radical, pan-Africanist, regional bloc known as the Casablanca Group. Meanwhile, those nations with moderate stances formed the Monrovia and Casablanca groups.<sup>14</sup> Considering that prior to the Congo Crisis, Africa was not comprised of opposing political groups and ideologies to such a degree, the downturn in United States-Ghana relations that followed made it all-the-harder for U.S. foreign policy in Africa to be applicable and implemented on a continental scale. It is the U.S. failure to recognize both the roadblock of Ghanaian regional objectives, which prioritized anti-colonialism and anti-neocolonialism above anti-communism, and the potential for self-agency on the part of the Ghanaians in effectuating their interests, that prompted the outcome of the Congo Crisis to be such a blow, rather than a gain, for U.S. foreign policy in Africa. The episode reflected American officials’ underestimation of the significance of Nkrumah’s policies as applying within the sphere of Africa’s regional politics. In the end, the differing political visions of Africa held by the U.S. and Ghana proved to be too much for the two nations to continue in an already fragmented alliance.

In all, the U.S. approach to foreign policy in Ghana during the latter half of the twentieth century was not as successful as initially envisioned. With Africa being a foreign policy unknown, coupled with presumptions about the region informed by the international, post-World War Two political climate, successive presidential administrations underestimated the number of challenges the U.S. would face in the process of increasing its presence and influence on the continent. It can be claimed that the U.S. today remains in a similar position as that of 1957: without a formidable and regionally significant African ally to help in effectuating American foreign policy objectives. As of 2017, no sub-Saharan African Nation had been designated as a Major non-NATO ally. The period of 1950-1980 brought a unique set of conflicts and challenges, combining to account for U.S. failures in its foreign policy objectives in the region. Perhaps now that the U.S. political climate has progressed beyond the racial issues of the mid-20th cen-

ture, and that it is no longer said to be in as much competition with the Soviet Union for economic, political, and social influence globally, Americans will be readier to realize previously elusive foreign policy objectives in Africa. It also seems much more feasible for the U.S. to expand its foreign policy objectives to include counter-terrorism and the promotion of democracy, which could be very promising in terms of success and, most importantly, are in the shared interests of both Americans and Africans.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ebere Nwaubani, "Eisenhower, Nkrumah and the Congo Crisis," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36 (2001): 602, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180775> (accessed November 23, 2017).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 603.

<sup>3</sup>Arnold Rivkin, "The Congo Crisis in World Affairs," *Civilisations*, 10 (1960): 477, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41230711> (accessed December 19, 2017).

<sup>4</sup>Nwaubani, 605.

<sup>5</sup>McGeorge Bundy, "Ghana: Nkrumah Visit, March 1961," *Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers*, accessed November 25, 2017.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas J. Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History*, 8 (1984): 65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44254244> (accessed December 19, 2017).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>8</sup>Nwaubani, 615.

<sup>9</sup>"Intelligence—Report on CIA Assassination Plots (1)," *Richard B. Cheney Files*, accessed November 25, 2017.

<sup>10</sup>Fasih Raghbir Gauhar, "The United States and Overthrowing of Democracy in Congo," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 70 (2009): 874, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44147734> (accessed November 23, 2017).

<sup>11</sup>Nwaubani, 615.

<sup>12</sup>Noer, 68.

<sup>13</sup>Nwaubani, 619.

<sup>14</sup>Barnett Correlli, *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality* (London, 2008), 149.

\*

## Catherine the Great: A Voice of Reason and Rationality in Eighteenth-Century Russia

by Cécilia Lux '20



Portrait of Catherine the Great, by I. P. Argunov (1762), Kuskovo Museum.

Russian Empress Catherine II, known to historians as Catherine the Great, condemned Russia's "oriental" backwardness, exchanging outdated laws for new reforms based on principles of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. The intellectually gifted Catherine was Empress of Russia from 1762 to 1796. She was born the daughter of a minor German prince, and at fourteen, she moved to Russia to live with her betrothed and heir to the Russian throne, Karl Ulrich. Nineteen years later, in 1762, she took power by stealing the throne from her husband in a coup. Before her ascension to the throne, Catherine II became fascinated with Enlightenment ideas when she was introduced to the work of the ancient Roman philosophers, Plutarch and Cicero. Two years later, she discovered the writings of French *philosophe* Voltaire. His writing fascinated her and, beginning in 1763, she and the great French philosopher became regular correspondents.

Catherine presented herself to fellow intellectuals and writers as a subservient mind eager to learn, and learn she did. She was charming yet intelligent and quickly rose to a place of respect even in the most exclusive of salons. Her passion for Enlightenment ideas continued throughout her reign and soon influenced reform legislation in Russia, introducing core ideas of the Enlightenment—reason and rationality as a basis for policymaking—to her country. But her story turns out to have been more complicated than just that: Catherine also recognized the line between the Enlightenment ideas that would aid her empire and those that would detract from Russia's power. She utilized the principles of



the Enlightenment as a tool to advance her personal place, and that of her empire, in the wider world. Yet, while devoted to principles of the Enlightenment, she also recognized that the Russian state could not yet fully sustain such radical changes.

Catherine the Great's genuine interest and respect for Enlightenment ideas grew throughout her reign, as seen in her memoirs. But she also gained the approval of *philosophes* to advance her place in intellectual society. Immediately after she gained the Russian throne, Europe saw Catherine II as an illegitimate sovereign and accused her of murdering her husband.<sup>1</sup> In a desperate attempt to clear her name, she wrote to Voltaire in what would be the first letter of a correspondence that would span fifteen years. Voltaire's response dismissed the scandal surrounding her coup. His attitude recognized but did not share Europe's initially negative attitude toward the new Empress: "I know that . . . [Catherine] is reproached with some *bagatelle* about her husband, but there are family matters in which I do not mix."<sup>2</sup> Once Catherine had solidified her grasp on power, their friendship flourished. She and Voltaire developed a mutually beneficial relationship. She gained the approval of one of the most respected *philosophes* in all of Europe. His support lifted her from a previously dubious status among the intelligentsia of Europe, while Voltaire gained, in turn, the ear of a sovereign of a vast and influential empire.

Undoubtedly, both valued the relationship. Voltaire's letters were garnished with flattery, including references to her as, "Saint Catherine." It is rumored that a portrait of Catherine the Great hung above Voltaire's bed.<sup>3</sup> Though the pair never met, Voltaire often gave Catherine II advice on legislation and the state of Russia. Their correspondence continued until Voltaire's death in 1778.



Portrait of Voltaire as a younger man, by Maurice Quentin de la Tour (circa 1736), Château de Voltaire.

Another enlightened correspondent of the Empress was French *philosophe* Denis Diderot, founder and chief editor of the new Encyclopedia, which European intellectuals referred to as “the bible of the enlightened.”<sup>4</sup> Catherine II desperately wanted his approval, and in 1765 she made a grand gesture to earn it. Diderot was struggling with debt, and it spread throughout Europe that he was selling his collection of personal books and works for 15,000 pounds.<sup>5</sup> Catherine purchased his library for 16,000 pounds and insisted that it should remain in his possession so that he could act as librarian over the vast collection. She also paid Diderot a yearly salary of 1,000 pounds. In a letter to Voltaire, Catherine wrote, “It would be cruel to separate a scholar from his books.”<sup>6</sup> In a message of thanks to the Empress, Diderot responded, “Great princess, I prostrate myself at your feet.”<sup>7</sup> Diderot felt obliged to his benefactress, sang her praises, professed his love for her throughout the continent. His story of Catherine II’s kind gesture and brilliant mind brought the Empress the respect of literary Europe.

Catherine’s relationships with *philosophes* were built on mutual benefit and reciprocated respect. That is not to say that the *philosophes* did not have true love for Catherine II, as Voltaire demonstrated when he exclaimed to her, “Diderot, d’Alembert and I—we are three would build you altars.”<sup>8</sup> Catherine herself, however, was more restrained. Though she entertained their letters and enjoyed their admiration, she could not afford to assume that all of their ideas could apply in her tradition-bound Russian empire.

Catherine the Great artfully drew the line between rational Enlightenment thought that appealed to her and that which, if implemented in Russia, would spell destruction to her empire. Denis Diderot, as it turned out, was slow to realize this. In 1773, he made the arduous journey to visit his patron in her Palace in Saint Petersburg. The Empress, flattered that Diderot had come to see her, invited him to stay indefinitely. Catherine II received Diderot in a private audience daily for many months. During these meetings, Diderot spoke animatedly of his “enlightened” opinions on the judiciary system, religious tolerance, and



Portrait of Diderot, by Louis-Michel van Loo (1767), Louvre Museum.

lawmaking. In her memoir, Catherine wrote in a lighthearted tone that she emerged from these meetings with bruises on her legs, for at every new idea, Diderot would slap her leg in excitement. A few months into his visit Catherine realized that Diderot expected her to apply his Enlightenment ideas to her Russian empire. She diplomatically explained to Diderot his misunderstanding:

I have listened with the greatest pleasure to the inspirations of your brilliant mind; but all your grand principles, which I understand very well, would do splendidly in books and very badly in practice. In all your plans for reform, you are forgetting the difference between our two positions; you work only on paper which accepts anything, is smooth and flexible and offers no obstacles either to your imagination or your pen, while I, poor Empress, work on human skin, which is far more sensitive and touchy.<sup>9</sup>

Catherine the Great's enthusiasm for Enlightenment ideas was based on her pursuit of knowledge rather than a search for potential reforms and legislation. Diderot wrongly believed that Catherine II was his pupil who would use his advice to modernize Russia. After this encounter, Diderot returned home to Paris, their relationship forever changed. The final meeting between Catherine and Diderot perfectly illustrates her pragmatic approach to Enlightenment ideas.

Catherine II did attempt a formal implementation of carefully selected Enlightenment ideas in her "Great Instruction," or *Nakaz*. The Great Instruction consisted of modernizing reforms based on Catherine's personal views and vision for the social, political, and economic sectors of Russia. The Empress personally worked on the reforms from 1765-1775. She borrowed heavily from the works of two acclaimed French *philosophes*, Montesquieu's *On the Spirit of the Laws* (1748) and Cesare Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishments* (1765). The Instruction reflected Montesquieu's encouragement of an equitable monarchy that served the interests of its citizens. Like Montesquieu, Beccaria supported the belief that legislation should serve the interests of the people in general. Furthermore, Beccaria condemned the practice of retribution in response to law-breaking. His alternative method of crime prevention was deterrence: making the threat of punishment outweigh the benefits of committing a crime. It was Beccaria's argument that inspired Catherine II to reform the Russian judiciary system and police force.

The entirety of the Great Instruction, however, never came into being. Catherine II overestimated the willingness of the Russian people to go along with radical change and, particularly, that of the Russian nobility to embrace the Enlightenment ideas the way she had. In a letter to Voltaire, Catherine wrote, "The

number of ignorant noblemen was immeasurably larger than I could have ever expected.”<sup>10</sup> The Empress had naively assumed that the views of her sophisticated friends could appeal to her own aristocratic class in Russia and was disappointed to find how selfish and parochial their views toward the proposed western reforms proved to be. The Great Instruction was not a complete failure, however. One side-effect of it was the collection of information about the needs of the Russian people and the growth of some insight as to the future course and method of reforms based on western European models.

