Recounting the Past

A Student Journal of Historical Studies
at Illinois State University

Thanks to Professor Adedze
for providing the stamps that appear on the cover.

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Florence Crittenton and the Option of Motherhood

JOEL PLATTNER

In March of 1917, Katrina Lazowski[1] first suspected that she was pregnant. At the time she was working as a domestic and boarding with an upper-class family in Chicago. Only a year before at age seventeen, she had left her family in Poland, immigrating to the city. Shortly after her arrival, she secured the only job available for such a recent immigrant—domestic work—and she began seeing the father of her child. Katrina told him in May that she was pregnant, but he seemed uninterested. A month later, he informed her that he had been drafted and was leaving for basic training in the South. Despite her attempts to hide it, by late August, Katrina's pregnancy became noticeable, and her employers inquired about her sexual conduct. After learning that she was pregnant, the family fired her, and Katrina found herself without work and with little savings. She knew that she could unload her child on a baby farmer, but she doubted that she had the funds to pay for her delivery at a maternity hospital. With winter coming, she also knew that she needed a place to live. A few months before, a friend had checked herself into the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home for unwed mothers, and Katrina realized that the home might also provide her with refuge. In late September, and with only weeks until her delivery date, Katrina stood at the door of the Anchorage Home.

Many girls like Katrina sought help at or were brought to Florence Crittenton maternity homes across the country between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War II. Although the National Florence Crittenton Mission bore the name of its founder Charles Crittenton, the maternity homes were run by women and designed to reform "fallen girls" through a spiritual but uniquely female agenda. Up until the late 1930s, the Crittenton Homes strongly encouraged the pregnant women they served to keep their babies. Although this insistence stemmed from a view that motherhood would help

1 This is a fabricated name as well as a hypothetical situation about how many Florence Crittenton girls must have found themselves at the Anchorage Home. This protoype is based on Florence Crittenton Anchorage casefiles as well as information about independent working women in Chicago found in Joanne J. Meyerowitz's work. The full citations are "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Case Records-sample intake cards 1910-1922," "Restricted," Florence Crittenton Anchorage Records at Richard J. Daley Special Collections Library at University of Illinois-Chicago (hereafter FCAR), Folder 135; and Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

achieve ends of reform, by promoting the maternal bond and discouraging adoption, Florence Crittenton also helped resist the practice of commercial baby farming in the early twentieth century. Baby farms generally acquired and sold the illegitimate offspring of urban, working-class girls: the same type of women for which the Florence Crittenton maternity homes were created. By offering women of little means the option to keep their children, Florence Crittenton also worked to prevent babies from reaching the black market.

A great deal of secondary literature has been written about "fallen women" and the "girl problem." Much of this literature attempts to explain why unwed mothers and even sometimes single, independent women were perceived as such a threat to the American social fabric before the 1960s. Furthermore, class and racial implications are thoroughly discussed within historical monographs, and historians have used an organizational approach to cover the activism of maternity homes.[2] Since this paper deals with the Florence Crittenton chain of maternity homes, Katherine Aiken's monograph *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood* has helped ground the history and mission of much of the organization's work through 1925. Although she focuses heavily on personalities and the white slavery issue,[3] her work is indispensable for understanding the mission of the Crittenton Homes as well as their faith in motherhood.[4] Separate but related topics are childlessness and adoption in American history.[5] Both categories of women's history briefly touch upon the deeply sensational issue of baby farming, which lasted from the late nineteenth century through the postwar era. This work will seek to connect the "fallen woman" and the childless couple with baby farming, and then explain how Florence Crittenton's activism to redeem unwed mothers also served to prevent the practice of baby farming.

2 For examples of scholarship about America's dilemma with unwed mothers and independent women, see Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*; Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and for an overview of recent research of the topic of the "girl problem" see Kyle Emily Ciani, "'Problem Girls': Gendering Criminal Acts and Delinquent Behavior," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 203-214.

3 White slavery was a term many reformers during the Progressive Era used to describe prostitution. Before Florence Crittenton had established itself primarily as a chain of maternity homes, the National Florence Crittenton Mission work centered on rescuing prostitutes.

4 Katherine G. Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood: The National Florence Crittenton Mission, 1883-1925* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998). For a better understanding of Florence Crittenton's role in the white slavery issue see pages 149-172.

5 For scholarship on childlessness and adoption, see Elaine Tyler May, *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Since this paper focuses heavily on the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home in Chicago, I drew a great deal of information from the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Records manuscript collection found in the Richard J. Daley Special Collections Library. From that collection I used the Anchorage Home's annual reports, pamphlets, publications, national publications, and even some case records. Although only a few case records are available to the public, they offer a small window into the lives of the women who lived at the Anchorage home.[6]

In the early twentieth century, the connection between childlessness in America and "fallen women" was a tale of two stigmas. Without question, for the greater part of history, barren women have struggled with the fact that societies have placed an incredible emphasis on children. In American history, the stigma of barrenness is exacerbated, and historian Elaine Tyler May shows that American women had higher birthrates than their European counterparts and less frequently employed contraception and abortion dating back to colonial times. Although views of reproduction and childlessness underwent profound transformations, even by the 1950s women were not considered to have achieved "true womanhood" unless they had also reached motherhood.[7]

By the 1920s and 1930s childlessness peaked for the nation, and many couples seeking to fulfill the model of the happy family found even the avenue of adoption closed because of a baby shortage (at least of white babies). Furthermore, mothers at the turn of the century found that childlessness held a new stigma: lack of patriotism. Fearing race suicide, eugenicists in the early twentieth century vigorously encouraged native, white Americans to procreate in order to preserve the best genetic material.[8] During this same time period, Americans' views of babies also underwent changes. In the late nineteenth century the adoption of babies was rare because they were economically worthless.[9] However, by the early twentieth century married, childless women were usually considered not only unpatriotic but also morally impotent and emo-

6 In her "Bibliographic Essay," Katherine G. Aiken notes that the overall record keeping of the Florence Crittenton Homes was rudimentary and that many files were not saved or even destroyed. Much of this had to do with the desire to protect the confidentiality of the women who stayed at the homes. I also found that such publications as the annual reports were strikingly incomplete, and that there were almost no records for the Florence Crittenton Anchorage home between 1902 and 1916.

7 May, *Barren in the Promised Land,* 31, 135.

8 May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 87, 61-62.

9 Vivian A. Zelizer, "From Baby Farms to Baby M," *Society* 25 (March/April 1988): 24.

tionally lacking. To remedy this, many in society prescribed the adoption of a baby. Supposedly, adoption would morally uplift the mother and would help keep the father from wandering away from the home. Often, it was thought that the adopted child would provide more benefits than it would actually receive.[10]

Another stigma of the early twentieth century was unwed motherhood. While motherhood in the sanctioned bond of marriage translated into true womanhood, those who gave birth out of wedlock were alternately considered to be fallen women, problem girls, sex delinquents, and feebleminded. Rickie Solinger explains that unmarried women with children were social pariahs and labeled enemies of the stable family. Furthermore, she argues that illegitimate births in the white community brought tremendous shame upon the woman and the family, while their occurrence in black women was considered to be more of a racial or cultural failing within the black community.[11]

While unwed pregnancy in the twentieth century was indisputably seen at least as a character flaw, it had multiple interpretations. Although somewhat misguided, the most charitable interpretation probably came from evangelical reformers such as the Florence Crittenton Homes' president Kate Barrett, who felt that unwed mothers were victims of poor circumstances, vicious men, and a troubling double standard of sexual behavior. Reformers called these women "fallen," and in a sisterly way they hoped to redeem them.[12] Florence Crittenton's mission and work grew out of this reform impulse and specifically Barrett's views.

A second interpretation of unwed pregnancy came from social work professionals, who viewed these mothers as maladjusted or emotionally disturbed. Furthermore, they identified these women as sexually aggressive, delinquent, and as the causes, rather than the victims of, social problems. While the first interpretation was more stereotypical of Victorian views in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this second interpretation enjoyed currency during the 1920s and 1930s. [13]

The third interpretation suggested that a mental flaw accompanied an unwed mother's moral flaws. Beginning around 1910, "feeblemindedness"

10 Claudia Nelson, *Little Strangers: Portrayals of Adoption and Foster Care in America, 1850-1929* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), 117-118.

11 Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie,* 21-25.

12 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls,* 9-12.

13 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls,* 2, 51-52.

became a watchword and was attributed to most anyone considered to cause social problems. In her monograph about psychiatry at the turn of the century, Elizabeth Lunbeck describes feeblemindedness as an inferior mental quality that was only observable through "scientific testing." Once psychiatrists diagnosed an individual as feebleminded, there was no need for further examination or treatment because of the condition's inherent nature. Experts felt that mental capacity was just simply unevenly distributed.[14] While this condition was variously expressed, most experts agreed that feebleminded women were predisposed to promiscuity. They believed that although not inherently sexually aggressive, feebleminded women were extremely susceptible to illegitimate pregnancy because they lacked the moral or mental capacity to control their passions.[15] According to Kunzel, experts felt that these women were always in danger of becoming pregnant, and because of this many sought to regulate their sexuality.[16]

However, society also felt threatened by another group of women. Specifically focusing on Chicago, Joanne J. Meyerowitz thoroughly researched these females commonly known as "women adrift." These were single women concentrated in urban centers like Chicago, who lived autonomously from their families (although they probably did not enjoy a great deal of independence). The number of women who lived in this manner skyrocketed between 1880 and 1930 due to a concomitant increase in opportunities to earn wages in the city. While these women were almost never the threat they were perceived to be, the sexual stigma they bore attracted activist efforts. Meyerowitz has duly noted that single, independent women were often mistrusted and associated with a sexual licentiousness that scandalized middle-class values, and thus simply being single and independent stigmatized women at the turn of the century.[17]

Since poverty was such a pervasive part of single life in the city, it is true that some women were involved in sexual service. However, Chicago censuses conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the image greatly surpassed the reality. In many ways the image of the independent working woman became collapsed with that of the fallen girl because both resided in the city and seemed to share similar economic situations. Reformers generally assumed that finan-

14 Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 48, 56, 64.

15 May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 100-101.

16 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 52-53.

17 Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 1-3, 21.

cial difficulties drove women to prostitution, and independent working women also found themselves in precarious economic positions, which often made them dependent upon men for some degree of financial support. Either way, the sexuality these women were identified with appeared to lead to unwed pregnancy or other social ills that were the fruits of sexual misconduct.[18]

Some reform-minded Chicagoans acted on this somewhat superfluous fear and established a system of cheap boarding-homes, where single women could lead their lives without the need of male support. Many assumed that the already tremendous potential for these women adrift to become pregnant was exacerbated by the fact that they were disproportionately of immigrant stock.[19] Historian Claudia Nelson explains that immigrants in urban areas contributed significantly to the population of illegitimate babies and that these women were often considered subnormally intelligent.[20] This combination of mental inferiority and autonomy only placed these independent, immigrant women in greater danger of seduction or sexual delinquency. Because of their autonomy, city girls were poorer and more sexually expressive than their domesticated, rural counterparts. As a result, unwed pregnancies occurred frequently in the city and often befell women who were not able to bear the extra financial load.

Before World War II, adoption most likely served as a resolution for the two stigmas. It provided childless couples with an opportunity to realize America's family ideal, and it also removed the object of these single women's shame as well as a difficult financial situation. Unfortunately, one lucrative method of relieving the burden of these stigmas took a strikingly non-humanitarian turn. There were many willing to profit from this service to childless couples and unwed mothers through the avenue of baby farming.