Catherine the Great did succeed in introducing the Enlightenment principle of efficient governmental bureaucracy and the idea of increasing, in a limited way, the voice in government for ordinary Russians. The Empress created provincial assemblies run by nobles and elected marshals in 1776. She believed that people would voluntarily become law-abiding citizens in return for a say in assemblies. These assemblies resulted in the increased efficiency and coordination of the Russian empire. The lethargy of the Russian aristocracy no longer went unchallenged, as they were now forced to be proactive within their provinces for fear of being stripped of their titles. Catherine II also took a personal interest in the education of Russian children. She prepared her own text for teaching young students, entitled *The Book On the Duties of a Man and Citizen*, published in 1780. Catherine’s book focused on the duty of society to obey and support an enlightened monarch and contained admonitions such as, “those who give orders know what is useful to the state.”<sup>11</sup> In 1782, she created The Russian Board of Education to improve school systems and encourage inquisitiveness in Russian children. Further modernizations included amendments to the judicial system, training for police officers, and public elections for provincial marshals. Catherine the Great’s modernization reflected the Enlightenment principle of basing legislation on the needs of the people, within limits of what was possible in the Russian empire as it was.

Catherine the Great’s previously steadfast stance on human rights was shaken the most when she revealed to the Russian aristocracy her intention to emancipate serfs. In keeping with Enlightenment opinion, she had unyielding personal opinions about serfdom. Catherine II proposed her idea to the aristocracy while writing the Great Instruction. The Russian aristocracy strongly disagreed. Abandoned chapters of the Instruction have since been found to contain passages condemning serfdom. Catherine’s plan was to implement laws that set a maximum of six years in serfdom and gave serfs the opportunity to buy freedom from their masters. The Empress was surprised to find that even her close friend and council member, Alexander Stroganov, was against emancipation. In her memoir, she described him as, “a gentle and very humane person [who was] kind to the point of weakness [and defended] the cause of slavery with fury and passion.”<sup>12</sup> Catherine was so determined to address the subject that she encouraged the first public discussion of serfdom through an international essay-writing

competition. Although acclaimed *philosophes* such as Voltaire entered, the winner turned out to be Frenchman Bearde de l'Abbaye, who advocated in favor of serfdom and allowed only slight concessions of liberty to the serfs. Finally, Catherine realized that her proposed reform was so unpopular in Russia, and serfdom so supported by the Russian power structure, that its abolition would result in socio-economic instability. The Empress came further to this conclusion because of the Pugachev Rebellion, a serf and peasant uprising from 1773 to 1774, which questioned her claim to the throne.

The Pugachev Rebellion resulted in Catherine's condoning an increase in the power of the nobility over their serfs, allowing nobles to scrutinize the behavior of the serfs with the aim of quelling future uprisings. She revised the Instruction to condemn enserfment and abuse but not to ban these practices. The Instruction also encouraged masters to treat their serfs with humanity, but it did not punish those who refused to abide by this law. It also continued the nobility's full ownership of serfs and allowed serfdom to mimic chattel slavery. Though Catherine II was forced to formally surrender her plans to emancipate serfs, she continued to openly criticize the practice and slowly created minor laws to regulate human trafficking into serfdom. In 1767, Catherine forbade foster parents from selling their illegitimate children into serfdom. In 1781, the Empress outlawed enserfment of war prisoners and emancipated serf women who had been forced into marriage with their master. So, Catherine the Great's genuine concern for and desire to improve human rights within her empire was not completely foiled by the concerted opposition of her aristocracy.

Catherine the Great responded to Europe's cultural westernization by immersing herself in Enlightenment culture both for personal interest and for the good of her empire. During Catherine II's reign, Russia saw measured reform in its traditional socio-political construct. Catherine navigated the advice of *philosophes* such as Voltaire and Diderot with caution, as she considered how destructive radical change could be when enacted over a short period. Russia's selective use of Enlightenment ideas influenced other European sovereigns, in turn, to consider how modernization based on liberal ideas could benefit their empires. The age of Catherinian Russia is immortalized as a time when a truly enlightened sovereign took the throne, but if one more closely examines her experience as a reformer, the true complexity of implementing liberal ideas in a traditional empire such as Russia becomes apparent.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Robert K. Massie, *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman* (New York, 2011), 252.
- <sup>2</sup>Mark Cruse and Hilde Hoogenboom, *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great* (New York, 2005), 94.
- <sup>3</sup>Simon Dixon, *Catherine the Great* (New York, 2009), 168-169.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 53.
- <sup>5</sup>Massie, 336.
- <sup>6</sup>Catherine II's letter to Voltaire, 1765, in Massie, 172.
- <sup>7</sup>Diderot's letter to Voltaire, 1765, *ibid.*, 174.
- <sup>8</sup>Voltaire's letter to Catherine II, 1765, *ibid.*, 152.
- <sup>9</sup>Memoir of Catherine the Great, 1774, in Dixon, *Catherine*, 126.
- <sup>10</sup>Catherine II's letter to Voltaire, 1774, *ibid.*, 236.
- <sup>11</sup>Catherine the Great's *Nakaz*, in Simon Dixon, *The Modernization of Russia, 1676-1825* (Cambridge, UK, 1999), 215.
- <sup>12</sup>Memoir of Catherine the Great, 1772, *ibid.*, 242.

\*

## The History of Audubon Greenwich: The First Nature Center

by Scott Gibbons '19



A tour of the Audubon Center, circa 1950s.

Since its inception in 1942, the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Connecticut, has provided locals and researchers with the opportunity to experience and study nature. The National Audubon Society had realized that Americans were losing connection with the outdoors and created centers around the nation in order to counteract this trend. They believed that “we need [nature] for our peace of mind and to better face the pressures which are thrust upon us daily.”<sup>1</sup> Seeing how land was being over-exploited instead of being nurtured, the Audubon worked to promote the preservation of nature.<sup>2</sup> The property in Greenwich where the Audubon Greenwich center is situated, however, has not always been used for the preservation of nature. Prior to 1942, it was passed down the generations as a family farm. Once it was donated to the Audubon, the center has been open to the public as an outlet for people interested in nature. Because of the Audubon’s rich history and dedicated members, it has been able to educate over 20,000 visitors per year while serving also as a valuable location for

research.<sup>3</sup>

The area in northwest Greenwich, where the Audubon Center sits today, was originally inhabited by Siwanoy Indians long before the first white settlers appeared there in the 1640s.<sup>4</sup> The Siwanoy once, in fact, lived in much of what is now the Greenwich area and centered in the Cos Cob part. Although it is unlikely that there were any large Siwanoy settlements on the Audubon property, they most likely used the land as hunting grounds for food to supplement their agriculture and fishing.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that European settlers purchased much of Greenwich from the Siwanoy, northwest Greenwich remained mostly uninhabited throughout the 1700s. Much of the land supplied timber and fuel for the rest of Greenwich, but it remained difficult to cultivate because of the rocky and heavily wooded wetlands. Eventually, the land was used for raising livestock: sheep, cattle, and pigs. Those farms were inhabited by yeomen freeholders, many of them subsistence farmers, though some of the land from the early 1700s to the 1940s belonged to well-known early Greenwich families, like the Meads and Lockwoods. Later, these farms in northwest Greenwich cultivated potatoes, hay, vegetables, and apples. Interestingly, most of the potatoes they grew contributed to the food supply of New York City.<sup>6</sup> These farms, however, were eventually abandoned, and forest area which defines Audubon Greenwich today grew back. Today, a few pieces of evidence, such as stone fences, an old barn, and a root cellar, remain to show the land's agricultural history. Through selling, expanding, and passing land on to family members, the Audubon property eventually came into possession of H. Hall Clovis and Eleanor Steele Clovis.

The Clovises were the last family to own the property before it was acquired by the National Audubon Society. In 1942, they donated the land—281 acres—to the Audubon for the creation of the first nature center.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Eleanor and Hall Clovis generously provided a maintenance fund to help support the new center. Because the National Audubon Society was relatively small and had little funding, this maintenance fund was essential to the creation of Audubon Greenwich.

Because Americans of the twentieth century more and more lost their connection with nature, the National Audubon Society created Audubon Greenwich as a model for other places of its kind around the country. John H. Baker, the President of Audubon Greenwich, said in 1957 that “we strive to open the eyes and minds of both young and old to the wonders and beauties of the outdoor world, to make them aware of the steady stream of life going on around them, to help them realize that they are part of this exciting pageant of events.”<sup>8</sup> In order to promote this goal, Audubon Greenwich has built various buildings, including the Audubon Lodge, in 1957, and the Kimberlin Nature Education Center, in 2003. Audubon's goal is to take education out of the traditional classroom and make it more interactive by immersing students in nature.<sup>9</sup> Since the 1950s, the Audubon has offered summer programs to allow students to learn in an outdoor setting. This experience is far different from the conventional meth-



ods that students most likely experience throughout the regular school year. These students benefit from the “National Audubon Society’s concern for building an ecologically integrated program of sound land management and education.”<sup>10</sup> In one example, Jean Porter, who was a specialist at Audubon Greenwich, played a role in designing the *Audubon Adventures* program, which appeals to younger children by providing magazines and games relating to nature.<sup>11</sup> These programs connect locals with nature and, therefore, fulfill a part of the Audubon’s larger mission.

In addition, Greenwich strives to preserve nature as well as educate locals. For example, in 1952, the Board of Management announced that a portion of the property would be “maintained indefinitely without any attempt at management thereof.”<sup>12</sup> To show the value of preservation, Audubon Greenwich chose a section of the property that had not been damaged by human activity and where the trees had not been cut. By preserving nature, visitors can experience the landscape of Greenwich untouched by hundreds of years of settlement and modernization. This primal connection is essential to the lives of Greenwich residents because it stimulates both imagination and creativity. Without it, our lives are dominated by human creations such as automobiles, classrooms, computers, and cell phones; the appreciation for nature is lost.

More broadly, the creation of the National Audubon Society was part of the movement in America to reconnect with nature. The administration of President Theodore Roosevelt, which started in 1901, strongly supported wilderness preservation. Roosevelt said that “we have become great because of the lavish use of our resources. But the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil, and the gas are exhausted, when the soils have still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the rivers, denuding the fields and obstructing navigation.”<sup>13</sup> During his presidency, Roosevelt set aside 150 million acres of American land for national forests.<sup>14</sup> Roosevelt, along with other conservationists such as John Muir, promoted this idea of preservation in contrast with the massive industrialization in the late 1800s. This movement included the creation of the National Parks Service and eventually the National Audubon Society. In fact, Roosevelt himself was directly involved in Audubon Society of the District of Columbia in 1908.<sup>15</sup> He organized the first motion pictures of wild birds and shared this own vast knowledge of birds with the members of his local Audubon group.

Although America started to gain a greater appreciation for nature in the first half of the twentieth century, the creation of Audubon Greenwich during the height of World War II is impressive because of the challenges of the war. These challenges included “restrictions upon the quantities of available materials, transportation thereof, etc.”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the mindset in America was focused on economic development, not preservation and connection with nature.<sup>17</sup> Despite the war-related challenges that the center faced, Audubon Greenwich persevered and spearheaded the movement to create more centers run by the National

Audubon Society.

The outset of the National Audubon Society, more specifically Audubon Greenwich, was part of a national movement to support preservation. Audubon Greenwich continues to strive to promote education on nature and also preservation. Not only does the rich history of the Audubon property show the history of Greenwich itself, but it also adds character to the current center. Despite potential setbacks, Audubon Greenwich works towards its mission daily by connecting people with nature.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Duryea Morton, "Welcome to the First of the National Audubon Centers!" New York, October 2, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>Martha F. Sykes, "Welcome to the Audubon Center in Greenwich," Greenwich, October 2, 1976.

<sup>3</sup>Audubon Greenwich, "History," <http://greenwich.audubon.org/about/history> (accessed May 27, 2018).

<sup>4</sup>Audubon Center in Greenwich, *A Patchwork History* (1976), 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>7</sup>John H. Baker, "Dedication Address at the Audubon Center at Greenwich," June 28, 1957.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>"Audubon Society Opening New Greenwich Wildlife Sanctuary," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 10, 1943.

<sup>10</sup>*A Patchwork History*, 3.

<sup>11</sup>Frank Graham, Jr., *The Audubon Ark* (1990), 292.

<sup>12</sup>Baker, "Dedication Address."

<sup>13</sup>"Theodore Roosevelt and Conservation," National Parks Service, <https://www.nps.gov/thro/learn/historyculture/theodore-roosevelt-and-conservation.htm> (accessed May 27, 2018).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Graham, *Audubon Ark*, 292.

<sup>16</sup>Baker, "Dedication Address."

<sup>17</sup>*A Patchwork History*, 3.

\*

**“A lesson that I will not forget very soon”:  
The Untold Story of Sergeant James McKee**

**by Jack Withstandley ‘19**

On July 3, 1861, in the heavy rain, infantry Sergeant James McKee, of the 10<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteers, sat down to compose one of many letters that he wrote home during the American Civil War to his beloved brother, Thomas, who would also serve in the war. James McKee was born in 1843, in Freedom, Pennsylvania (Beaver County, just outside of Pittsburgh). The town of Freedom was founded by the Harmony Society in 1824 and gained wide recognition for its religious devotion and economic prosperity. The letters, excerpted here, reflect the daily thoughts, worries, and hopes of just one of the tens of thousands of Union troops who experienced combat between 1861 and 1865. Were it not for this record of letters, McKee, like so many others, could never have been known to people living today.

As a child, James McKee was schooled in the Christian faith and taught, albeit imperfectly, to read and write. It was through his ability to put his thoughts on paper that we are able to experience what was truly important to him, as he interpreted the sights, sounds, and smells of the Civil War. Like many volunteer soldiers of the time, James understood the task at hand and was perfectly willing to answer the call. His patriotism was not in doubt, though he did question the willingness of others to go and fight, as indicated by his references on several occasions to the reaction in the North to the Conscription Act passed by Congress in 1863.

For their occupation, James and Thomas had been caulkers and had worked caulking boats on the Ohio River. Clearly revealed in the letters are James’s concern for his and his family’s financial security, his love of his brother and the hope that they would see each other again, and his never-failing religious belief. Further, the letters reveal a young man’s focus on his most basic concerns as a soldier in the war, his first-hand accounts of the conflicts and battles, his opinion of the political climate, his concepts of right and wrong, and his constant hope that the war would come to a swift and just end.

McKee enlisted for three years in the Union Army on May 15, 1861. During the war, he was taken prisoner by Confederate forces at the Battle of Second Bull Run, fought on August 28-30, 1862. He suffered a shoulder wound at the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864, and was discharged from the army soon after that, on June 11, 1864, having completed his full period of enlistment. McKee carried the bullet lodged in his shoulder for the remainder of his life.

The reader will note from the following excerpts McKee’s limited grasp of formal English (spelling, commas, capitalization, and so on). Periods at the ends of sentences have in many cases been silently added to facilitate under-

standing.

#### **July 3<sup>th</sup> Washington City 1861<sup>1</sup>**

“I Bless God that I have as good helth as usuel and their ante very many of our Company Sick some of them has something like the flux but not bad. we have as nice times as can be expected. you wrote to me to write soon so you could send me som money but things has changed since I wrote to you. I think that we will get our money this weak. the Eight and ninth reige ment has bean paid. I think the ninth aint quite all paid yet but soon will be if nothing happens so you neadent send me any money. I dont nead it very bad. their is eny amount of camps round here. the minacota [Minnesota?] rergmint is camped along side of us about 100 yds. they ware in the fight [First Battle of Bull Run]. their aint not near as many of our men kild as was reported though. aint half as bad as was in the papers. our side was whipping them untill about foure or five O clock...”

#### **Camp Tannelley September , 1861<sup>2</sup>**

“I set down this pleasant Sabath morning to let you know how I am getting along. . . . We will get paid off this weak some time. I dont know whether I will send eny money hone this time. I wont to get some things. I think maby I will by a revolver and when I get what I nead then maby I will send some hom. this money has to do us two months. you said if I neaded eny money for to send for it. I didnt send it home to send for it again. I sent it hone for you to use it if you neaded it which I think you will fore winter is over. you said for me in one of your letters to send what money I didnt whant home and you would lay it up till I come hom if I ever do so that I could go to school. that is a very good idea but if you nead it a toll use it and if I ever get home I can work for it. I will sell my watch if I can and if I do I will send some hone if I got more than I need. . . .”

#### **Camp Pierpont Nov 14, 1861<sup>3</sup>**

“We got paid off Just satturday. the amount of Twenty six Dollars. two months pay. We wont get Paid off for two months again. I intend to send some of it hom.

I bot Pair of Boots and giv my watch and Three dollars for a coalts revolver. and that took eight Dollars and I had to by some other littel things. and I hav got Fifteen Dollars yet and I think that, I will send only Tenn home. I might acidentley nead some for something.”

#### **Camp Pierpont Nov 22, 1861<sup>4</sup>**

“Their was an axident on last sunday morning in our camp in company B when they ware out on picket - some time ago they found an old Bum [bomb] shell and one of the boys had it for two or three weeks in his

tent for a candle stick. it was plugged in the end with wood and he had dugh it out a littel to put the candel in and the hole got filed up with greas and he put it in the fire to melt it out and their was a whole lot of their boys sitting around the fier and it wint off and wounded about five or six. three was burnt so bad they took them to the Hospital. their was none of them died. aone of them was stuned so bad they thought he was dead and when they carryed him in the tent and laid him down he come too but he wasent hurt much.”

**Camp Pierpont Dec 11, 1861<sup>5</sup>**

“Yesterday while we ware out on picket their was two of our boys got to fooling with their guns when they ware on guard and one of them went off and shot the other one but didnt kill him but wounded him prety bad. we thought he would die in a frew minets he blead so much. he blead as much as a hog would when you cut its throat. The Ball went in at his write cheak about a half inch from the corner of his mouth and came out behind his Ear. We thought the jugler vain was cut at first he blead so much but it was not cut. it come with in a quarter of an inch of it. The Doctors think he will get over it. He was one of the mean we got at Hopewell. his name was Stewart.”

**Camp Pierpont Dec 19, 1861<sup>6</sup>**

“You said that you had not got any letter from Sol for a long time and that big word you used when you said you did not now what the hell had be come of him. I would much rather you leave them out. It spoils the letter and then it shows how much respect you have for him and me boath. So take my advice and quit all such bad habits. It hurts my feelings when you write such things as that. So quit it. We might never again meat each other on this side of the eternal world and I know we wont meat that way in that better world which is prepared for them that serv God. So take my advice Dear Brother.

I dont want to flatter you for I I feal that it is my duty. I am still trying by the grace of God to live right and I know that if we never meat again in this wourld that it would be a happy meeting if we live wright and meat in that better wourld.”

**Near Aqua Crick Landing Va January 15, 1862<sup>7</sup>**

“Dear Brother,

I received your wellcom letter yesterday and was happy to hear that you had got hom and had your Discharge. I will be more contented now knowing that you ar at hone where you can be attended to and taken care of. I am so glad that you heav got your Discharge you can rest contented now knowing that you will not heft to come back again. But I hope you will soon get better and be able to do your work as you did

before you left home. . . . Johns time will soon be up he was only for two years. I wish my time was as near up as his is. We heav sixteen months to serve yet but I hope the war will be over before that time. You said that box had not come yet that is something strange. I left it with Charly Rose from Phillipsburg and giv him one Dollar to pay tyhe freight on it. I had it directed and every thing ready to put in the office. I expect he is not there now or else I would write to him and see if he sent it. But if he is not onest enuff to send it let him keep it. Their is some of your company dserted and went home Hendrickson for one I believe that is all at present. May God blefs us and keep us from all harm.”

**Camp Near Bellplaines Va. January 18<sup>th</sup> 1862<sup>8</sup>**

“I was glad to hear that the family was all well and to hear that times is so good there so there is no danger of the family suffering for something to eat. Bless God for that. . .

I expect Rose never sent it atoll the letter I wrote you before I told you all how it was fixed. I left it in Chales Rose's care and give him \$1.00 to send it. the box was not very long. pap wanted the receipt but I did not get eny. I had not time myself and if he sent the box he never sent me the receipt. . . . Tell mother I would like to be at home as bad as she wants me there but if it is Gods will that I many return home he will work out som way for me. tell mother not to fret her self about me. it [is] only killen her. May God bless us and save us in heaven.”

**Camp Near Alexandra April the 6, 1862<sup>9</sup>**

“I was glad to hear that the family ware all well. and I was also glad to hear that their was so much work there to do.

There aint much danger of you starving this sumer I dont think. That is a comfort to me to think that you heav plenty to eat and plenty to do. . .

Well I must tell you that we aint paid off yet and I heav no idea when we will now. I can do without it but I would like to get it before we leave here so I could send some of it home.”

**Manasses April 16 1862<sup>10</sup>**

“I was over to see the Bull Run Battel field the other day. I herd so much about it that I went just to sadisfy my curosimy. and I was very much disaponted when I saw it. I thought it was a hilly place and full of pines. But the part of it that I saw was not that kind of a place a toll. Their was a good place for to fight where I was and they said it was the place where the Black Horse Caverly maid the charge on the zuaves. I dont know wheather it was the place or not but their was a good many dead Horsses laying around that is the bones and hair of them and besides their was a good many graves their to. some of them was buried

prety will and their was others that was not. We suposed they ware our men some of the zuaves. Their was a gutter washed out by the water and the dead was throwed in it and a littel durt throwed over them and the water was standing all around them and their cloathes was sticking out and the bones some of them had the flesh on them yet. I supose the water cept them from decaying sooner than they would if dry.

You hav I supose herd or seen in the papers about the rebels taking the bones of our men and making one thing or other out of them. But I believe our men is as bad as they ar because the day that I was over there they was diging the durt off the graves. Their was one place where their was three graves with railes built up around them. I dont know how many was in it but their was three stones put in for head stones and their was not more than a foot of durt over them. They suposed their was a hole full of them and our men some of them was diging the durt off them. they had one of there skulls uncovered when I was there and some of them was knocking the teeth out of the jaw bone for trofies of the battel field and I think when they will do the like of that they had better quit talking about the rebels. But their is som men that heav not got eny cence a toll. That is enuff of that at preasent. We was paid off Monday morning for two months. They cept us out of it for a good while. Their is two months pay coming to us the first of next month. But I expect they wont pay us for som time after we ar mustered in for it like this time. I am going to send some of it home this time.”

**Camp Near Falmouth May 27, 1862<sup>11</sup>**

“You nead not think strange of me for not sending eny money home as I said I would. I dont think it will be long till we ar paid off again and I will send enough to make up for it. that is if I am living and well. I hope by the time these new lines reach you that mother will be enjoying good helth and the rest of the family also.”