It is essential to note that during the early twentieth century, society assumed that immigrants, women adrift, the construct of feeblemindedness, and unwed motherhood were linked. According to Lunbeck, immigrants and society's undesirables were far more likely to be considered feebleminded or insane than their native, white American counterparts.[21] Furthermore, a 1915 letter to Julia Lathrop, head of the Children's Bureau, found that the conditions of illegitimacy and feeblemindedness were related and that they both factored heavily into adoption and commercial baby farming.[22] Babies born to middle-

18 Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 39, 30.
19 Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 41, 12.
20 Nelson, *Little Strangers*, 142-143.
21 Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion*, 64, 311.

class, married women were not the ones placed in baby farms. Instead commercial baby farmers bought and sold the illegitimate offspring of the stereotypical women adrift. While the bulk of secondary literature indicates that adopted babies were primarily produced by unwed mothers, May insists that most children legally relinquished for adoption in the early twentieth century were orphans or from destitute families.[23] The fact that the babies found in black-market farms during this same time period were almost exclusively born to unwed mothers suggests that most single mothers did not benefit from licensed adoption services.

Vivian Zelizer argues that commercial baby farming did not create a market or demand for babies. However, it did capitalize on the desire both to relinquish and to obtain them. In the late 1800s, baby farmers essentially collected unwanted babies and generally charged a woman ten dollars to remove the stigma and unwanted financial burden her illegitimate child brought. Farmers received strikingly low commissions for the sale of these babies, but because they could collect a large volume of babies in places like New York and Chicago, the practice became quite lucrative.[24]

At the dawn of the twentieth century, baby farming was not universally condemned and it was difficult to determine the difference between reputable and black-market adoption agencies. Furthermore, established laws at the turn of the century required next to nothing for families to adopt and agencies to place children.[25] Adoption by mail advertisements and the publication of available children and babies in newspapers was not uncommon in the early 1900s.[26] A 1915 letter between Children's Bureau caseworkers mentions that most newspaper advertisements for adoption agencies promoted establishments where there was limited regard for child welfare.[27] Thus the "traffic in babies" was hardly underground at the turn of the century.

22 "Memo from E.O. Lundberg to Miss Lathrop," May 22, 1915, Box 60, Folder 7346, USCBP, found on *The Adoption History Project*, http://www.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/USCBmemo.htm (accessed October 28, 2004).

23 May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 141.

24 Zelizer, "From Baby Farms to Baby M," 23.

25 Rollin Hart to Helen Sumner, May 10, 1915, Box 60, Folder 7346, "Adoption," United States Children's Bureau Papers, National Archives II (hereafter USCBP), found on *The Adoption History Project*, http://www.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/HarttSumnerltr.htm (hereafter *The Adoption History Project*) (accessed October 28, 2004).

26 Nelson, *Little Strangers*, 116.

27 Rollin Hart to Helen Sumner, May 10, 1915, Box 60, Folder 7346, "Adoption," USCBP, found on *The Adoption History Project* (accessed October 28, 2004).

According to Zelizer, the commercial exchange of babies only became a social issue after the American concept of adoption shifted from utilitarian to sentimental.[28] In her monograph *Pricing the Priceless Child*, she argues that the public criticism of baby farms was only part of a larger change in society's view of children. She explains that in the nineteenth century, families welcomed children for their labor as well as the insurance they could later provide. Under this utilitarian view of children, it was not necessarily considered immoral to profit from a child and his or her labor. Progressive Era reformers brought an understanding that such profit was in fact exploitation. As such, a sentimental view of children developed at the turn of the century, and babies in particular became valued for their emotional qualities instead of their potential economic benefits. Subsequently, practices that allowed adults to profit from children were either outlawed or condemned. Commercial baby farming was perhaps the most heartless exploitation of the monetary value of children.[29] However, this sentimental view of babies also increased their demand among childless couples, and thus it had the paradoxical effect of simultaneously sustaining and condemning baby farming.

Florence Crittenton Anchorage workers in Chicago would have been highly aware of baby farming because a report published in 1917 found 137 baby farms operating in the Chicago area alone.[30] Had these functioned as reputable adoption agencies no one would have been alarmed. However, investigators began to find that there were few, if any, rules governing these commercial farms and that babies were exchanged as indiscriminately as merchandise.[31] A slogan coined by one Chicago baby farmer summed up the practice and profit motive by saying, "It's cheaper and easier to buy a baby for $100.00 than to have one on your own."[32]

Reported conditions in baby farms throughout the United States were

28 Zelizer, "From Baby Farms to Baby M," 25.

29 Vivian A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 5, 6. To gain a real understanding of the overall shift in the value of children and how baby farming fits into this movement, read the entire introduction.

30 Arthur Alden Guild, "Baby Farms in Chicago: An Investigation Made for the Juvenile Protection Association," Box 44, Folder 4, "Child Welfare League of America Papers," Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota (hereafter SWHA), found on *The Adoption History Project*, http://www.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/ GuildBFC.htm (accessed October 28, 2004).

31 Zelizer, "From Baby Farms to Baby M," 25.

32 Arthur Alden Guild, "Baby Farms in Chicago, An Investigation Made for the Juvenile Protective Association," 1917, Box 44, Folder 4, Child Welfare League of America Papers, SWHA, University of Minnesota, found on *The Adoption History Project*, http://www.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/ USCBmemobabyfarm.htm (accessed October 28, 2004).

lurid and horrific. In one Maryland "nursery," babies were held like livestock. There were no toilet facilities except for a jar, some babies appeared to have been abused or even whipped, and babies were denied water because, in the words of one baby farm caretaker, "water poisons the children."[33] Although investigative reports in the early twentieth century did impact the government and activist organizations, the general practices of commercial baby farming persisted through the 1950s as the adoption scandal in Memphis reveals.[34]

It is likely that baby farming would have been even more successful at the turn of the century had popular conceptions of unwed motherhood not prevailed. Adopted babies usually came from mothers who were immigrants, unwed, or both. This discouraged many couples from adopting because they feared that children born to these women would lack proper intelligence and could not even be rehabilitated through education or a loving environment.[35] While the ancestry of immigrants varied from region to region, according to Meyerowitz, the women adrift in Chicago, who were allegedly predisposed to unwed motherhood, primarily came from European countries like Germany, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway, but especially from Poland.[36] These women all would have had babies that were more marketable than those who were of African or Asian descent.

One alternative to relinquishing their children for adoption, which for these women often meant the black market, was Florence Crittenton. The Florence Crittenton chain of homes was officially founded by the millionaire evangelist Charles Crittenton, who was awarded the title "Brother of Girls." He founded the first Crittenton Home in New York's red-light district, where he trusted there was a dire need for Christian rescue work for women.[37] In his early history of the Florence Crittenton mission, Charlton Edholm describes the New York home as a "city of refuge" amidst a den of evil men and fallen women. His work, as a whole, shares the work of the National Florence Crittenton Mission through the lens of early evangelical reformers, who found their

33 "Memo on Sunshine Nursery," July 19, 1918, Box 60, Folder 7349.1, USCBP, found on *The Adoption History Project*, http://www.uoregon.edu/~adoption/archive/USCBmemobabyfarm.htm (accessed October 28, 2004).

34 For information about the notorious case of the Tennessee Children's Home, see Linda Tollett Austin, *Babies for Sale: The Tennessee Children's Home Adoption Scandal* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1993).

35 Austin, *Babies for Sale*, ix-x.

36 Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, 12.

37 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 14.

work absolutely inseparable from their Christian calling.[38]

Although much of Florence Crittenton saw itself as the brainchild of Charles Crittenton, women were an even more integral part of the activist work, especially at the Chicago branch. The same report by Edholm notes that the Anchorage Home in Chicago had its roots in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The Anchorage Home was founded in 1886 by Matilda B. Carse and Frances Willard, who both sought an avenue to rescue women. The board of directors also was entirely comprised of women, and the only role Crittenton played in the home was to dedicate the facility in 1893.[39] Without question, the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home was the activist work of women.

Despite the Crittenton name, historians such as Aiken argue that Florence Crittenton's true national leader was Dr. Kate Waller Barrett, and it was she who had the greatest impact on the homes' policies and ideologies. While Florence Crittenton was permeated with the religious principles that characterized evangelical reform, it was Barrett's incredible emphasis on the power of motherhood that served as the bedrock of the organization. It was also Barrett's distinct viewpoint as a woman that informed the homes' decision to show society's pariahs not only compassion but also respect.[40] Her own view of unwed motherhood allegedly developed when a destitute, country girl appeared at her doorstep with a fatherless child. Barrett realized that she could have been that girl and subsequently vowed to give such girls a chance.[41] Thus Barrett's perspective as a woman and mother probably inspired feelings of empathy, compassion, and especially respect to which a man could not have attained.

It appears that there were no Florence Crittenton Homes located outside of urban areas. Most monographs and manuscripts locate Crittenton Homes in places like New York, Denver, Boston, Chicago, and even places like Peoria, but not in suburban or rural areas. Part of this probably was a natural result of where most reform-minded Americans dwelt, but it also implies Florence Crittenton felt that women were either in the most danger or the most dangerous in

38 Charlton Edholm, *Traffic in Girls and Florence Crittenton Mission* (Chicago: The Women's Temperance Publishing Association, 1893), 118. This source is written completely from the perspective of the Crittenton Homes and is most useful in determining how the home viewed itself prior to the twentieth century.

39 Edholm, *Traffic in Girls*, 279-282.

40 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, xviii-xxi.

41 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 9.

the city. Solinger's work argues that after World War II, many middle-class girls "disappeared" to maternity homes from distant places; however, it seems likely that city girls comprised Florence Crittenton's main clientele up through the 1930s.[42] These aforementioned women adrift were probably targeted because they were clearly lower-income and far outside the traditional safety nets of society. Furthermore the maternity homes probably expected that a high percentage of these girls would need the services of a maternity home because of their stigma and financial dependence upon "male support."

On the cover of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage annual report in 1902, the Home spells out its mission:

> To aid and encourage destitute, homeless, and unfortunate girls and women, or having been betrayed from the paths of virtue, are willing to reform; to give a temporary home and employment until restored to friends or established in honest industry…[43]

Clearly, the functions of a maternity home were always important to the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home in Chicago. However, a sizable number of its residents were also either destitute or referred by juvenile and criminal courts. A 1914 report of all Florence Crittenton Homes estimated that courts had referred nearly 25 percent of all residents, and Crittenton activists claimed that this testified to a vote of public confidence.[44] Yet, as the twentieth century progressed, the Anchorage branch became identified almost solely as a maternity home, and records show that the home went from having one baby for every five female residents in 1902 to closer to a one-to-one ratio by 1920.[45] By 1928 a report explained that the Anchorage Home was a haven "for any girl who wishes to reform, but mainly a maternity home."[46]

Based on publications and records, the population that the Anchorage Home served appears similar to the Chicago women adrift that Meyerowitz

42 Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*, 105-106.

43 *16th Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual Report* (1902), 1, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

44 *The National Florence Crittenton Mission* (Florence Crittenton Association of America, 1914), 136-137, found in "National Florence Crittenton Mission 1914," FCAR, Folder 104.

45 *34th Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1920), 5-6, and *16th Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual Report* (1902), 3-4, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

46 *42nd Annual Report Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1928), 17, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

describes. Perhaps informed by society's perceptions of the susceptibility and even ignominy of single, independent women, Florence Crittenton Anchorage describes this group as helpless, vulnerable, straying, and fallen. Statements such as "our girls have rarely fallen from choice," and "[women] having been betrayed," demonstrate the maternity home's subscription to the view that women were helpless victims.[47] One of the same publications also warns that if straying women are not placed in the Anchorage Home, they will be lost to society and become a "public menace." The women Crittenton publications described were simultaneously betrayed and fallen, innocent but potential menaces.