**Camp Near Annapolis Sept 6, 1862<sup>12</sup>**

“I have not heard from home for about one month not since I was at the Hospital at Portsmouth and I would like to hear and know that you ar all alive or not. We have been going the rounds since we left Harrison's Landing. We went to Fredericks Burgh and then to Washington and then to Bulls Run in where we had one of the greatest fights I supose that has been yet. And Bles God I come off without getting a scratch but got taken prisoner that was bad enuff. They did not ceep us long as they had no way to ceep us. They only ceep us three days and then Paroled us. We had a prety hard time while they had us. Their was about twelve hundred of us we was not all taken at one place. we ware taken on diferant days. . . . But they did not give us eny thing to eat while they had us. only twice they giv a littel fresh meat and the one half did not get eny a toll. I did not get a bite of it. all I had was a few hard

crackers that the privates give me and some of them had not drawn eny thing for two or three days but they could get corn and on thin or other.

We ware all prety near run down. they marched us so hard to get us across their lines and into ours. But when we got inside of our lines we got plenty to eat. We will heav good times now untill we ar exchanged. We ar all incamped about one and a half miles from Annapolis and noth- ing to do only eat and ceep our selves clean. I exspect it will be a good while before we ar exchanged and if their is eny chance of getting a fur- low I will get one and go hone a while.”

#### **Camp of Parole Annapolis Sept 27, 1862<sup>13</sup>**

“Their was for a long time that I did not hear from you or from home and I did not know what was the matter but the reason was the mail was stoped from going to the Regt. and I did not get eny letters that was sent me after I left the Hospital at Pourtsmouth untill I came here and then they was sent to me. I suppose you heav heard by this time that I was tak- en prisoner at Bull Run and where I am now. I was in Washington the very same night that you was. I saw your Regt. there the 1.3.8th and nev- er dremped of you being there. I had not herd for so long from home that I did not think of you being out so soon.

But I suppose you had a very nice time of it when you was burning the dead. at bull run. I think it would be a prety hard job. You would heav some idea of the Battlefield after you would get done with the job.

I got a letter from Father and he said that you had found a Revolver but if you had been there before the Rebbels gathered every thing up you could have found as many as you would have wanted. But I will tell you one thing a Pistol is not much use to you in a fight. Your Gun is as much as you can use unless you get in close quarters with some one and then you could use it but I do not think you will get that close to them. I had a splendid coalt Revolver and when I got wounded the boys unlosed it off me and it was lost. If I had a revolver now I would send it home or sell it but do with it as you please.

Thomas I heav seen some prety hard times since I last seen you and I expect you will see some prety hard times to.

But you must take care of your self the best you can. but you can see how things is better than I can tell you on paper.

When you get this letter I want you to write me and tell me all about things and tell me what boys is in your company from Freedom and how you ar getting along and all the rest of the boys.”

#### **Camp Near Bellplaines Va. January the 26<sup>th</sup> 1863<sup>14</sup>**

“Since I last wrote to you we heav had quite a march and a mudy one to



at that. But we are now in our old quarters but do not know how long we will stay. I suppose if it had not rained we would heav had a nother fight. But it rained so hard and made the roads so muddy that the Artilery and wagons could not move. So we come back to our old camps. If it had not rained and we would heav went over the river I expect it would heav been a hard fight.

But I think they had better giv up moving untill it is better weather. We signed the pay roll this morning and will be paid this evening or tomorrow but I do not think that I will get eny for they ar only paying the troops for four months and I heav bean paid up till that time. But I do not care for that I will get the more the next time if I live . . . .

I cannot understand why the box that I sent does not go home for I directed it to my self. I marked it on boath sides and it could not help but go if it was started once. It may be that it is on the road some place or other. . . . We heav been in about twenty months now. that is a good while. but it will not be so long to stay in the remainder part of it. But if God spares my life to get threw it will learn me a lesson that I will not forget very soon.”

#### **Camp On Miners Hill Va March the 22<sup>nd</sup> 1863<sup>15</sup>**

“We must all die some day and it becomes us to always be ready. . . . I suppose the people is prety bad scared around the country about the draft or rather the Conscription Act. But that is the onlything that will end the war eny way soon. Some of the people I suppose is in for resisting the Draft but they had better not. it will only make the thing worse for the South will be encouraged by it and they will heave to com at last. If they send eny of the Reserves back to inforce it they will bring some of them in a big hurry. I do not think they can bring you again but if they can and you are able to come I say come like a man. . . . If a country is not worth fight for it is not worth living in. . . . I am tired of this war but I am not tired of my country. . . . Some is down on the President but I think he is doing all he can to bring this war to a close. And if he does not succeed in one thing he tries another and I think he has hit on the wright one at last. I hope he has and the war will soon be over. God speed it.”

#### **Camp On Miners Hill Va March the 30<sup>th</sup> 1863<sup>16</sup>**

“I was happy to hear that the family was all well and was also glad to hear you was able to get to work once more. I hope you may heav good health and plenty of work and then their is no danger of starving. I would like to be their with you to help you Calk. it appears to me to me that I would like to work a littel while again. And I hope the time is not far distant when this war will come to a close and then we will heav the

privilage to work or do what we like to do best. The wages is good now but I suppose every thing is high in acordance to them. But then work is plenty and a man nead not lay idle. . . . But I hope before my time is out this war will be out to. I think the Rebbels is prety hard up for grub now from all accounts and I think that will bring them to some terms before long. And the terms I want to see is for them to give up and say they ar whipped. . . .

P.S.

May God blefs us and ceep us safe and if we should never meet in this wourld we will be permitted to meet in the better land where their is no more sorrow and trouble there.”

**Washington City D.C. May the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1863<sup>17</sup>**

“I promised to send some more money hone when I would write again but I cannot do this time as I had to buy some things that I needed and I heav only twelve dollars left. but when I get some change I think that I will send five more home and that will make enuff to pay for them boots and things that you sent me. That is all I can think of that will intrest you. I was at Church to day and heard a good sermon preached. . . .

P.S.

May God bless us and save us at last in heaven”

**Washington City D.C. May the 10<sup>th</sup> 1863<sup>18</sup>**

“Tell Mother that I can not send eny more money home this time but I think we will be paid off again soon as we ar handy to the pay master now. And tell her to do as she pleases about the Old house. I will send all the money I can to help pay for it.”

**Washington City D.C. May the 18<sup>th</sup> 1863<sup>19</sup>**

“I would like to get a Furlough and go home but their is not eny chance now and I do not know when their will be. but we must put up with all this and if our lives is spared one more year we will be out of this busi-ness and then we can go and see who we pleas without eny Furlough. But I hope all is for the better. God's will be done not ours. If the peo-ple was a littel better and would try to do write in the sight of God this war would be over long a go and their would not heav been so many lives lost and it looks very much like their would be a good many more lives lost and no dout their will be before this is ended. And I would not be surprised if we did go back to the front as their is so many of the troops going hone. But that is what we come out for and if it is God's will that I or eny of the rest should fall it is better for us if we ar only ready to die. So it becomes us to always be ready for we know not the our or the day when the son of man cometh. So let us try and live wright

in the sight of God.”

**Washington City D.C. May the 18<sup>th</sup> 1863<sup>20</sup>**

“Your letter came to hand on last evening and I was happy to hear that the family was all well. And I was also glad to hear that you was getting along so well with your work. I would like to be there with you to help you calk a little. From all accounts times is better in the North than they ever ware before. I hope they will continue to be so. It appears that their is some littel opposition there now. . . . You said for me to get a Furlough and come home but their is no chance now for their is about six or seven ahead now and their is no use to say eny thing but I will ask and meaby my turn will come some day if I live and ceep my health. And you said if I did not get a furlough that you would come out your self but you can do as you pleas about that. I would like to see you and the rest of the family but I think you nead your money for something of more benifit to you. You may think that I do not want to see you but that is not the case. I think as much of home as ever and if it is God's will that I may get home it will not be long now untill we will be out of this business and then I can come and go as much as I want to. You had better put your money to something that will benifit the family. You nead not think hard of this for I think it is for the beater. I will send you some of then Photographs and you can giv aunt Polly one and eny other one if you chose. You wanted to know what Sergt I was I am fifth. That is all you wanted to know I believe.”

**New Castle Pa July 1<sup>st</sup> 1863<sup>21</sup>**

“Their was a war meeting held in the Court House the same evening for purpes of getting troops out to fill the Governors call for sixty thousand men and their is five Comp to leave here this morning. they ar not all full yet I believe and their is plenty of men here to fill them but they will not go. And I say if they do not go now when will they go I supose when the draft comes and thats what I would like to see now.

Why it is a sin for men to act the way some of them acts at this present time. The Governors proclimation was read in all the churches in this town on Sunday I believe. I know it was in most of them. . . .

Give me all the news when you write

Your Brother

James McKee

May God bless us and keep us safe”

After his service in the Civil War, James was finally able to return to his Pennsylvania home, and he did go back to work alongside his brother, Thomas, in the boat-caulking business. James later married, in 1871, and raised a God-fearing, patriotic family who would carry on the traditions of hard work, connection to the community, and service to the country. He died on January 9, 1923, just 3 days after his 80th birthday. Thomas had predeceased him. As James McKee had told his brother on March 22, 1863, “We must all die some day[,] and it becomes us to always be ready.”

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Letter. The James McKee letters—33 manuscripts in all—are stored in the Withstandley Family Private Collection.

<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter.

<sup>3</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>4</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>5</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>6</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>7</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>8</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>9</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>10</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>11</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>12</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>13</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>14</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>15</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> Letter.

<sup>16</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>17</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>18</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> Letter.