Case records seem to corroborate both the argument that Crittenton's clients were the stereotypical women adrift and the argument that the home viewed them through this lens. Each case record card included a category that asked the caseworker to list whether the woman was poor, a boarder, or "fall." One record describes a sixteen-year-old girl of Polish descent, who became pregnant about a year after arriving in Chicago. Other "fallen women" had been in Chicago between three weeks and two years, and all but one appeared to be away from her family and self-supporting. When asked to list a contact or friend, only one listed a relative and some answered that they had no friends to help them.[48] Thus the clientele of Florence Crittenton Anchorage was overwhelmingly composed of a population considered endangered and dangerous, and a group that was impoverished and perceived to be sexually expressive. These were the same types of women who were also most likely to turn to a baby farm in the event of single motherhood.

The ultimate goal for the Florence Crittenton Homes was to spiritually reform the "fallen" girls and women who came in time of need. Since this was the lofty aim, various publications estimated the rate of women the Anchorage Home saved. In reference to its clients, a 1924 pamphlet stated, "Conservatively

47 *34th Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1920), 3, and *16th Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual Report* (1902), 1, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

48 "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Case Records-sample intake cards 1910-1922," "Restricted," FCAR, Folder 135. Although I would have wished to have access to hundreds of case records, this folder contains only six case records of girls. This is a probably a testament to the incomplete record keeping that seems to pervade the Florence Crittenton Homes in general, and because these case records revealed confidential information, they were even more likely to be incomplete and few in number. These case records are not numbered or identified in any particular way. Although this folder is marked restricted, it is accessible to anyone who signs a paper promising not to use any names.

speaking, 90% of our girls make good."[49] This was to say that only one in ten had another child out of wedlock. Furthermore, case records had a section that described as much as possible the girl's behavior after her stay at the home. In one case record, a section describing subsequent behavior noted that a girl had been found in a car with two boys. Whether she became pregnant after her Crittenton stay or did another stint in court is not stated.[50] However, these examples and the plethora of published testimonials from former residents demonstrate that the Crittenton Homes before World War II did not exist simply to hide pregnant girls.

Although Kate Barrett, the head of Florence Crittenton, felt that religious conversion was the only hope for unwed mothers, she also believed that inspiring these women with a sense of duty and self-respect was crucial. In her opinion, the power of motherhood was the only thing that could instill these virtues in women who were social outcasts.[51] Women could not realize this power of motherhood simply by giving birth to their children, but they could experience its reformative capacity if they truly raised and nurtured them.

In 1920 the Anchorage Home stated the following:

> One of the strongest principles of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage is keeping the mother and child together, for through love of her child come courage and the incentive to do her best.[52]

This principle was quite unique, for most people thought it was wise for a poor, single girl to put her child up for adoption. Single mothers themselves intuitively felt that they should relinquish their babies for adoption to couples who were better able to support a child. A 1916 publication testifies to the peculiarity of this guideline as well as the typical inclination of unwed mothers:

> When these girls come to us in their hour of perplexity and sorrow, their first thought is to find a place of refuge for themselves and when the little ones come, to give them away.[53]

49 "What the Florence Crittenton Circle Does for Girls," (1924), 5, found in "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Publications: Brochures & Pamphlets ca. 1920s-1970s," FCAR, Folder 155.

50 "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Case Records-sample intake cards 1910-1922," "Restricted," FCAR, Folder 135.

51 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 38-39.

52 *34th Annual Report of Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1920), 3-4, found in "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

53 *30th Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1916), 10, found in "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

Kunzel asserts that the preservation of the mother-child bond was the cardinal rule of the Crittenton Homes and attained a sacred status under Barrett's leadership.[54]

This principle was not the exclusive property of Barrett and Florence Crittenton, although they were the leading forces in promoting this doctrine of the mother-child bond as a vehicle for the moral regeneration of fallen women. A White House conference in 1909 adopted the conclusion that poverty should not necessarily separate the mother from her child. Although this conclusion generally referred to widowed and not unwed mothers, it indicates that experts on the subject were moving toward a position that encouraged the unique mother-child bond.[55] Still, even among maternity homes and organizations designed to serve unwed mothers this principle was quite unusual. It appears that very few if any other homes borrowed this cardinal rule of the Crittenton Homes, for an Anchorage report as late as 1928 primarily distinguished itself by highlighting this feature.[56] Furthermore, in a study on maternity homes in Cleveland, Ohio, Marian J. Morton attributes the insistence of preserving the maternal relationship to Kate Barrett and the Crittenton Homes. However, she suggests that as the twentieth century progressed, other homes also began to accept and even practice this ideology. Still, the research showed no evidence that other maternity homes elevated the mother-child bond to the same level that Florence Crittenton did.[57]

While the preservation of this relationship was primarily instituted to aid the mother's moral reformation, there were perhaps some other reasons for this insistence, or at the very least this cardinal rule seems to have had some unintended consequences. Since the Florence Crittenton Homes in general and the Anchorage Home in particular placed such an emphasis on keeping the mother and child together, this would have had an effect on baby farming, which encouraged the relationship's dissolution. Baby farms drew nearly all their babies from the likes of unwed, poor mothers, who lived in urban areas like Chicago. The Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home was designed to serve this same population, and by not only providing medical care but also insisting

54 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 33.

55 Nelson, *Little Strangers*, 137-138.

56 *42nd Annual Report Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1928), 8, found in "Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

57 Marian J. Morton, "'Go and Sin No More': Maternity Homes in Cleveland 1869-1936," *Ohio History* 93 (Summer/Autumn 1984): 141-142, 126. For a complete look at the different maternity homes in Cleveland and their procedures see pages 117-146.

that mothers keep their offspring, the home probably protected a number of babies from the black market.

The Anchorage Home well understood the pressures and dire circumstances single, pregnant girls experienced as they faced the prospect of motherhood. As a testimony to this, the 1927 annual report affirmed that the home also understood the options generally afforded to unwed mothers, although the document fails to elaborate. It was the Anchorage Home's desire to provide "a safe, straight path for straying feet" during a critical time of decision making for the mother.[58] Although pregnant, single women of the upper class had the opportunity to seek an abortion, Aiken asserts that these operations were difficult for Florence Crittenton's clientele to obtain.[59] However, in a city that housed 137 baby farms of all types, these Chicago women had the cheaper alternative of relinquishing their babies to the black market

Florence Crittenton Homes despised institutions such as lying-in homes because they neglected reformation and placed a premium only on secrecy and speedy black-market adoptions.[60] Barrett felt that Crittenton was filling a void for single, pregnant women, and described those who ran lying-in homes as either unsavory or willing to profit at the expense of young girls.[61] It seems that the Crittenton Homes' approach to aiding single, pregnant women and insisting that they keep their babies did at least partially aid other social workers in eliminating the disreputable practice of baby farming. The Children's Bureau endorsed Florence Crittenton's work, and Julia Lathrop, its head, stated at a 1919 meeting that "There can be nothing better than for a mother and child to stay together if it is at all possible."[62] While the Florence Crittenton Anchorage conceived the relationship "to be a protection to the young mother," the Children's Bureau found this Crittenton measure to protect the very vulnerable children of unwed mothers.[63]

Although Solinger's work suggests that the homes harshly imposed conservative values on their charges, Florence Crittenton's approach to unwed

58 *41st Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage of Chicago* (1927), 6, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

59 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 70.

60 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 69-70.

61 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 70.

62 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 186.

63 *39th Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1925), found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

mothers was not just a punitive measure applied to helpless and optionless women, but it was often compatible with what the women themselves desired. With the new sentimental value Americans ascribed to children, it is not surprising that many single mothers desired to keep their children as well. Although it is certain that many of the women that resided at the Anchorage Home were not there by choice, Aiken argues that many women came because they were willing to make the sacrifices necessary to keep their children.[64]

However, it was not enough for the Anchorage and other Crittenton Homes simply to insist on preserving the maternal bond even if the unwed mothers were agreeable. In order to successfully carry out their policy, preserve the mother-child relationship, and keep the baby off the black market, the homes had to make single motherhood feasible. Thus, the homes made learning how to earn wages a high priority. Domestic work provided the best opportunity for these women to earn a living to support themselves and their babies, and so Crittenton offered training in this area.[65] Nearly all of the annual reports listed how many women found work within a given year. For example, the 1902 report notes that forty of the women who lived at the home that year had secured employment.[66] To provide training that would prepare the women both for motherhood and domestic work, the Homes had to keep the women longer than typical maternity hospitals. The 1928 report explains that the second defining feature of the Anchorage Home is that it keeps the mother and child for at least six months.[67] However, despite the homes' emphasis on domestic training, Florence Crittenton's strongest hope was for the unwed mother to marry or obtain financial support from the biological father.

One of Florence Crittenton's goals was to find outside support for the single mothers who resided at the homes. The 1916 annual report includes a paragraph proposing an enforceable state law that would compel the biological father to financially support his child.[68] This obviously would allow the mother to keep the child. More women would be willing and able to make the sacrifices of single motherhood if the father made the financial strain bearable. The

64 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, xxi, xxiii.

65 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 83.

66 *16th Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual Report* (1902), 3, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

67 *42nd Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1928), 18, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

68 *30th Annual Report of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1916), 12, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," FCAR, Folder 2.

homes' attempts to secure this type of legislation indicate that its policy of preserving the maternal bond was the outgrowth of a deep commitment to the view that motherhood was the best solution to the "girl problem." However, marriage was not always a viable option for single mothers. Unfortunately, some young women were forced to flee to Florence Crittenton Homes because of cases of rape and incest.[69] Still, in Crittenton's view marriage was the paragon, and just as annual reports documented the number of girls that found work, they also enthusiastically recorded how many married each year.[70]

Although the rule of keeping the mother and child together eclipsed all others at Florence Crittenton, eventually this position shifted beginning during the 1930s. As early as the 1920s, Aiken notes that there was widespread disobedience to Crittenton's cardinal rule, and that this disobedience was sometimes so brazen that it was even nationally reported.[71] Evidence suggests that the Anchorage Home in Chicago was slower to shift away from its central tenet. As late as 1938, an Anchorage publication stated that even though a baby could be adopted into a more financially stable family, it was still best for the child to remain with the mother. Furthermore, the pamphlet explained that such an idea had not only influenced Florence Crittenton policy, but that it also had been exported to the community at large and had become part of the public's conscience.[72]

However, only two years later, an Anchorage Home publication reveals a shift in both ideology and practice. A 1940 report referred to a typical resident by saying, "She learns to care for her own child regardless of whether she keeps it or gives it up for adoption."[73] This shows clear evidence of a change in thinking about the needs of both mothers and children. Home policies and ideology continued to trend this way, and by 1957 the annual report simply stated, "Less than 10% of the babies were kept by the girls, and many of those were later accepted by adoption agencies for adoption."[74] By this time the transformation was complete, and the Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home had converted

69 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 108-109.

70 *16th Florence Crittenton Anchorage Annual Report* (1902), 3, found in "Annual reports-photo copies 1902-1932 (incomplete)," Folder 2, FCAR.

71 Aiken, *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood*, 187-188.

72 "What the Florence Crittenton Home Does for Girls" (1938), 1, found in "Policies, Procedures, Services 1938-1972," FCAR, Folder 153.

73 "Report for Maternity Committee for January 26, 1940," 1, found in "Policies, Procedures, Services 1938-1972," FCAR, Folder 153.

74 *Florence Crittenton Anchorage of Chicago Report of Progress* (1957), 4, found in "Annual reports 1947-1965," FCAR, Folder 3.

from a maternity home in the early twentieth century that specialized in preserving the maternal relationship, to one that assured prospective clients that it was unlikely that they would keep their babies.