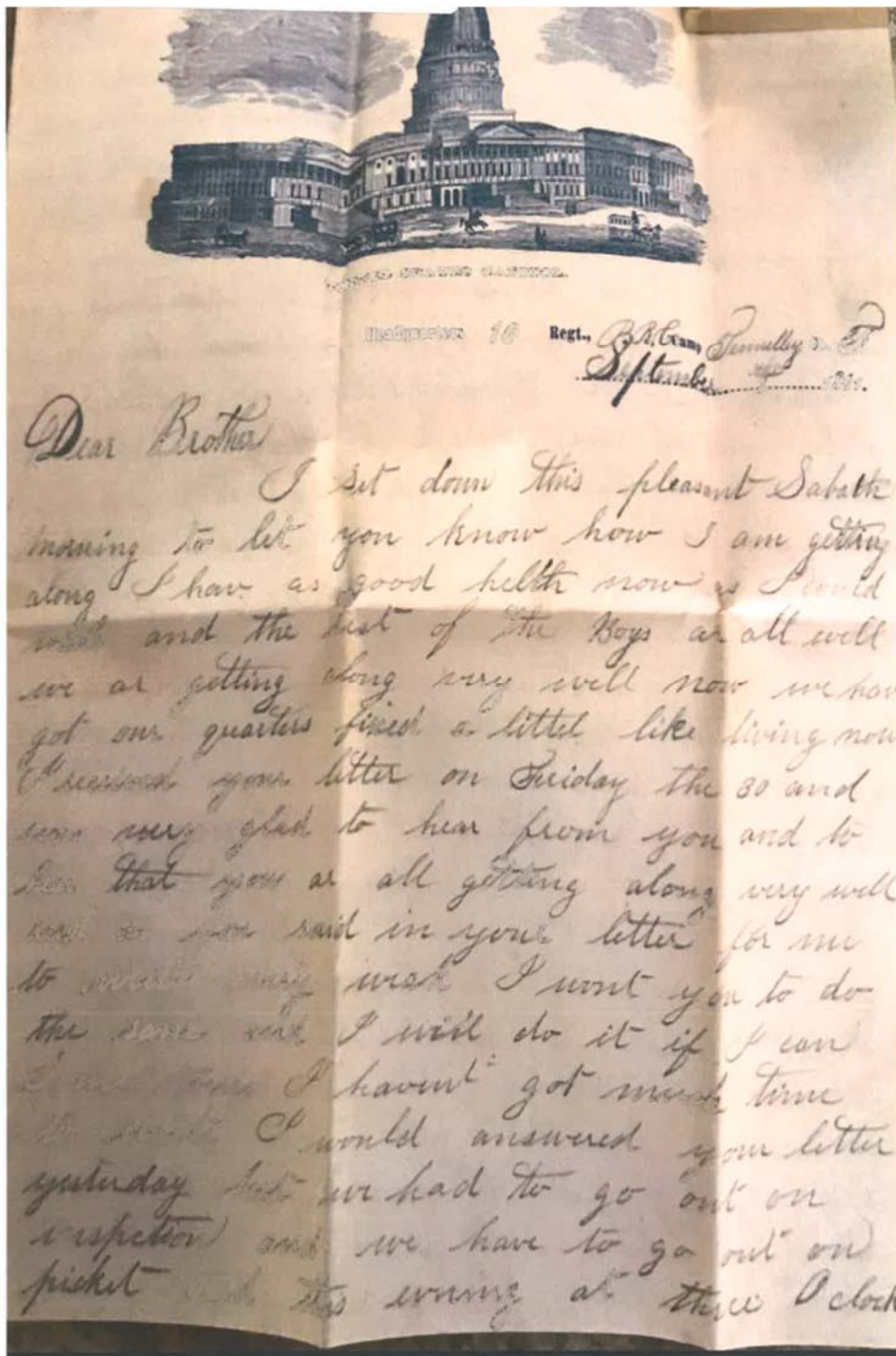
<sup>19</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> Letter.

<sup>20</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> Letter.

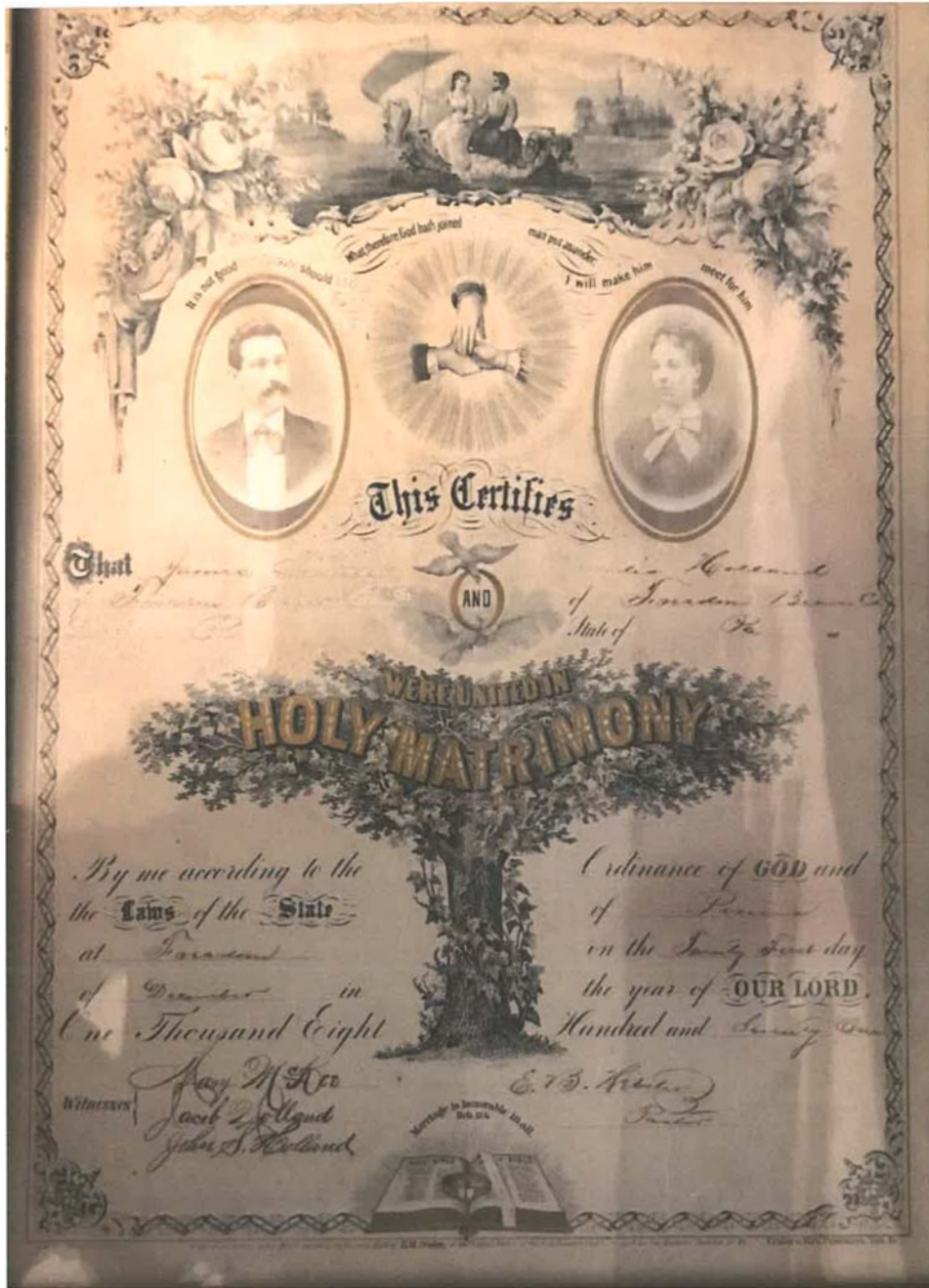
<sup>21</sup> 32<sup>nd</sup> Letter.



Photograph of Amelia H. McKee and James McKee, wife and husband, circa 1871.



One of James McKee's letters—an example of his handwriting.



The McKee's marriage certificate, December 21, 1871.

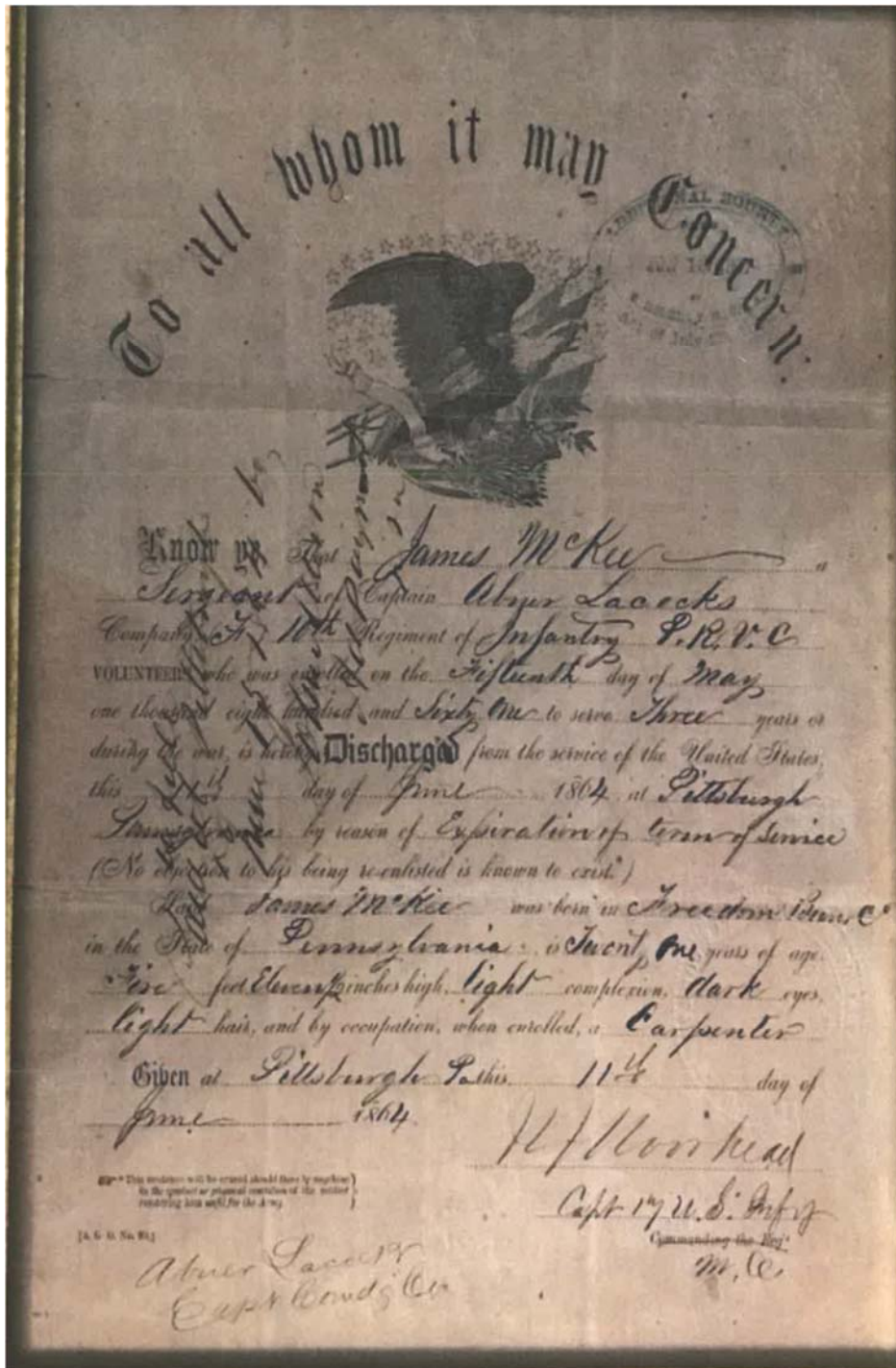








James McKee's infantry soldier's cap.



James McKee's discharge certificate from the Union Army, June 11, 1864.

## Leo

by Brian G. Freeman

You have just heard through the neighborhood grapevine that Leo's suffering is at last over. His death marks the end of his long grievances, and, though you will come to miss him, the loss is a relief, too, if a guilty one.

Leo Tavernier seemed as old and fragile as the forests he loved. While he spent nearly all his latter days on the forest's edge puttering about, "ripping & tearing," as he called it, doing his best to cull the invasive plants—the bitter-sweet, especially—from the margins of the farms he labored on, by the end he could be more often found in a kind of state of imminent departure, staring off into space as he leaned on a shovel or a rake, smoking cheap cigarettes, seeming barely aware of where he was.

"How you *doin*?" he'd call out in greeting, once he caught sight of you and had returned to consciousness.

"Fine, Leo," you'd call back to him from across the lawn, which he'd be crossing now as quickly as his gnarled legs could carry him; he seemed worried you'd disappear before he reached you.

"Welcome home!" he'd say brightly. "I was worried you wouldn't make it on account of the storm they say we're going to get tonight."

"I've heard," you'd say, "that a storm is brewing."

"It's not natural," he'd say, "storms like that coming along this way this time of year. Used to be the prevailing winds would come from the west, but this rotten north wind is messing with us, bringing in more snow when it should be getting ready for the big melt—I mean, it's 'supposed' to be spring!"

Leo always started with the weather, which was seldom to his liking, and only gradually would make his way to his strongest priority.

"You don't happen to have any money with you, do you?" he'd ask. "I've been ripping and tearing all week, whenever the weather let me—but it's been cold as the blue flugies, I can tell you. Let me show you the piles I've got ready for burning." And then, after a pause, "did you call for a burn permit yet?"

Leo worked odd jobs for people in the neighborhood, helping out on the sheep farm next door—where he also lived—on a daily basis and when they needed someone to lend a hand with the lambing; feeding the alpacas down the street when the Whites were away visiting their grandkids; and then one day last spring he'd come at you from behind the stand of old Christmas trees to ask if you'd like him to work at clearing the fence-line at the back of your property; he'd said he'd work for ten-dollars an hour. You'd said you'd have to see.

“I hate to see those damned invasives taking over,” he’d cautioned. “If you don’t do something soon, there’ll be nothing left but that damned bitter-sweet and that damned wild cucumber and those damned climbing roses.” You’d watched Leo working on the other side of the fence-line, and you knew he was the slowest, most methodical sort of worker there could be, but you knew that he wasn’t worth ten-dollars an hour, since more than half his time he spent staring off into space with that vacant look in his eyes. So you told him you’d give him some money when you had it, but that it wouldn’t be anything as regular as ten dollars an hour. You ended up agreeing to a certain amount a week, but since you didn’t come up to the farm every weekend, sometimes there were gaps in his pay (though you also noticed that if you were gone for long, the piles stopped mounting along the fence-line, and the bittersweet would slowly return to flourishing everywhere). Still, as soon as he’d seen you’d returned, he’d be back ripping and tearing as if he’d never stopped and never would again.

\* \* \*

That spring Leo got busy and ripped and teared along the fence-line something fierce until the piles of detritus started to grow like small, lopsided haystacks every twenty or so feet. Before the end of April, you spent a couple of days one long weekend burning some of the piles with him, pouring kerosene on them, dousing some rags with the liquid at the base until the mounds were alight. Then all morning Leo prodded and poked at the base with his metal rake, keeping the flames going, while you carried over more vines and tendrils of the invasives from other piles, keeping the burning mass fed. The pesky north wind kept blowing, and the smoke blew in your faces all the time no matter which side you tried to stand on. The dogs kept circling about, trying to help—standing at attention near the flames, rushing about and bringing in the odd stick for you to add to the conflagration. In the dull roar of the fire Leo talked about his life many springs ago.

“Back in the day when I was growing up on the farm in Gainesboro, we’d be able to burn all year long, but now they’ve screwed things up so much that we can’t burn but a few months a year—starting in January and ending on May first, so it seems we never do get ahead of the creep of the awful invasives; and, oh, yes, they’re winning—you *can* see that, can’t you?”

“Yes, Leo,” you’d say, “I can see they’re winning,” because you could. All over your property the roses and vines were clearly covering everything they could reach.

“But back before they’d invaded, even then we needed to burn all year to keep nature in check, yep.”

“I can imagine,” you’d say.

“But there didn’t used to be none of that damned wild cucumber then; it’s a sonofabitch, you know.”

“I know.”

“Those ungodly pods it makes just open up and the seeds go everywhere.” And Leo pulled some of the offending vines with their rattling seedpods and pitched them into the fire, which spat them up and out as vigorously as it could, flaming up into the air while we chased after them to catch them and throw them back. “Look,” he’d say incredulously, “it’s as if they’re magicked and refuse to be burnt!”

Gainesboro was a town over the hills to the west, a sparsely inhabited farming community wending far up in the hills into Vermont; it was a place with more sheep than people. Leo’s people were originally small farmers themselves, but when things had been tough they’d ended up selling most of the good land off to bigger farmers, leaving themselves with the house and a small plot to grow vegetables on and not much more.

“There weren’t much to eat in those days,” he’d tell you, speaking of his childhood back in the fifties and early sixties, “so my mother would have to cook whatever my father could find to shoot, and that weren’t much better than road-kill—there were so many damned ‘possums and racoons in the freezer out back on the porch, and they weren’t no good to eat even when they were fresh, you know. Tasted like crap. Maybe once a year he’d get a deer, but mostly it was just racoon-stew, which tastes about as awful as anything you can eat does taste.”

\* \* \*

As spring started to blend into summer and you spent more time up at the farm, you saw so much of Leo that he became a regular fixture in your life. As you sat up in your study on the second floor of the house, you’d see him traipse across the field from his hut out in back of the sheep farm’s pens, near the stand of tall white pines, mumbling to himself as he’d listen to the talk radio that formed a background to his talk that summer, a sound that whined like angry mosquitoes in the July humidity. After you had worked for a few hours on some project that kept you busy in the mornings on those days, you’d rouse the dogs from under the desk and ask them if they’d like to go out to ‘find Leo,’ and since they always did, you’d all start out downstairs and across the lawn to the boundary area where he’d be working.

The green shoots of spring gave way to the full-sprung meadows of grasses and daisies and dandelions; on the margins by the fences, stands of knotweed and the tangled skeins of Leo’s hated invasives covered the branches and trunks of trees that had fallen over the last few winters and which had never been cut up and dragged away, much to his chagrin. When you and the dogs would find Leo standing beneath a tree, he might be staring out toward the main road where a group of kids were awaiting their bus on one of the last school days of the year.

“Look almost happy, don’t they?” he’d offer. “Don’t realize, do they,

what kind of a world they're going to inherit."

"No, I don't suppose they do," you'd reply for something to say; you thought Leo was winding up for one of his diatribes against the times.

"When I weren't much older than them, my father threw me out of the house, and I had to go live with my aunt and uncle down in Northampton; had to finish high school down there, too."

"Why did your father throw you out?"

"Well, I guess I deserved it, perhaps," he said with a hint of a sly look on his face, "but it was a blow just the same. And life at the high school down there weren't the same as it was up here. And I never did manage to graduate—they screwed up my transcript, somehow, and I lost credits I needed, so though I tried to fix things, I weren't able to, and in the end I just said, 'screw it,' and went off and got a job working at Simpson's market for a while—I was 'the *produce* guy.' I guess it wouldn't've mattered anyhow. Though it would've been nice, maybe."

"Life can be tough," you say, because you need to say something.

"Yeah, life's a *beach*."

Leo, it turns out, had once been married—though he seldom spoke of his wife in any detail. His wife was always just "She" or "Her," always capitalized. Another bump along his life, one that knocked him about for a while. She disappeared, he'd tell you, once while he was on the road working for the power company down in Florida, digging trenches. He got a call from his brother to tell him She had gone, and he'd had to borrow some friend's car—one that had a busted air-conditioner—and driven back up to Gainesboro in the heat of August.

"Barely made it, you know," he'd say, "but the old car just limped along fine so long as you only went no more'n 50, and finally I got home, to where I'd left Her just a few months back, when I headed down south to take the job in Miami. I pulled into the driveway, and the house was dark, and, yep, She was gone, just like my brother had said. No note, no nothing. Just gone. Even took the dog." He looks at you from under his thick reddish eye-brows, as if testing you to see if you'll buy it.

"Even the dog?" you say, playing along.

"Yep, even the dog. And it were a special dog, too, a pure-bred one that I bought Her. One of them white fuzzy ones She said she liked—a *beechon-frisay* it was called. I'd gone into Boston to buy it from a special store and brought it home to surprise Her with. But She never liked that dog—it were a noisy dog, it's true—and She used to tie it out in the yard on a rope most days. But She still took it with her when She went."

“Even the dog,” you’d say, and he’d nod and go back to work pulling vines from the base of a decaying old birch tree.

The hut where Leo lived was an old sugar shack the sheep farmer next door had given up on some years back, but it was sound enough and had running water and an old pot-bellied wood stove. In summer it just peeked out from under a hedge of lilac run amok, and birds nested in ancient fruit trees in its back garden. Leo would sit out under the front window on an old crate, smoking his foul cigarettes and staring out at the sheep. You could see him there from your study on hot evenings when it was too hot either to pull up vines or work on any kind of project with much gusto. As the summer drew toward its close and it was nearly time for you to head back to the city, more often you found Leo sitting under some tree in his special sort of rapt contemplation, less driven by vitriol against his chosen adversaries than he’d been even a few months ago. On some occasions he’d stop by to say hello when you were sitting out on the lawn reading a novel. You’d offer him a beer and a seat—he’d accept your offer of the first, but refuse the chair.

“I never sit down,” he’d say, with palpable dishonesty; sometimes he’d even say this when he was sitting down, as on those occasions you asked him to come to dinner. One evening when the sun was just starting its long decline into winter, you and he were sitting on the back porch eating grilled steak and steamed potatoes and asparagus. He was reminiscing about the many concerts he’d gone to over the years—he’d seen Willie Nelson, his favorite, many times (he actually looked a little like Willie, too). “It’s almost time for the Big E,” he said. The Big E is a big fair held down in Springfield in the fall. “I wonder which of them big country music stars are going to be playing there this time?”

“You planning on going?” you asked.

“Yep. Bought a season pass, even.”

“Really,” you said. “You must be planning on going down there quite a lot. How do you plan on getting to Springfield?”

“Well, can’t exactly say, you know. Maybe I’ll find a ride, maybe *you* can drop me off when you’re headed back to the city on a Sunday when you’re going down?”

“Sure, Leo,” you said, optimistically.

\* \* \*

Fall comes and you are busy and don’t get up to the farm as often as you’d planned. By the time it’s October and the last weekend of the big fair in Springfield, you promise to take Leo with you early the next morning—but you tell him he must be outside by your car by 9:00 a.m. sharp—since you need to be back in town by noontime. He says he’ll try, he knows it’s his last chance. By 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning, there’s no sign of Leo, though, and you drive off feel-

ing a bit sad.

The week of Thanksgiving your sister arrives from her island off the coast of Maine with her puppy, Medea, a three-year old lab that seems impervious to the expectation that she grow up and stop stealing your socks and raiding the trash. Whenever Medea sees Leo, she tears after him like the wind, unsettling him to the point where he drops his rake or shears and allows her to grab one of his leather gloves and take off with it to chew under the horse chestnut tree. Leo is fonder of alpacas and sheep than he is of dogs, though he tolerates your quieter dog, Tacitus, who just sits by him and lets him pat his head. Your other dog, Creon, barks at Leo because he ignores him. Creon doesn't understand people who don't like dogs and Leo doesn't like dogs who bark at him, but the two generally come to a truce after a few minutes. "Why's he being so noisy?" Leo will ask as he always does, and you reply as you always do by reminding him that Creon works for the invasive species lobby and wants to put him off his game.

You invite Leo to join you for Thanksgiving dinner, and when he arrives it's time for cocktails. He brings you a decorative pop-up turkey that he's been saving under his bed and a small bottle of Drambuie liqueur. When your sister unfurls the turkey and puts a paper-clip on it to hold it open, it reveals its autumn-colored paper feathers in all their tattered glory. Given the number of items that Leo brings out from under his bed, it must be a pretty crowded venue. Occasionally he brings you a treasure for safe-keeping. He is distrustful of the sheep farmer who lets him stay in his sugar house, and worries that he (or one of his cats—Leo particularly hates cats) will come by when he's out ripping and tearing and steal something. And so you have a cabinet in which you keep Leo's special possessions—a carnival glass bowl he inherited from his grandmother, a set of shot glasses in all sorts of fruit colors, and a collection of marbles he's found over the years. He's particularly proud of the carnival glass bowl, and keeps it in its own Tupperware container enclosed in bubble wrap.