By mid-century there were almost no options for a single mother but to relinquish her child. Nor was there room for the 1920s baby that appeared on the cover of a Crittenton pamphlet which said, "Help Me Keep My Own Mother."[75] Kunzel argues that this mainly resulted from an overall transition that began in the 1920s from evangelical reform to the professionalization of social work. She asserts that after the transformation was completed, the same social welfare and casework agencies were barely recognizable in both principle and practice. Along with this shift, the emphasis of workers changed from saving fallen women to readjusting disturbed girls.[76] Crittenton publications show evidence of this change. Instead of viewing single pregnancy as evidence of sin, a 1951 report said, "Because pregnancy out of marriage is a symptom of emotional disturbance, an unmarried mother should have help in understanding herself."[77]

However, the Anchorage Home itself hinted at perhaps an even bigger reason for this shift. By the 1950s the population of girls that the home served had changed dramatically. Clients were no longer just the women adrift from the city of Chicago. Instead they came from respectable families located all over the Midwest. A 1956 report mentioned that the Crittenton residents were more difficult to control than those in the past, and explained that the girls were increasingly drawn from middle- and upper-class families who wanted them to "disappear." Since these girls had no intention of keeping their children, the domestic training and strict discipline that had long been Crittenton hallmarks left this new type of girl bored and restive.[78]

In 1950, the typical Florence Crittenton Anchorage Home girl would not have come out of dire need. Instead, she would have been placed there by her parents, who would have hoped that she could disappear until she had her baby. Crittenton caseworkers would have aided her in placing her child with an adoption agency, and after giving birth to a baby, the girl would have gone home as

75 "What the Florence Crittenton Circle Does for Girls," 1, found in "Publications: Brochures & Pamphlets, ca. 1920s-1970s," FCAR, Folder 155.

76 Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls*, 2-3. To gain a deeper understanding of Kunzel's central argument read the entire work, especially the introduction.

77 *Annual Report of Florence Crittenton Anchorage* (1951), 1, found in "Annual reports 1947-1965," FCAR, Folder 3. Also see Kunzel's and Solinger's work for more thorough treatment of how Florence Crittenton eventually came to serve pregnant girls in the middle class.

78 "Florence Crittenton Anchorage, January 1956," 5, found in "Policies, Procedures, Services 1938-1972," FCAR, Folder 153.

if nothing had ever occurred. Although the Florence Crittenton still sought reformation or adjustment, the same 1950s girl would have had little reason to choose Crittenton over a lying-in home and baby farm that essentially performed the same function but promised speedier results. Between the 1930s and the 1950s Florence Crittenton converted from a maternity home that offered the option of motherhood to little more than the lying-in homes from which it had previously spared women and children.

Mexican-American Women and the Pecan Shellers Strike of 1938

BRAD GILLETTE

The Pecan Shellers Strike of 1938 was an organized response by Mexican-American workers to harsh conditions and brutal treatment in the workplace. This strike, while small in nature compared to many other movements, was important to Mexican-American women's activism because it shed light on the "unseen" demands and control of both large pecan shelling companies and the United States government over these women. Striking allowed workers, led by such labor activists as Emma Tenayuca, Luisa Moreno, and Donald Henderson, to challenge these businesses and enlist the help of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) in order to gain equality in the workplace.

Mechanization and repatriation by the U.S. government, however, proved to be invincible opponents; likewise, the efforts of these leaders to increase society's understanding of the particular issues concerning Mexican-American women appeared futile. Yet, by analyzing the pecan shellers strike and focusing on their poor working conditions and harsh treatment we are able to collectively learn the reasons, inspirations, and results of an ongoing battle that began in the 1930s.

The scholarship of historians who have researched the strike clearly shows that women workers and their leaders attained some positive results. However, labor historians have been concerned with men.[1] Historians of working women have been busy in the past two decades challenging the male focus of the field. A handful of published and unpublished studies of women and the United Electrical Workers, the Packinghouse Workers of America, clerical workers' organizations, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, and cannery workers' unions have greatly advanced our understanding of women in unions in the 1930s and 1940s.[2] Major help came from people and organizations that were willing to go public with the accounts and the injustices that caused these women to strike. While the majority of literature on this subject is secondary literature, the few firsthand accounts available offer a means of recognition and

1 Nancy Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935-1975* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 2.

2 Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement,* 3.

understanding to the reader. Amazingly, a historian notes the irony involved in the leadership of this movement—the lack of results produced by Emma Tenayuca as a leader of the strike when compared to Donald Henderson—and this may lead some to question the effectiveness of women leaders. The problem, however, was not merely a problem of gender-based leadership; it was a problem composed of differences among individuals who quite simply did not see eye to eye.

Some historians may believe that the only reason these women received any reward from their strike was due to the efforts and the willingness of Donald Henderson to participate. From this perspective, the issue of leadership has little to do with gender and everything to do with organization. Emma Tenayuca, a woman leader, did not have the organizational skills or the support of an organization as strong and recognizable as the UCAPAWA. The support and organizational efforts of the union were the exact characteristics that aided in Henderson's leadership throughout this strike. Although chief of police Kilday did not particularly care for either individual, Tenayuca's association with the Communist Party and her lack of experience were seen as "speed bumps" on the road to equality. As a strong leader, she willingly stepped aside for a person like Henderson, knowing that results would not be attainable for these women workers had she remained a leader in the struggle.

The events surrounding this strike follow a typical pattern of worker relations with businesses, but the organization and scholarship regarding women workers and labor history demands attention as well. The research and scholarship is beginning to show the complex issues involved in gender and labor organizing. Much of the literature involves the gender ideology that affected women workers, but more importantly, it clarifies the importance of gender in organizing women workers. Mexican-American women developed a critical consciousness and became participants in cannery labor organizations, beginning in San Antonio in the 1930s and continuing into the 1970s in the Teamsters' unions in California.[3]

San Antonio in the 1930s

In the 1930s, the poor population of San Antonio, largely Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans, were only in part descendants of the Spanish-

3 Patricia Zavella, "The Politics of Race and Gender: Organizing Chicana Cannery Workers in Northern California," in *Chicana Critical Issues,* ed. Norma Alarcon, 127 (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1993).

speaking population that was the majority at the time of the birth of the Republic of Texas. Most of these people were, in fact, recent migrants to an area that had become a staging place for migrant agricultural labor in central Texas. As a means of collecting income, Mexican farm workers, both male and female, congregated in San Antonio during the winter months, only to return to the fields in March or April. These workers cultivated cotton, picked and processed fruits, and even traveled as far away as Colorado to work in the abundant beet fields. After they completed this work, they returned to San Antonio in an effort to support themselves as best they could over the course of the winter months, establishing an annual cycle of migratory labor in the region.

In the 1930s, San Antonio was filled with large numbers of unemployed or underemployed workers over those winter months, and because these workers were willing to work for low wages, they contributed to the extremely low wages that were evident throughout the city. The pecan shelling industry proved an important area of work for migrants since it employed high numbers of people and one need not be literate or conversant in English. In fact, between 10,000 and 15,000 workers were employed at wages that typically averaged $2 or $2.50 for a fifty-hour week. The pecan shelling industry in San Antonio was concentrated for the most part in the west side of the city. In this area of about four square miles, almost completely Spanish in its written and spoken language, lived at least 65,000 of San Antonio's estimated 100,000 Mexican-Americans.[4] The general makeup of the west side of San Antonio, as well as its living and working conditions, would later be brought to light in a popular Mexican-American poem written by Glenn Allen Nolen:

> Over 65,000 people were not so giddy
> About living in a slumlord's space.
> Less than four miles wide,
> There was not room enough for one more face.[5]

Working and Living Conditions in the 1930s

Despite the harsh conditions, many Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American women preferred industrial employment to domestic service.

4 Selden C. Menefee and Orin C. Cassmore, *The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio: The Problems of Underpaid and Unemployed Mexican Labor* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), 43.

5 Glenn Allen Nolen, "The Pecan Sheller's Revolution of 1938," *Poetry of Glenn Allen Nolen*, 2000, http://www.geocities.com/glennallennolen/pecan_shellers.rtf (accessed October 4, 2004).

Cannery work was perceived as a step up in status, if not in pay.[6] There was a specific system of labor for these workers, which can be seen by taking a look at the leading firm in the city at the time, the Southern Pecan Shelling Company (SPSC). This company put the pecans out to contractors, who in turn recruited Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American workers and ran small contract shops where the workers processed the nuts. From the first, the required skills were divided along gender lines. Boxes of produce were delivered by horse-drawn wagons, unloaded by men and boys, and delivered to tables where the produce was initially processed.

Preparing the produce for canning required a careful touch and skills usually considered "women's work."[7] Remarkable similarities existed between these contract shops and sweatshops of the Lower East Side of New York at the turn of the century. Primitive working and sanitary conditions prevailed in the San Antonio contractors' plants. Frequently as many as 100 pickers toiled in a 25-by-40 foot room. Illumination was poor; ventilation was inadequate and the fine dust from the pecans hung in the air except when doors or windows were opened in warm weather. Inside flush toilets and even running water were rarities until 1936 when a city health ordinance compelled all plants to install these luxuries.[8]

The poor conditions inside the factory were representative of equally poor living conditions for these workers. Only 12 percent of pecan workers had running water inside their homes, only 9 percent had inside sanitary toilets, and only 25 percent of families had electric lights.[9]

Problems and Reforms in the Workplace

In addition to the low standard of living, the pecan shellers also faced employers who were unwilling to negotiate wage increases for their workers. Managers and owners of the shelling companies adamantly opposed any effort to establish minimum wages for pecan shellers under both the National Recovery Administration (1933-1935) and the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938).

6 Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 25.

7 Patricia Zavella, *Women's Work and Chicano Families: Cannery Works of the Santa Clara Valley* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

8 Harold A. Shapiro, "The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio, Texas," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 32 (March 1952), 230.

9 Menefee and Cassmore, *The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio,* 44.

In response to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's congressional message of May 17, 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, an emergency measure designed to encourage industrial recovery and help combat widespread unemployment. The act called for industrial self-regulation and declared that codes of fair competition—for the protection of consumers, competitors, and employers—were to be drafted for the various industries of the country and were to be subject to public hearings.

Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act on June 25, 1938. The main objective of the act was to eliminate labor conditions detrimental to the maintenance of the minimum standards of living necessary for the health, efficiency, and well-being of workers.[10] The act established maximum working hours of 44 a week for the first year, 42 for the second, and 40 thereafter. Minimum wages of 25 cents an hour were established for the first year, 30 cents for the second, and 40 cents over a period of the next six years. The Fair Labor Standards Act also prohibited child labor in all industries engaged in producing goods in interstate commerce. The act set the minimum age at fourteen years for employment outside of school hours in non-manufacturing jobs, at sixteen years for employment during school hours, and eighteen years for hazardous occupations.

Despite these new laws and regulations, many owners and employers continued to violate the rights of these Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American women workers. Many employers simply did not abide by these new regulations, and believed that the new rules and regulations would limit the total output of pecans from the factories. The owners continued to impose a longer workday and refused to spend money to improve the quality of the factories. Most important, they believed these new laws directly undermined their authority as employers, which created dissent between the workers and the employers. The employers believed that the creation of these new laws by the government would be much easier than the government's ability to actually enforce those laws. At a later hearing, one employer spoke for others when he explained,

> The Mexicans don't want much money…Compared to those shanties they live in, the pecan shelleries are fine. They are glad to have a warm place in the winter. They can be warm while they're working, their kids come in after school

10 U.S. Department of Labor, "Compliance Assistance—Fair Labor Standards Act," March 2004, http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/flsa/#content (accessed November 29, 2004).

> and play because it's better than going home. If they get hungry they can eat pecans.[11]

Ironically, employers would typically permit a sheller to eat any amount of pecans they desired, yet later cited that practice as one reason why the workers did not need higher wages. However, pecan shellers did want higher wages and they repeatedly attempted in the 1930s to organize a union for representation with the owners of the pecan shelleries.