Leo is a polite and appreciative guest at dinner, and he quiets down after a glass of scotch, seeming even to enjoy sitting in the dining room chair. He doesn't seem to mind that the turkey is a bit dry, and has a second helping of apple pie. While you and your sister discuss politics and recent books and life on the island, Leo seems mostly content to sit and eat and listen. Given that his usual diet seems to consist of peanut butter and instant oatmeal—with the occasional meatball sub from Shepard's Market thrown in for excitement—it is perhaps not surprising that he enjoys being fed more festively.

After dinner you adjourn to the living room where there is a fire, and you pull a chair up for Leo close to the flames.

"You know," he says as he sips on a small glass of liqueur, "I pretty much gave up drinking after that day when the police busted me and put me in the slammer."



“When was that?” you ask.

“So, I never told you about that?”

“No, not yet,” you say encouragingly.

“Well, it was just about the worst day of my life, I guess,” he says warming to his task.

“It was when I worked for The Sunshine Cookie Company, you know, back when I traveled up and down the 91 corridor, from Hartford to the north country, selling crackers and cookies to the stores along the route. It was a good life, it was—while it lasted. Well, it was good enough, and I got to drive a lot and meet lots of people. I did fine for some years, till that bad day came.

“It was a day fated from the beginning to be a ruin—started with sleet, turned to rain, then to snow, and there were accidents all down the highway. In Springfield, a tractor-trailer overturned, spilling frozen food all over the road, and the police had to shut down the whole damned road for over an hour. Well, I wasn’t doing no good just sitting there, so I got off the road and went down into the city, found a bar, and had myself a beer. After an hour, the TV said the accident was cleared, so I got back in my car and made it down to Hartford for my meeting. Arrived just a bit late, even then. Once it was done, the weather turned even worse—freezing rain topped with hail, and my buddy Mel said we ought to lay-by for a while and get a drink before getting back on the road, so we did that—and after another hour (it was about 6:00 p.m. by now)—I got back in my car and headed back up to Gainsboro, where I was supposed to meet my wife for dinner. I never should have left Hartford, I know now. But, Hell.

“The trip up was smooth, but I was running late, so by the time I got to the restaurant it were near 8:00 p.m., and She was nowhere to be seen—not in the bar, not in the dining room, not in the parking lot. So I got back in my car and started to drive around the streets to see if I could find Her wandering about. I never did find Her, though, because the cops found me first—they said I’d run a stop sign—never saw it!—and didn’t pay attention to their lights flashing behind me. They gave me the field sobriety test, and I failed it . . . and that was that, and I ended up spending the night in the town jail, since She wouldn’t come out to get me, said the ‘weather were too bad.’”

“That was one hellish day,” you said, realizing just what all this means.

“Yeah, but it just kept gettin’ worse,” he said. “I had to spend six months in the slammer, lost my license, too—though I got it back eventually. But though the company said they wanted to keep me on—I were that good, selling on the road—the insurance people wouldn’t hear of it, wouldn’t insure me no more, so it was a no-go from there. And so . . . here I am!”

“And so here you are,” you say sadly as you poke the fire and think about fate and how unkind it can be. “Another glass of Drambuie, Leo?” you

ask.

“Can’t hurt anything now,” he says, chuckling.

\* \* \*

By December the first snows have covered over the last of autumn’s leaves, and the temperatures have sunk down into the twenties for the highs most days. You are busy for much of the Christmas season, though Leo stops by dutifully every few days to report on his life. He tells you he’s feeling awfully tired, not well at all, and it’s true you seldom see him out in the woods ripping and tearing anymore. Mostly you see the smoke from his woodstove, or see him carrying his bundle of possessions with him as he shuffles down to the local market for his cigarettes and peanut butter. He carries everything important with him these days, in case the sheep farmer’s cats get into his shack to ruin them. You remember to keep giving him his weekly money.

Once it’s January, your obligations down in the city keep you from getting up north much, and by March you’ve only managed to spend two more weekends at the farm. On one of them you again help Leo with some burning, though neither of you is quite in the mood for the task this year. He’s moving more slowly than ever, and seems to find it difficult to keep his attention on anything for very long. The spells he spends staring out over the land get longer and longer.

\* \* \*

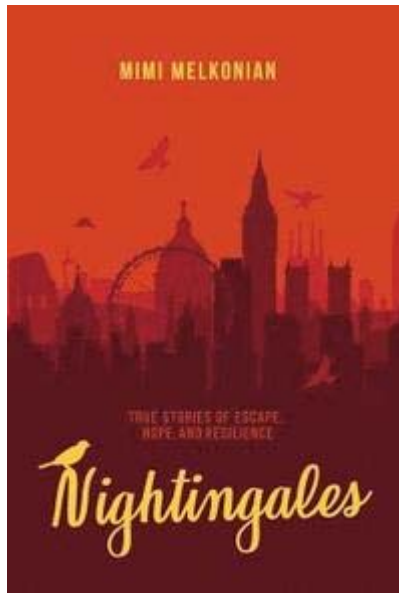
You’ve just now arrived at the house for spring break, and one of your neighbors stops by to tell you the news—Leo’s gone, been gone a week now. He says that one day the sheep farmer didn’t find Leo at his usual tasks, noticed there wasn’t any smoke coming from his woodstove, and went in to check. Leo hadn’t made it through the night.

You and your sister and the dogs all sit by the fire after dinner, feeling sad. You each drink a small glass of Drambuie out of the special fruit-colored shot glasses he left you.

\*

*Nightingales, True Stories of Escape,  
Hope, and Resilience: A Book Preview*

By Mimi Melkonian



All nations, all peoples, have a story. Usually not one story but stories—stories of who they are or were, how they came to be, and who they are meant to be. In the present day of globalization, as nations interact, peacefully or violently, and peoples move forcibly or voluntarily, these stories take on an urgency to be told and not to fall into the realm of the forgotten. My new book, *Nightingales, True Stories of Escape, Hope, and Resilience* (Crater Publishers, LLC, 2018), is about Syrian migrants, forced migrants, and refugees telling their true stories.

As a young girl, I heard countless times the stories of my parents and grandparents surviving the Armenian genocide and then starting all over in the new lands. Forced to leave Adana, in contemporary Southern Turkey, in the context of the Armenian Genocide, my father came to Lebanon in 1921. According to my grandparents, my father's aunt, Hoki, had been a translator for an American missionary at what is now known as Tarsus American College. While translating some documents, she discovered that the Turks were preparing to attack and round up Armenians in Adana and Tarsus. She informed her sister (my grandmother), and my grandparents both prepared to flee immediately. Leaving everything behind, they headed to the port at Mersin on the southern coast and

took a ship to Beirut. My father, at age five, his parents, his twin siblings, and his eldest brother all left, never to return.

They took with them only their fears and their memories. Out of eighty-five of my father's family members, only seven survived. The rest were massacred, along with a million-and-a-half other innocent Armenians. Walking to the port, then sailing from Mersin to a Syrian port city, and then riding on a cattle train via Damascus into Lebanon, they arrived in Beirut and settled in a quarantine camp. They did not speak Arabic, nor did they carry any possessions, but they were thankful to have survived. After growing up in Beirut, my father did well and became the chief of construction for one of the largest shipbuilding and repair companies in the Middle East, *Polycarbos Dimitrius, Poldim Works*. He managed more than two hundred skilled construction workers, both men and women. My father, in turn, helped many young Armenian orphans start new lives and families after meeting them at *Poldim Works*. He received an honorary medal from King Constantine II of Greece for his innovative achievements in shipbuilding. He established a trade union in Lebanon, and for the first time, workers were granted eight-hour workdays instead of being forced to labor for extended hours with little compensation. His love of music and violin-playing brightened our weekly family dinner evenings. He had five children and lived a comfortable life in Beirut, Lebanon.

My mother had her own forced migration story. In 1915, her parents fled Siverek to Adana, the major city of south-central Anatolia. The family lived in Adana until 1921, and my mother was born in 1920 or 1921 (we don't know). She was still a baby when her parents had to flee again, this time from Adana due to the massacres conducted by the Turkish government. Like my father's family, they took the boat from Mersin and arrived in Beirut. My mother grew up in Beirut and eventually started teaching at a day school, where she organized theatrical productions in which she also acted. She donated part of her salary to help build a school and a church for Armenian children. She was also an active member in the Armenian General Benevolent Union and helped coordinate scholarships for Armenians to pursue higher education in Beirut. In 1908, when my mother's brother was not yet even a teenager, he fled to the United States from Mersin. He never saw his parents again. Fifty-seven years later, my mother tracked him down, and they met again in Philadelphia.

My parents worked hard to give us the security they never had, something that forced migrants consider vital. Under present-day international crises, forced migrants face different circumstances, and global politics have also changed. Still, forced migrants continue to flee war and persecution. They lose all of their sources of security, having abandoned everything familiar—family, friends, culture, home, and work. Sometimes traveling in unsafe conditions by sea and land, they risk their lives to reach safety. The questions asked when mak-

ing desperate escapes are the same for all forced migrants around the globe: Where should I go? How can I eat? Where should I sleep? Where can I work? Whom can I trust? Where can I find work?

The war in Syria has created a massive crisis of forced migration. The divisions within the Arab world and the Middle East have prevented an adequate humanitarian response. Syrian refugees and migrants were dehumanized during the U.S. presidential election in 2016. They were also cited as a motivating factor for British citizens choosing to leave the European Union in the same year. Sadly, Syrian forced migrants are largely the victims of extremist organizations.

Having experienced the Civil War in Lebanon (from 1975 to 1990) as a teenager, I have enormous empathy for the victims of the war in Syria. The Lebanese war brought untold difficulties and changed our lives completely. We all lived day-to-day, hoping and praying the war would end the next morning.

In 1978, my family was internally displaced and had to leave our mountain house in Bois De Boulogne and head to the Bekaa Valley town of Anjar. Like many people who have experienced war, I had many traumatizing experiences that I still find difficult to verbalize.

Although I cannot be considered a forced migrant myself, in 2001 I left Lebanon and migrated to the United States. In Lebanon, I was an accomplished pianist who taught at the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music. I had toured many European countries and the United States and entered my students in various international piano competitions. However, after migrating with my children, I found it difficult to lead a creative life as before, due to the responsibilities of earning a living and raising my children in the United States. Therefore, one motive for my writing this collection was to assist other creative people, now migrants, in their efforts to support themselves and tell their stories.

As the war in Syria continued to worsen, I could not help but think about people's experiences through the lens of my own. Living in the United States, I read in popular media about how Syrian refugees and forced migrants navigated their escapes and attempted to build new lives. On Arabic social media, I also discovered other agonizing stories that would never be shown on television. I realized that Syrian civilians were writing and telling their true stories.

As a teacher of Arabic language, I was particularly attuned to the misconceptions about Middle Easterners and Syrians held among Westerners. Increasingly, I wanted to counter these somehow and help tell the true stories of Syrian migrants.

Three years ago, a visit to Berlin, Germany, helped me understand the

authentic experience of the Syrian refugee. My tragic and depressing outlook began to find some strands of hope for the future. In Berlin, milling around in my hotel lobby and walking through the streets, I constantly heard Arabic, and I ended up speaking with many Syrians. Asking them a battery of questions about their journeys, I was fascinated at how many of these people, who had never traveled before in their lives and had not spoken a word of German, were now living in Germany with permits to work and live independently. I observed the courage and determination of the Syrian migrants through what they were able to accomplish in a short period. These achievements were clearly advanced through an ethic of community. Having survived and then living a free life had made them more selfless human beings. They helped each other as a rule, and if a stranger asked for assistance, they would not hesitate to give advice and help. This ethic of selflessness is something that I had also witnessed among the Armenian Genocide survivors that I knew in Lebanon.

As I began to appreciate and notice this ethic, I observed it on social media, on Facebook and Instagram, with so many Syrians helping each other, even if they were strangers. For example, if one wanted to find how to travel in Europe, Syrians would pose questions on social media and people who had already fled would post answers. Information on finding the most honest and safest smugglers, as they call them, was discussed on social media.

After I returned from Berlin in 2016, I decided to develop a book project of interviews of Syrian migrants. On television, most stories of Syrian refugees and forced migrants show people living in camps, who are presented and sensationalized as uneducated, dirty, and hopeless. Without denying the difficulties that such people face, I wanted to tell stories of Syrians who were determined to build successful lives in the West. Many Americans are unaware that Syria, as well as my home country of Lebanon, was filled with many well-educated people who most certainly had the ability to succeed anywhere through hard work. A number of such Syrians have told their stories on social media, but I decided to collect and share some of the most inspiring ones.

Through connections made on social media and through personal contacts, I invited around twenty-five individuals to do recorded interviews from different continents and countries, which we agreed that I would transcribe into a narrative and send back for their review. Some declined and did not want their stories published, fearing that their loved ones in Syria could be harmed; others felt their lives and stories should be kept private. Sixteen people agreed, many of them artists already accustomed to telling their stories to public audiences. I attempted as much as possible to retain their voice and use their actual language in literal translation.

I personally interviewed every speaker that I feature in *Nightingales*. Their original stories were provided in Arabic, Armenian, or Turkish, with a few in

English. I recorded each story and then transcribed and translated the recording into English. When I performed the interviews, I was a total stranger to all of them, except to Talar Dekrmendjian and Lena Tavitian. I knew Talar from the International Piano and Voice Competition in Sicily, Italy, which I judged in 1999. I knew Lena from Beirut, where we both attended the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Yervant Demirdjian School in Zarif, Beirut, and stayed in contact. All other interviewees I met virtually. I used Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter to learn their stories and then contact them.

Some readers might ask why these stories do not seek more to project the inner emotions and traumas of the interviewees. Instead, my interviews were focused more on the mechanics of how these people were able to build new lives in the West and share their Syrian identity with the world, often through their art or daily life. Some interviewees are famous Syrian artists (such as, Kinan Azmeh, Kevork Mourad, Dima Orsho, Talar Dekrmendjian, Mirna Kassis, Gabriel Jebran Yakoub, Tammam Azzam, and Ahmad Joudah), and others ordinary civilians (such as, Alaa al-Hariri, Maya Shahaf, Sara Mardini, Mojahid Akil, Lena Tavitian, Malake Jazmati, Dalya Zeno, and Muhannad Qaicinnie). While a number of the artists have attempted to explain the experience of the Syrian refugee or war victim through their artwork, in these interviews, I sought more to understand their daily, basic challenges of life as lived, rather than how they are expressed in their artistic practice. Even though artists have fame and have the means to express their emotions with a variety of tools, at the end of the day, they still experience the same practical difficulties as everyone else.

To be a total stranger and perform an interview on such emotional subjects was not easy, especially because in our Middle Eastern culture we find it difficult to share our inner emotions with strangers. In general, if you ask a Middle Easterner, "How are you, today?" the answer will be: "Thank God, I am fine." It could be that the person has many worries, but the outlook towards life is always to be thankful and hopeful for a better day according to God's will. And perhaps, this region of the world that has seen the rise and fall of so many empires and civilizations, and so many wars and peace agreements, has made its inhabitants look at life with a focus on what they can do immediately to improve their situation and not dwell on their traumas of the past.

In addition to forced migrants (people who leave their home country because they have no other choice) and proper "refugee" stories (a defined category in international law theoretically entitled to entry and support), I included several stories of regular Syrian migrants. Migrants are those who leave their home country voluntarily in search of better economic opportunities or to pursue higher education abroad. A number of the Syrians I interviewed had been studying abroad or had decided to migrate before the war. Once the war broke out, they could no longer return to Syria. Their parents, siblings, and close family members became scattered all over the world. While such migrants may not have

undergone the same traumatic experiences as forced migrants or refugees, many of them still suffered because they could not unite with their parents or other loved ones. Many live their lives with hopes of uniting with their loved ones, while many others have lost loved ones.

I would also like to stress that the Syrians who are living in camps are struggling and surviving in their own way—by working in the camps or attempting to bring the normality of school and weddings into this environment. They also are survivors, and they hope one day that they will be able to return to their homeland. Despite feeling the pain of this ongoing tragedy, I wanted to share voices of hope and survival in this book. These authentic stories remind me of my parents. Although these individuals have lived through traumatic circumstances that many people may not want to hear, and which they themselves may not be prepared to process fully, they are attempting to tell their truths. The poet John Keats' nightingale sings of divine truth:

Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth;  
Philosophic numbers smooth;  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

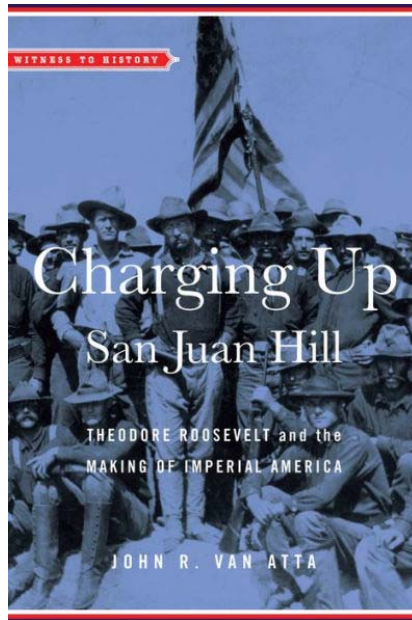
*Ode (Bards of Passion and of Mirth), 17-22.*  
John Keats

Syrians are still attempting to tell the basic truth of their journeys as forced migrants and refugees. For the time being, until this crisis is resolved, these stories of truth nevertheless signal human resilience and hope.



*Charging Up San Juan Hill: Theodore Roosevelt  
and the Making of Imperial America:*  
A Book Preview

John R. Van Atta



Here is a strange confession for one who has been for the past forty years a historian of the *early* American republic: I have been fascinated by Theodore Roosevelt since the age of fifteen. That year, as a tenth grader, I happened to find in my parents' collection a book by Hermann Hagedorn, entitled *The Roosevelt Family of Sagamore Hill*. This book portrayed TR as a man of such energy, intelligence, and self-confidence that I could not resist him. Afterward, I quickly developed a teenage obsession with Roosevelt that did not abate until about half-way through college, where some of my favorite professors (in the early 1970s) let me know that admiring such an imperialist president did not fit with the anti-Vietnam mood on campus. Feeling chastened, I conformed and looked to different subjects. Later, after becoming a teacher myself, my interest in Roosevelt came back, though of course in a more balanced and critical way than it had occurred years before.

In addition, I had never entirely lost my childhood interest in wars and war heroes. As an adult, the issue became more one of why we choose the heroes

that we do and how war influences that choice. This question naturally led to some of the themes in my new book *Charging Up San Juan Hill* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018). I argue that as a story of American military history, that of TR, the Rough Riders, and the so-called Battle of “San Juan Hill” reflected broader dictates of culture and society as well as the more common considerations of weapons, strategy, leadership, and national interest. Further, the image of Roosevelt’s famous First Volunteer Cavalry Regiment—the Rough Riders—related much more closely to questions of nation- or empire-building than one might think. Certainly his consequent image as a “war hero” made *the* crucial difference in TR’s political career. His successful military experience in Cuba confirmed Roosevelt as a popular force in American life before he became so much a political one. Without it, he would never have become president and would most likely have gone down as just a minor figure in American history, mostly unknown today.

Historians who have written full-length studies of the Rough Riders have focused much more on what they *did* than on what they *meant*, both to themselves and to other Americans. Few have analyzed the significance of their composition as a group, for example. Although billed as an “all-American” fighting force, they would pass no multicultural muster of today. The regiment reflected its time, along with prevailing social biases. It included no women and no African-Americans in those days of an all-male, strictly segregated military. Nor did it contain many names reflecting the “new immigration” from eastern and southern Europe or Asia. Few Hispanic surnames appeared. The roster featured only a smattering of Catholics and Jews and just a small number of Native Americans.

And yet, many commentators of the time thought the regiment to have been strange in design even for then. “In its ranks, serving as privates, are men of all social conditions and racial differences,” exaggerated the *Springfield Republican*. “On this account alone we are proud of ‘Teddy’s Terrors.’” All volunteers, they constituted a band of citizen soldiers but not just any citizens and, in some cases, hardly the most conventional. As critics initially judged them, the Rough Riders’ faults of composition seemed certain to outweigh their military potential. Some figured that about half the regiment consisted of people *least* likely to sacrifice for *any* cause: a bunch of rowdy, law-flouting, ungovernable far westerners on the one hand; on the other, a contingent of spoiled, soft, overprivileged sons of the wealthy eastern elite.

Though at first advanced as a criticism, this very fact constituted one of the most important points about them. The Rough Riders’ two commanders, Roosevelt and fellow Harvard graduate Leonard Wood, believed the unusual mix of troopers held great symbolic as well as military potential. They wanted the experiment to show that Americans all around still had greatness in them, whatever their political, social, and sectional differences. According to the regimental roster, the troopers represented 145 different occupations, professions,

and trades. Only 160 of the eventual 1,252 enlistees described themselves as “cowboys,” along with another 58 who hailed as “ranchers” or “cattlemen.” Apart from those, the combination included 87 miners, 53 farmers, 44 clerks, 34 laborers, 32 attorneys, 31 railroad men, 26 students, 23 printers, 17 blacksmiths, 15 teachers, 15 polo players, 14 musicians, and 13 carpenters. In addition, 29 regular army men joined the regiment as volunteers. For occupational range, the regiment featured a confectioner, two florists, a pair of nurserymen, three insurance agents, two singers, a hotelkeeper, a pharmacist, four watchmakers, and a sculptor. The vast majority of the men were young—in their 20s—and unmarried. Their wide variety of backgrounds strongly suggests that the Rough Riders never all that much resembled the wild bunch of “cowboy” soldiers that the newspapers—and later historians—found to make such engaging copy. As their story evolved, however, the scribes around the country started to find more interesting their real identities in contrast with their popular image. As one would say shortly after the fighting for the San Juan Heights, it had been “childish” ever to imagine that every man was a “cowboy.”

The obvious takeaway from all this is that the past turns out always to have been more complicated than most of us would imagine, and so too were those people we regard as leading figures in the past. As a fifteen-year-old-boy, I found it easy to adopt Theodore Roosevelt as the personal hero that I wanted, and probably needed, in my life at that time—a great American that I might in some ways emulate while growing up. That is a concern of childhood, or in my case, adolescence, but one not so relevant in later life. For my part, the need for personal heroes lessened considerably as I got older. The more important story, the one that matters to me now, is how this man, TR, came to be regarded as such a hero to so many fellow Americans in his own time, and how the answer to that might today illuminate a little bit more of our convoluted history and political culture. A piece of that larger story is what I have tried to capture in *Charging Up San Juan Hill*.



