Pecan Sheller Organization

In 1933 and again in 1937 short-lived unions emerged in the pecan shelling industry.[12] These short-lived unions focused on organizing a six-week strike, largely by Mexican-American women pecan shellers, in February and March of 1938. Strikers responded to a cut in wages instituted earlier that winter by the pecan shelling companies. Prior to this cut in wages, shellers earned a "piece wage" amounting to six and seven cents per pound of nuts. They earned seven cents per pound for whole nuts and six cents for halves. These wages were cut, however, on January 31, 1938, to five and six cents per pound. The reduction represented a cut of about 15 percent of earnings that already averaged less than $2.50 for a fifty-hour week.

Local papers such as the English-language *San Antonio Light* and the Spanish-language *La Prensa* documented the events leading up to the strike remarkably well. On January 30, *La Prensa* reported the events and warned its readers of the possible upcoming strike. The paper stated that leading officials of the UCAPAWA were organizing a meeting for the purpose of attempting to unify "all the pecan shellers living in this area and to reach an agreement between the International Pecan Workers Union and the Texas Pecan Shellers Union." In addition, the paper explained that the meeting would "address issues relative to wages and other working conditions, and that next Monday there will be a pecan workers strike, in the event that employers insist on keeping wages at 5 to 6 cents per pound for whole nuts and at fixing wages at 40 cents per 100 pounds of broken nuts."[13]

The Strike Begins

Despite the 1935 passage of the Wagner Act (which had guaranteed workers the right to organize) strikers, numbering perhaps 5,000 in all, were not

11 Shapiro, "The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio, Texas," 241-242.

12 Menefee and Cassmore, *The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio*, 16-17.

13 "Estallara Una Huelga De Nueceros," *La Prensa,* January 30, 1938, 1.

permitted to picket peacefully, as local police arrested them for carrying signs and "blocking" sidewalks. Those arrested were thrown into overcrowded jails and fined for having the nerve to stand up to their employers and withhold their services. It is here, in the beginning stages of the strike, that we see the importance of organization and leadership by women workers. As the *San Antonio Light* reported on January 31, "Warfare on San Antonio's labor front flared anew Monday when pecan shellers under the banner of the C.I.O. declared a strike."[14] The strike was organized to include all of the city's 120 pecan shelling factories, yet varying reports were submitted regarding women workers' willingness to potentially lose their job for striking. While papers such as *La Prensa* stated that approximately 8,000 workers were on strike (3,000 more than the highest number reported by the leader of the strike, Emma Tenayuca)[15], the *San Antonio Light* reported on the variation in the numbers of strikers in different plants. In a special section devoted to the actual strike numbers, the *San Antonio Light* interviewed several different plant owners and employers; it is here where we can first see the disparity in the effectiveness of the strike.

Jack Harkheimer of the Alamo Pecan Shelling Company reported that nearly 200 of his 230 women employees were on duty; while A. Sanchez, operator of another factory, declared that only a "few" of his workers were absent. In addition, M. Guerroro of the National Pecan Shelling Company asserted that all his employees had reported for work at the regular hour.[16] These reports were effective because they hindered any bad publicity of the companies in the local press.

Newspaper Coverage and Related Literature

Public opinion, evidently molded by newspaper coverage, eventually became quite sympathetic to the harassed Mexican-American pecan shellers. This public sentiment was helped by the publication of *La Prensa,* which was founded in 1913 by a Mexican exile, Ignacio E. Lozana. This paper was considered to be "the voice" of *los ricos,* upper-class Mexican refugees who settled in the Southwest by the thousands during the Mexican Revolution. The paper offered detailed and sympathetic coverage of the pecan shellers strike as a movement of fellow Mexicans in San Antonio.

14 "Pecan Plant Workers Strike," *San Antonio Light,* January 31, 1938, 1.
15 "Siguen Firmes Los Nueceros," *La Prensa,* February 1, 1938, 1.
16 "Pecan Plant Workers Strike," *San Antonio Light,* January 31, 1938, 2.

In contrast to the journalistic approach of *La Prensa,* another paper devoted a lot of coverage to the pecan shellers strike. The *San Antonio Light* differed from *La Prensa* when it came to their journalistic approach. The *San Antonio Light* offered a much more unbiased, truthful coverage of the strike, and offered its readers a complete story that included information and events that did not help persuade public sentiment in regards to the strike.

In addition to the newspaper coverage at the time of the strike, another paper was produced with the purpose of persuasion in regards to the strike and the people closely associated with it. The *Daily Worker,* the weekly newspaper of the American Communist Party, offered a critique of San Antonio law enforcement, but shows itself surprisingly welcoming of C.I.O. support for the pecan shellers strike, as the original communist activists stepped aside in favor of Donald Henderson, president of the UCAPAWA. While delivering the facts regarding the major strike events and concerns, this newspaper used a very subtle approach in its support of the striking workers. The following excerpt is an example of their subtle approach of support when reporting the facts about the strike:

> Action was taken by officials of the United Cannery, Agriculture, Packing, and Allied Workers, CIO., which has been leading the strike of 8,000, after San Antonio police forcibly smashed all picket lines around the struck plant this morning.[17]

Together, these papers offer a detailed, unique look at the strike and the events that surround it. Their differences in approach, journalistic coverage, and point-of-view create a distinctive realm of information regarding the pecan shellers strike and the individuals that witnessed it.

Notably, the *San Antonio Light* described the efforts of not just the strikers as a whole, but the women organizers and leaders of that strike. The paper stated "Mrs. [Tenayuca] Brooks, who was not a pecan sheller but was the Workers' Alliance leader, wore a C.I.O. button in an effort to lend her moral support to help the workers obtain more pay and improved health standards."[18]

The *San Antonio Light*, however, shows an unbiased journalistic approach to its coverage of the strike, and the paper took significant strides to remain completely objective throughout its articles. This coverage showed that the uni-

17 "Pecan Workers Protest Civil Rights Curb," *The Daily Worker,* February 4, 1938, 3.
18 "Pecan Plant Workers Strike," *San Antonio Light,* January 31, 1938, 2.

fying effort of the women workers appears to have been overlooked by their leaders, which in turn took away from the earliest strikers' effectiveness.

From the beginning of the strike, the number of strikers was reported to be between 500 and 5,000 workers from all the city's plants. However, articles within the *San Antonio Light* as well as *La Prensa* offered clear evidence of the willingness of the police chief, Owen Kilday, to exercise his own brand of justice when it came to enforcing the law during the strike. As he explained to a reporter from the *San Antonio Light,* justifying his arrest of Emma Tenayuca, he "did not intend to let any Reds mix up in the strike."[19] Tenayuca was a member of the Communist Party, and Kilday used this fact in an attempt to dishearten the striking pecan workers. Despite the efforts of Kilday to suppress this strike, the local coverage from newspapers detailed the efforts and results of the first few days of the strike.

The Strike Leaders

The variations in the number of people willing to strike and the effectiveness of its leadership were definitely detrimental to the overall success of the strike in its earliest stages. While *La Prensa* was still quite optimistic about the strike, the *San Antonio Light* focused its attention and coverage to the left-wing background of Emma Tenayuca, her husband Homer Brooks, and the strike spokesman, James Sager. The local police chief had labeled the strike leaders as communists and on that basis, denied the strikers the right to assemble and pickets peacefully in front of the pecan shelling factories. The *San Antonio Light* reported on February 3 that leaders of the San Antonio pecan shellers strike offered to step down as leaders. In essence, the backgrounds of the leaders were challenged by their opposition, and this challenge helped lead to their resignations. The opposition, along with the cannery union, thought that the backgrounds of the leaders would cause dissention among the supporters of the strike. An interview conducted by the *San Antonio Light* stated, "Emma Tenayuca doesn't want the strike to end, but rather to prolong it. She wants a revolution. It's wrong leadership."[20]

The strike, despite its limited success, is important because of what it tells us about an almost invisible group, Mexican-American women workers. The vast majority of pecan shellers were women and they chose a fellow Mexican-American, Emma Tenayuca, as their leader.

19 "Pecan Plant Workers Strike," *San Antonio Light,* January 31, 1938, 1.

20 "Pecan Strike Heads Offer to Quit," *San Antonio Light,* February 3, 1938, 1, 4.

Tenayuca was not a pecan sheller, and although she was only twenty-one years old at the time of the strike, she was an experienced organizer, having played a leading role in the Workers' Alliance in earlier labor struggles.[21] She was also an active member of the Communist Party in Texas and the local police chief used her political affiliation to discredit the strike movement, as previously mentioned.[22] In direct response to this perceived ineffective leadership, Donald Henderson of Washington, D.C., president of the UCAPAWA, planned to arrive in San Antonio at the end of the week to take personal charge of the strike.[23]

Organizers from the CIO-based United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA), Donald Henderson and Luisa Moreno, took over leadership of the strike and steered it to an arbitrated settlement.[24] Their leadership, however, did not take place without a certain degree of opposition.

Even with Tenayuca replaced, some of the opponents of the workers were still hesitant to believe that the UCAPAWA did not still contain a certain number of ties to the Communist Party. By 1938 UCAPAWA had already acquired a reputation as a Communist Party (CP) union.[25] In fact, a special witness who gave testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee accused Donald Henderson of directing an underground espionage ring. In response to the allegations of Communist ties, Luisa Moreno, an international vice president of UCAPAWA, stated, "UCAPAWA was a *left* union, not a Communist union."[26] Throughout her long career of activism and leadership within the UCAPAWA, Moreno vigorously enforced government regulations and contract stipulations. She also encouraged workers to air any grievance immediately.[27] Moreno's role as a leader and her dedication to equality proved to be a vital attribute of the union, and women organizing women proved a key to the union's success.[28]

21 Zaragosa Vargas, "Tejana Radical: Emma Tenayuca and the San Antonio Labor Movement During the Great Depression," *Pacific Historical Review,* 66 (1997), 553-580.

22 "Pecan Plant Workers Strike," *San Antonio Light,* January 31, 1938, 1.

23 "Pecan Strike Heads Offer to Quit," *San Antonio Light,* February 3, 1938, 3.

24 Shapiro, "The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio, Texas," 235-239.

25 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 46.

26 Interview with Luisa Moreno, September 6, 1979, conducted by Vicki Ruiz; *People's World,* June 7, 1988.

27 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 77.

28 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 102.

In direct response to this perceived ineffective leadership, Donald Henderson of Washington, D.C., president of the UCAPAWA, planned to arrive in San Antonio at the end of the week to take personal charge of the strike.[29]

Before Henderson could arrive to take control of the strike, sporadic violence began to erupt in San Antonio. The police booked E.M. Zerr, owner of a factory, after he threw a woman worker out of the plant for "agitating in favor of the strikers." Mrs. Garza, the worker thrown from the plant, had been handing out strike pamphlets that were issued by Emma Tenayuca, who had been labeled as a communist by Chief Kilday. In response, Chief Kilday placed a ban on all picketing, which severely hindered the workers attempts to shine light on their situation in the workplace. Strike leaders were hopeful that the arrival of Donald Henderson, president of the UCAPAWA, would revive the strike.[30]

The role of unionization in the pecan industry is significant in that it demonstrates the responsiveness of Mexican-American workers to unionize, and it indicates that the real and suspected Communist leadership of the pecan workers has been a factor in the continued general public rejection of the labor movement in San Antonio.[31] The emergence of the UCAPAWA as the leaders of the strike proved effective for the women workers. Unfortunately, the leadership of a woman did not produce noticeable results. It is with this lack of noticeable results that focus shifts from the strikers themselves to the leaders of the strike. The leadership of Emma Tenayuca was ineffective not because she was a woman, but because she was affiliated with questionable organizations, such as the Communist Party. Tenayuca's role as a leader was representative of the struggles she had faced throughout her life.

The role that gender segregation played on her abilities to be a leader was noticeable throughout her life. She attended Brackenridge High School, and local Mexican-Americans remembered her as a brilliant schoolgirl, gifted in public speaking, who bitterly resented discrimination against her and her fellow students because of their Mexican heritage. This bitterness eventually led to her embracing communism. Here, the irony of her decisions is evident: Her decision to support communism early in her life was largely based on her resentment of being mistreated. As a leader of the pecan shellers strike, her leadership was ineffective due to her affiliations with the organization (com-

29 "Pecan Strike Heads Offer to Quit," *San Antonio Light,* February 3, 1938, 3.

30 "Pecan Strike Heads Offer to Quit," *San Antonio Light,* February 3, 1938, 4.

31 Robert Landolt, *The Mexican-American Workers of San Antonio, Texas* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 230.

munism) that, throughout her life, had supported her. Upon Henderson's arrival, the union quickly organized the leadership in order to focus the attention of the strike on the workplace and not the strikers themselves. This shift in leadership is an important concept to consider and is often misunderstood when analyzing the role that the leaders played in the pecan shellers strike. It was not the shift in leadership from women to men that produced results; it was the shift from a leader with communist affiliations to a leader without communist affiliations that produced results. Before Henderson's arrival, the police had justified their position in not allowing the strikers to assemble because they were affiliated with the Communist Party. After Henderson's arrival and the support of the UCAPAWA, the police maintained that the people assembling outside the plant were not *officially* strikers until the strikers represented a majority of the total workers at the factories.

From the beginning, the union, under Henderson's leadership, faced the opposition of the city authorities. On February 7 the police routed 300 pickets, the majority of them women, from the shelling plants. Over 1,000 pickets were arrested during the strike on the charges of "blocking the sidewalks," "disturbing the peace," and "congregating in unlawful assemblies." Tear gas was used on six or eight occasions during the first two weeks of the strike, according to the testimony of Chief of Police Owen Kilday at the hearings of the Texas Industrial Commission on February 14; fifty-two policeman and 125 firemen were used on "riot duty" in the strike. During this time, both men and women strikers were targets of tear gas and arrest, depending on their role at the factory as well as their child-care situation. While women were considered at the time to be the primary caregivers to children, men also bore some of the responsibility. Husbands often helped to take care of the children when the women worked. Couples tried to arrange their shifts so that one parent could be home at all times, or they relied on an older child to care for their siblings.[32] Both Mayor C.K. Quin and Kilday maintained that there was no strike, since they said that only a minority of workers had left the plants.

Henderson, the recognized leader of the union representing these Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American workers, was not welcomed into this struggle by law enforcement officials. Chief Kilday made the following statement: "He is an intruder down here that hasn't 600 or 700 followers in the pecan industry. You call it a strike; I call it a disturbance out of Washington, D.C."[33]

32 Zavella, *Women's Work and Chicano Families,* 92.

33 "Pecan Strike Heads Offer to Quit," *San Antonio Light,* February 3, 1938, 5.

In spite of opposition, however, about half of the workers in the industry were out on strike by the middle of February. More than 6,000 persons applied for membership in the union, out of approximately 12,000 pecan shellers, and about 3,000 of these paid dues during the strike period, according to George Lambert, representative of the UCAPAWA in San Antonio in 1938.

The Women in the Union

When women did not immediately assume leadership, organizational work experience and political development allowed them the opportunity to work their way up. Women were able to exercise leadership without having to risk attacks from the male rank and file, and respect and admiration were given to them for talented and exemplary work.[34] The women who were in the union were not merely silent partners; rather, they formed over one-half of UCAPAWA's total membership, and these women performed various services that proved vital to the success of the union. They helped to negotiate contracts and provided the essential rank-and-file leadership that helped maintain the organization and leadership of the union.[35] An essential characteristic of their leadership, it provided the base for the formation of other unions around the United States that followed the UCAPAWA model.

Consider the organization of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) that formed in the 1990s. Much like the UCAPAWA, this union at Harvard would control its own destiny. In order to ensure that it was organized effectively, the women members had burdened the responsibility and created this union solely for the purpose of establishing equality in the workplace. Both the UCAPAWA and the HUCTW were created so that the workers at each respected location could have an organization of people banding together to improve and reform the institution that employed them.[36] While HUCTW didn't fit the image of hard-shelled, out-of-the-factory labor organizers,[37] they did create and organize their union with a similar foundation of women members that the UCAPAWA had consisted of in the past.

34 Magdalena Mora and Adelaida R. Del Castillo, *Mexican Women in the United States: Struggles Past and Present* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 1980), 9.

35 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 87.

36 John Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 4.

37 Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige,* 7.

The initial success of the UCAPAWA in achieving equality for its members, especially the Mexican-American women workers, sparked a surge in membership that has oftentimes been overlooked by historians. Between 1937 and 1944 the "total female union membership" rose from 500,000 to over 3.5 million.[38] Women accounted for approximately one-half to three-fourths of the cigar and canning labor force. Accordingly, these operatives were well represented among UCAPAWA officers. They filled two-thirds of all shop stewardships in canneries under union contract.[39]

Community Support and Results of the Strike

Leading women in the community and the Texas Civil Liberties Union intervened in the conflict and publicized what they viewed as unconstitutional harassment of the striking women. This was the first time that these Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American women were "represented" in the public sector; they had never before had any one willing to step in from outside the factories in order to show the public the conditions and treatments imposed on these women workers. The governor eventually called for hearings to investigate the treatment of strikers and the resulting bad publicity led the leading owner, Julius Seligmann, to submit to binding arbitration to settle the strike. The arbitrators' ruling eventually offered a compromise between the two sets of rates, setting piece wages at 5 1/2 and 6 1/2 cents per pound beginning June 1.[40]

The Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American women workers celebrated their small victory, but it was short-lived. Soon after the arbitrators' ruling, pecan sheller owners closed their plants. This closure was a direct result of the Fair Labor Standards Act going into effect in late October. The owners refused to pay workers the minimum

Wage of 25 cents per hour that was set by the act. In addition to their refusal to pay these wages, the owners petitioned the government for an exemption to the act's provisions while they installed new shelling machines and trained their workers to operate the new equipment. Federal hearing officers eventually turned down this petition, and pecan shelling resumed in San Antonio. However, with the addition of the new machines, the Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American women's workforce was only about one-fourth of its original size.

38 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 87.

39 Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives,* 92.

40 Kenneth P. Walker, "The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio and Mechanization," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 69 (1965), 53-54.

Both leadership and communication throughout the pecan shellers strike proved important to the strike's success. Communication and information during the pecan shellers strike were both available through the existing literature of 1938. A strike is meaningless if there is no one there to support it, and quite obviously, an employer will not spend money and time to improve working conditions if that owner is not forced to through industrial regulations. However, through the literature of newspapers and journalists, the public was able to better understand the issues involved in the strike; through this understanding they became sympathetic and supportive of these Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American women workers.

The Mexican-American women held out, even though local authorities repeatedly violated their basic civil liberties, denying them the right to picket peacefully or to hold meetings. The Texas Civil Liberties Union published a pamphlet, "San Antonio: The Cradle of Texas Liberty and Its Coffin?", exposing these practices. Eventually, the owners and the city mayor, fearing further negative publicity for themselves and San Antonio, accepted the governor's proposal of arbitration. Although the women workers won the battle and secured a partial restoration of their wage cuts, mechanization eventually cost most of them their jobs.

Their actions, however, did have an impact on San Antonio. Middle-class women and local Catholic clergy came to their support and suddenly Mexican-American working women were no longer invisible in the Anglo community. Moreover, the local administration was so discredited by its treatment of the strikers that an independent politician, Maury Maverick, won the next mayoral election, and a reform administration replaced the political machine of Mayor Quin.[41] Maverick promoted efforts to clear slums and build public housing in the city and with the support of an activist Catholic priest, Carmelo Tranchese, he succeeded in bringing federal housing funds to San Antonio. There was new hope on the Mexican "West Side" of the city and the Mexican-American Pecan Shellers Strike had played a major role in breaking the grip of the Depression and of "business as usual" in San Antonio.

41 Richard B. Henderson, *Maury Maverick: A Political Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), 188-193.

Edward Coles and the Struggle to Uphold Freedom in Illinois

SHANNON RING

Edward Coles played a leading role in the question of slavery in America in the generation following the American Revolution. As the United States expanded westward, questions emerged about whether new states admitted to the Union would allow slavery. Coles is largely known because he freed his own slaves in Illinois in 1819, was elected governor of the state in 1822, and became a leading abolitionist. Shortly after Coles was elected governor, the Illinois legislature decided to hold a referendum in conjunction with the 1824 elections to vote for a constitutional convention that would amend the Illinois Constitution to legalize slavery. In response, Coles began his well-known and vigorous campaign against the holding of the convention.

Coles' largest influence was in Illinois between 1823 and 1824 because his antislavery campaign against the convention kept Illinois free of slavery. As former Illinois governor Frank O. Lowden writes, "It is almost certain that if it had not been for his persistence and courage, slavery would have been written into the Illinois Constitution."[1] Coles' campaign is significant for the history of the United States because it was part of the political struggles before the Civil War over which states should be slave states or free states.

Coles' education in Virginia led him to believe slavery was wrong. In turn, his strong antislavery feelings encouraged him to free his own slaves and emigrate from Virginia. Finally, his convictions led him to fight the call for a convention in Illinois and kept Illinois' Constitution free of a slavery amendment. Coles not only ensured that Illinois remained a free state, but also helped to make a future for freedom in the United States possible.

Although the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 outlawed slavery in the territory of which Illinois was a part, slavery already existed there and continued to do so after the ordinance became law. The French had introduced slavery into the Illinois Territory in 1673 when they controlled the area. After the English withdrew, and George Rogers Clark took control, the slavery issue remained unchanged because the area came under Virginia's control.[2] Virginia granted

1 Frank O. Lowden, "Governor Edward Coles," in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* Clarence Walworth Alvord, ed. (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 1:1.

2 "Pro-Slavery Forces Hoped to Win Illinois by Amending its 1818 Constitution," *Illinois Intelligencer,* March 4, 1968, 17.

the Illinois area a deed of cession on March 1, 1784, when the state deeded all its western land to the jurisdiction of the United States. Illinois slaveholders argued, after the passing of the Northwest Ordinance, that they could continue to keep slavery in Illinois because they believed they were to follow Virginia's laws and liberties.[3] The initial slaveholders in Illinois were typically southerners who moved into the region from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina who had a strong interest in the issue. The primary part of the Northwest Ordinance relating to slavery in Illinois was Article VI: "After the year 1800 of the Christian era there shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in any of the said states."[4] The ordinance was initially misunderstood and not taken seriously by Illinois slaveholders. As Coles stated, the ordinance intended "to abolish the then existing state of slavery, as well as prohibit its ever being tolerated in the country northwest of the Ohio River."[5] Nevertheless, slaveholders in Illinois argued that they were to abide by Virginia's laws and thus could own slaves because slavery was legal in Virginia.[6] The ordinance contained strong ideals that Coles believed in and used during his later campaign against the convention in Illinois. In fact, the ordinance was initially unclear and promised more than it delivered, but Coles nevertheless believed that it put Illinois on the path toward abolishing slavery.[7]

Much to Illinois slaveholders' discontent, Illinois was admitted to the Union in 1818 as a free state with the Illinois Constitution declaring that slavery should not "hereafter be introduced."[8] Although Illinois was admitted into the Union as a free state, slavery still existed in Illinois, making it difficult for abolitionists like Coles. Illinois would have initially petitioned to be a slave state, but it took longer for slave states to be admitted into the Union. Illinois was the only free state in the Union that allowed some form of slavery to exist. Slaveholders in Illinois kept a form of slavery through indentured servitudes of

3 Edward Coles to Pennsylvania Historical Society, "History of the Ordinance," Philadelphia, 9 June 1856, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord, (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 376-377.

4 Alvord, ed. *Biographical Series,* 378-379.

5 Alvord, ed. *Biographical Series,* 385-386.

6 Elihu B. Washburne, *Sketch of Edward Coles, Second Governor of Illinois and the Slavery Struggle of 1823-24* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Comp., 1882), 69-70.

7 Paul Finkelman, "The Northwest Ordinance: A Constitution for an Empire of Liberty," in *Pathways to the Old Northwest,* ed. Lloyd Hunter (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1988), 2.

8 Paul Finkelman, "Slavery, the 'More Perfect Union,' and the Prairie State," *Illinois Historical Journal* 80 (Winter 1987), 252.

extreme length, such as ninety-nine years.[9] And many proslavery supporters pushed for Illinois to become a slave state even after it was admitted to the Union. Proslavery supporters in Illinois wanted Illinois to write a slavery amendment into its constitution, an event that would have changed Illinois' history and future in the Civil War. However, a leading abolitionist, new to Illinois, was significant by stopping Illinois from becoming a slave state and preserving the future of freedom in the Union.[10]

Although Edward Coles was born into a Virginian aristocratic family belonging to the planter elite with strong ties to slavery, his education caused him to oppose slavery. Coles was of the post-Revolutionary generation, born December 15, 1786, to Colonel John Coles and Rebecca Tucker Coles. He was the eighth of twelve children in his family. The Coles family was one of the first families to move to Albemarle County, Virginia. John Coles accumulated a large amount of land, wealth, and slaves in his lifetime; the Coles plantation, named "Enniscorthy," was one of the largest in Virginia. Through his family and education in Virginia, Coles was in contact with revolutionary thinkers and notables, such as Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe. It was to men such as these that Coles looked for answers when he became uneasy about slavery.

Coles' college education drastically influenced his strong beliefs against slavery and led him to decide slavery was wrong. He started at Hampden-Sydney College and later attended the College of William and Mary from 1805 to 1807. It was at the College of William and Mary that Coles read books that caused him to question slavery ideals, such as Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia.* Coles had many questions concerning slavery for his teacher and the head of the college, Bishop James Madison, such as "How can you hold a slave? How can man be made property of man?"[12] Coles saw a large inconsistency between holding slaves in a nation that was dedicated to the equality of man. Madison responded to Coles telling him slavery was wrong in principle, but was tolerated because it was too difficult to abolish. Coles responded to Madison that it would be "much less difficult to free the slaves than it had been to get rid of the

9 Finkelman, "Slavery," 249.

10 David Brion Davis, "The Significance of Excluding Slavery from the Old Northwest in 1787," *Indiana Magazine of History* 84 (March 1988): 86-87.

11 *American National Biography,* vol. 5, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), s.v. "Coles, Edward."

12 Ralph Ketcham, "The Dictates of Conscience: Edward Coles and Slavery," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 36 (1960): 47.

king of our forefathers."[13] In this context, Coles argued there was an inconsistency between the revolutionary fathers fighting for independence and their holding of slaves.[14]

Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* strongly influenced Coles during his college years to develop antislavery beliefs. Jefferson claimed, "I look, to the rising generations…for these great reformations."[15] Jefferson argued slavery was morally wrong: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever."[16] Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* contained antislavery ideals of the Enlightenment that Coles later inherited as his own beliefs. However, unlike Coles, Jefferson did not express these antislavery ideals publicly to the nation. Thus, when Coles later began to practice these teachings and commit himself to the abolition of slavery, Jefferson's help was not available.[17]

Coles admired Jefferson and wrote him letters asking for assistance in fighting slavery. On July 31, 1814, Coles wrote to Jefferson in his retirement asking him to "put into complete practice those hallowed principles contained in that renowned Declaration…on which we founded our right to resist oppression and establish our freedom and independence."[18] Coles saw an ideological difference in holding slaves and the Declaration of Independence. Coles explained his need for Jefferson's support in fighting slavery because he felt it would be easier for "the revered fathers of all our political and social blessings to begin work of gradual emancipation than it would be for any succeeding statesmen."[19] Coles believed Jefferson's support would truly be influential in fighting slavery and the expansion of slavery in America.

Jefferson's responses were not as encouraging towards the abolition of slavery as Coles had hoped. In a letter on August 25, 1814, Jefferson told Coles he was going to remain silent and reasoned, "this enterprise is for the young."[20]

13 Elizabeth Coles Langhorne, "Edward Coles, Thomas Jefferson, and the Rights of Man," *Virginia Cavalcade* 23, no. 1 (1973): 31.

14 Langhorne, "Edward Coles," 31.

15 David Brion Davis, *Was Thomas Jefferson an Authentic Enemy of Slavery?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 12.

16 Langhorne, "Edward Coles," 31.

17 Davis, *Authentic Enemy,* 15.

18 Edward Coles to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, 31 July 1814, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 23.

19 Alvord, ed. *Biographical Series,* 24.

20 Thomas Jefferson to Edward Coles, Monticello, 25 August 1814, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 24.

Jefferson continued with the excuse that his views on slavery were "in possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger root."[21] Jefferson was so tied to his country and the planter elite class that he did not feel equipped to fight slavery. He went as far as discouraging Coles from freeing his slaves. Despite Jefferson's advice to Coles to remain in Virginia and hold slaves, Coles decided he could never hold slaves. After these exchanges with Jefferson, Coles continued his plans to free his inherited slaves and fight slavery without Jefferson's help.[22]

Coles was certain he would not hold slaves and vowed in 1808—after inheriting twenty-two slaves—to set them free, thereby reinforcing his beliefs against slavery and giving evidence for his later argument when fighting slavery in Illinois. However, Coles did not want to ruin his family's name in Virginia so he decided to move west and free his slaves there.[23] Unlike Jefferson, Coles would not run a plantation with slaves because he could not accept putting his economic well being above the rights of his slaves.[24] Coles later wrote to his friend and founder of Edwards County, Illinois, Richard Flowers, of his history with slavery in Virginia:

> I was born in the very bosom of negro slavery…and having found it impossible to reconcile it either with my political or religious creed, I abandoned my native state, my aged parents and relations, to seek in this State a community whose principles and practice I presumed were in unison with my own.[25]

Coles eventually decided to move west to what would eventually be Illinois to release his slaves because he thought with the Northwest Ordinance his slaves could be happy and free. Coles used moving to Illinois to free his slaves later in his fight against the convention to help justify his sincerity toward the abolitionist cause.

Before Coles made the final arrangements to move to Illinois, he accepted

21 Thomas Jefferson to Edward Coles, Monticello, 24 August 1814, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 25.

22 David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 181.

23 John Thomas Cassidy, "The Issue of Freedom in Illinois," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 57, no. 3 (Autumn 1964): 284-285.

24 Langhorne, "Edward Coles," 31.

25 Governor Edward Coles to Richard Flowers, Philadelphia, 1855, *Journal of Negro History* 3, no. 2 (1918): 166.

an appointment to become President Madison's secretary because he felt as secretary he would have more time and resources to study the land in the northwest to plan the freeing of his slaves. He also accepted the invitation to become presidential secretary because he hoped through working with the political elites of the country he would be able to express his ideas and possibly have an influence on abolishing slavery.[26] Additionally, Coles traveled and studied slavery in places outside of the United States. In 1815 President Madison sent Coles to Russia on a diplomatic mission. Here Coles extended his antislavery argument comparing Russian serfs to American slaves, concluding that the "blot of slavery"[27] made America much less charming than other countries in the world.

After Coles resigned as presidential secretary he finally freed his slaves. Coles had purchased 6,000 acres of land in Illinois near Edwardsville in 1815. He also attended the constitutional convention for Illinois in 1818 to assure himself that Illinois was the right place to free his slaves.[28] In spring of 1819 Coles and twenty of his slaves set out for Illinois by flatboat down the Ohio River. Two of his slaves were too old to travel; therefore, Coles left them well-cared for in Virginia. On the Ohio River Coles began a speech to his slaves pronouncing their unexpected freedom. He stopped the flatboat with the Kentucky shore on one side and Indiana shore on the other.[29] He then addressed his slaves saying, "I have taken you from Virginia to make you free. You are no longer slaves, my people. You are free, as free as I am. You are at liberty to proceed with me or go ashore."[30] The slaves had the option of accompanying him to Illinois to be freed or staying in Kentucky to remain slaves.

Not only was Coles' freeing of his slaves a brave, generous, and revolutionary act, but it also secured his personal values and connections in keeping Illinois free of slavery. Coles' freeing of his slaves was meaningful evidence for justification during his fight to stop the call for a convention in Illinois. After the slaves traveled to Illinois and reached Edwardsville, Coles informed them he would give each head of a family 160 acres of land, employing the remainder

26 Washburne, *Sketch of Edward Coles,* 19.

27 Ketcham, "The Dictates of Conscience," 57.

28 *American National Biography,* s.v. "Coles, Edward."

29 Alvord, ed. *Biographical Series,* 331.

30 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, "The Virginian Who Made Illinois a Free State," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 45, no. 1 (1952): 6.

so that all of his freed slaves could make an income.[31] Upon reaching Edwardsville, Coles filled out the legal paperwork and land deeds for the appropriate freed slaves. On July 4, 1819, Coles issued each freed slave a certificate of freedom that read:

> Not believing that man can have of right a property in his fellow man, but on the contrary, that all mankind were endowed by nature with equal rights, I do therefore, by these presents restore to_____ that inalienable liberty of which he has been deprived.[32]

Coles made his abolitionism official and his slaves began their new lives of liberty and freedom.

Despite the revolutionary and brave actions Coles undertook in freeing his slaves, he faced confusion and criticism. One newspaper critic from the Illinois Intelligencer claimed Coles only emancipated six to eight worthless slaves and the remaining were being held in other neighboring slave states. Coles was quick to justify the accusation to the newspaper and other comrades of his by showing that he did in fact free twenty slaves in Illinois along with two women he left behind in Virginia, whom he still supported. In his reply, Coles asserted that his mulatto slave driver, Robert Crawford, became a successful Baptist ordained preacher with a large family and estate in Fayette County. Another former slave of Coles, Thomas Cobb, accidentally fell in a well and died, but the remainder of the slaves Coles freed were employed in domestic work.[33] Coles concluded his letter to the Illinois Intelligencer proudly claiming, "I have taken upon myself the support of all those left me by my father."[34]

Aside from Coles' education and freeing of his slaves, his early political career in Illinois also contributed to his influence in keeping Illinois a free state because he stopped the call for the convention and set an example of freedom for future states in the Union. President Monroe initially appointed Coles the registrar of the Edwardsville land office. Here he became acquainted with common people around him and heard of the possibility of the Illinois government

31 W.T. Norton, *Life of Edward Coles of Virginia, Second Governor of Illinois* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Comp., 1911), 13-14.

32 Richardson, "The Virginian," 12.

33 Edward Coles to John Mason Peck, Philadelphia, 30 April 1855, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 353.

34 Edward Coles to the *Illinois Intelligencer,* Edwardsville, IL, 4 June 1822, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 261-263.

wanting to eventually legalize slavery. Through the encouragement of the people around him and the fear of Illinois legalizing slavery, Coles decided to run for governor of Illinois in the 1822 election. He hoped that as governor he would have a strong influence on issues in Illinois, particularly slavery.[35]

The 1822 election for governor of Illinois was largely centered on the issue of slavery, which made the results especially significant for the state. The results of the election would determine the future of the state with the slavery issue because the candidates were strictly proslavery or antislavery. There were four candidates in the election: Joseph B. Phillips, Thomas C. Browne, Edward Coles, and James B. Moore. The favored candidate was Illinois State Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph B. Phillips. Phillips largely favored slavery and wanted a future with Illinois and slavery. He received strong support in northern Illinois. When Coles began gaining antislavery support in the southern area of the state, a proslavery candidate and associate justice of the Supreme Court from southern Illinois, Thomas C. Browne, came into the race to attempt to counter Coles. Later still, another candidate, Major General James B. Moore, entered the race for governor. Moore was weakly antislavery, but unlike Coles was not totally opposed to slavery and thus would have easily been influenced to vote for slavery to be amended into the constitution. The people voted largely based on the issue of slavery and there were more proslavery supporters. Therefore, on August 5, 1822, Coles won the race for governor with only one-third of the vote. He was the second governor of Illinois.[36]

Although Coles won, Illinois at this time was of a proslavery majority. Thus, if Coles had not won the election, people would have pushed to rewrite slavery into their constitution. Coles primarily won the election because the proslavery candidates split the proslavery support taking votes from one another, causing Coles to win by only fifty votes. The proslavery candidates accumulated 60 percent of the ballots, but were divided between Phillips and Browne. Out of 8,606 votes cast in Illinois in 1822, Coles received 2,854 votes and Phillips received 2,687.[37] Coles accumulated the majority of his support in southern counties and their support would be needed again later in his fight against the convention.

35 *American National Biography,* s.v. "Coles, Edward."

36 John Thomas Cassidy, "The Issue of Freedom in Illinois," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 57, no. 3 (1964): 286.

37 Theodore Calvin Pease, *Illinois Election Returns 1818-1848* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Society, 1918), 15.

The antislavery message of Coles' inaugural address led the Illinois legislature to begin fighting for a slavery amendment to the Illinois Constitution. In Coles' inaugural speech on December 5, 1822, he told the General Assembly his beliefs that "justice and humanity required of us a general revisal of the laws relative to negroes, in order the better to adapt them to the character of our institutions and the situation of the country."[38] Coles asked the Illinois legislature to consider changing the law to better benefit African Americans and asked the French in Illinois to emancipate their slaves. This inaugural address was the first speech of many given by Coles pleading with the legislature to permanently abolish slavery in Illinois. The legislature was a majority proslavery, thus the first speech given to them by Coles asking for better laws for African Americans especially outraged them.

Shortly after Coles' inaugural address the Illinois legislature began plotting for a referendum to vote for a convention to include a slavery amendment in the Illinois Constitution because they feared the affect of Coles' antislavery ideas on Illinois' future with slavery. Coles' advice to get rid of any remnants of slavery in Illinois and better the laws against kidnapping free blacks "stirred up a storm"[39] with the legislature and led to their attempt at legalizing slavery. The legislature vowed to put a convention referendum on the ballot for the August 1824 election.

Once it was official that a referendum would be held to decide if Illinois would hold a constitutional convention to add a slavery amendment to its constitution, Coles began his dedicated struggle to keep slavery out of Illinois for good. Although Coles knew he represented a minority of voters in the state, he did not give up hope.[40] He described his efforts toward stopping a convention as "doing all I could, personally and officially, to enlighten the people of Illinois, and prevent their making it a slave state."[41] To start the campaign against the convention, Coles formed the St. Clair society, a local organization in Edwardsville, Illinois, that strove to prevent slavery in Illinois by educating the people of the harm of slavery through pamphlets and speeches. Coles also devoted his entire year's salary of $4,000 to buy the *Illinois Intelligencer* newspaper for the purpose of educating people to oppose the convention.[42]

38 Washburne, *Sketch of Edward Coles,* 65.

39 Robert Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Comp., 1972), 134.

40 Norton, *Life of Edward Coles,* 20.

41 Alvord, ed. *Biographical Series,* 393.

42 *American National Biography,* s.v. "Coles, Edward."

The campaign led by Coles set out to educate people in Illinois about the ills of slavery, to convince them to vote down the convention, and to keep slavery out of Illinois so to foster a future against slavery in the Union. Coles gave many speeches describing slavery as a sin contrary to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. In one speech, Coles addressed the people in Illinois warning that if the convention succeeded, "we should write the epitaph of free government."[43] Coles received aid from his contacts in Pennsylvania, such as his good friend Nicholas Biddle and Quaker Robert Vaux. Vaux sent Coles antislavery pamphlets that Coles distributed in Illinois describing the terrible moral and political effects of slavery.[44] In a letter to Nicholas Biddle, Coles credited Vaux and his pamphlets with "preventing our soil from being polluted with the foul and disgraceful stain of slavery."[45] Coles was grateful to Vaux and held him responsible for helping him stop the spread of slavery into Illinois.

The anti-conventionists, led by Coles, developed other strategic arguments aside from speeches and pamphlets to convince the people of Illinois to vote the convention down. Coles and anti-conventionists in Illinois also attempted to appeal to non-slaveholding poor whites through political and economic arguments against slavery. Although Coles' preoccupations against slavery were more from a moral standpoint, Coles believed the people of Illinois needed something aside from the moral argument so he battled slavery from a different angle. The anti-conventionists argued the North could be wealthy through industry and did not need slavery for their economy. They tried to convince the people of Illinois that a white man in his own business was better than a black man in another's business. Coles and the anti-conventionists predicted that with slavery a social hierarchy would emerge and warned the people of Illinois how harmful this would be to their society and the future of the Union.[46]

After much campaigning, Coles and the anti-conventionists succeeded in getting Illinois voters to vote down the convention, thus rejecting the idea of amending the Illinois Constitution to include slavery and keeping Illinois a free state in the Union. Although Coles and the anti-conventionists prevailed to put

43 Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State,* 136.

44 Pease, *The Frontier State,* 83-87.

45 Edward Coles on the Struggle of Freedom and Slavery in Illinois, September 18, 1823, *Journal of Negro History* 3, no. 2 (1918): 158.

46 Suzanne Cooper Guasco, "'The Deadly Influence of Negro Capitalists': Southern Yeomen and Resistance to the Expansion of Slavery in Illinois," *Civil War History,* xlvii, no. 1 (2001).

down the idea of the convention, the conventionists had been persistent in their battle for the convention. In February 1823, many conventionists took to the streets of Vandalia, Illinois, shouting "slavery or death."[47] On August 2, 1824, 6,822 men in Illinois voted against the convention and 4,950 voted for the convention.[48] Illinois was clearly divided on the slavery issue and came perilously close to being made a slave state.

The voting down of the referendum marked a turning point in Illinois' history and the future of the Union and Coles was largely responsible. Had it not been for Coles' efforts, the history of Illinois may have turned out differently. If the referendum passed the Illinois legislature would have held a convention to amend the Illinois Constitution to include slavery. Coles remarked on the harm of Illinois becoming a slave state, "but it will be of incalculable injury to the interest of the state, of the Union, and of the extension and advancement of freedom and the amelioration of the human race."[49] As Coles believed, a slavery amendment in Illinois would have offset the balance of the Union's free and slave states and changed the future of freedom in the United States.

When the people of Illinois voted down the convention, they—in theory—were voting for the end of the slavery question, thereby altering Illinois' future in the Union. After the referendum vote in August 1824, many proslavery immigrants stopped migrating into Illinois. From 1820 to 1830 Illinois went from housing 917 slaves to 747 slaves, and in 1840 housed only 331 slaves.[50] Although Coles' efforts with the referendum did not automatically stop the remnants of slavery and indentured servitudes, Coles succeeded in helping assure that slavery was never legalized in the state and a gradual end to slavery in Illinois was underway. One of Coles' close workers for the St. Clair society described Coles as "an opponent of slavery, and especially of every attempt to extend it into free territory."[51] Coles not only led the start to abolishing slavery in Illinois permanently, he also caused Illinois to serve as an example of freedom for states later entering the Union at this time before the Civil War.

When Coles looked back on his efforts in Illinois, he too credited himself

47 Guasco, "Deadly Influence."

48 Norton, *Life of Edward Coles,* 25.

49 "Edward Coles on Struggle," 167.

50 Arthur Clinton Bogges, *The Settlement in Illinois, 1778-1830* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1908), 5: 179.

51 John Mason Peck to Waren, Rock Spring, IL, 26 March 1855, in *Biographical Series: Governor Edward Coles,* ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1920), 329.

in stopping the legalization of slavery in Illinois and the expansion of slavery in the Union. It did not matter to Coles that at the time in 1824 he was looked down upon by many people in Illinois for his efforts against slavery. Reflecting in 1855 on his antislavery campaign in Illinois, Coles said he was happy because "the abuse I endured, the labor I performed, and the anxiety I felt, were not without their reward…that I was chiefly instrumental in preventing a call of a convention, and making Illinois a slave holding State."[52] Many people of the United States agreed with him and saw the overall significance of his efforts toward the future of the country.

If the referendum for the convention in Illinois had succeeded the nation's history with freedom would have changed. Events in the United States after the 1824 Illinois referendum leading to the Civil War, such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, would have resulted differently had Illinois been a slave state. If Illinois were made a slave state, the Civil War would have developed "on different lines and perhaps ended with a different result. Lincoln would not have been supported for the presidency by a slave state."[53] Coles bravely led a battle against slavery in Illinois that resulted in a changed future not only for Illinois, but also for the future of the United States. Through a meaningful college education, Coles formed moral beliefs against slavery, influencing his decision to free his slaves and fight for abolition in Illinois. This, in turn, led him to battle a referendum in Illinois, thus allowing Illinois to remain a free state and discouraging the expansion of slavery in the Union.

52 Richardson, "The Virginian," 22.

53 Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State,* 134.

Affirmative Action: A Growing Trend or a Diminishing Cause?

WHITNEY WILDA

Throughout history, preferential treatment has been bestowed upon some and withheld from others. The United States is no exception to this phenomenon. Prior to the founding of America, various groups faced unequal treatment, from African Americans, Native Americans, and women, to immigrants of all nationalities, religions, and ethnicities. Official laws giving all people equal rights in America did not occur until the Civil Rights Act of 1964; even then discrimination and inequalities persisted, giving rise to demands that more should be done to help minorities. Thus, the Civil Rights Act brought new changes to the United States and altered its history. The emergence of what Thomas Sowell calls the "civil rights vision" after the Civil Rights Act and the ensuing policy of affirmative action have been hotly contested for the past four decades.[1] Although affirmative action is a complex and controversial subject that calls into question the motives behind certain positions taken on it, this paper will attempt the more narrowly focused task of examining whether or not support is increasing or declining.

Affirmative action as practiced in the United States employs "programs to overcome the effects of past societal discrimination by allocating jobs and resources to members of specific groups, such as minorities and women."[2] Businesses, governmental contractors, and colleges, to name a few, were required to understand the phraseology of affirmative action as well as changes in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance in 1971 as an expectation that equal numerical representation for all groups was necessary to meet federal regulations.[3] However, this was different from the original intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to Sowell, "the original concept of equal individual opportunity evolved into the concept of equal group results."[4] Due to the shift in thinking during the 1960s and the early 1970s, the debate

1 Thomas Sowell, *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984), 13.

2 *Encyclopedia,* s.v. "Affirmative Action," http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/a1/affirmat.asp (accessed April 2004).

3 Sowell, *Civil Rights,* 41.

4 Sowell, *Civil Rights,* 37.

now revolves around affirmative action policies and if they are, indeed, essential or unnecessary in today's American society.

Though some believe that affirmative action is necessary in today's American society, some statistical results from the past decade show that most believe otherwise. In 1995, ABC News/*Washington Post* conducted a national poll of 1,524 randomly selected Americans. Seventy-five percent opposed "programs that give preference to minorities to make up for past discrimination, and a virtually identical proportion felt the same way about programs for women."[5] Thus, from this particular poll, a vast majority of Americans surveyed believed that affirmative action policies were no longer necessary. In fact, "more than two out of three said those programs should be changed—or eliminated."[6] African Americans were split almost evenly, with fifty percent opposing policies that give preferences to individuals that are minorities.[7] This is an interesting point because affirmative action policies were meant to help these individuals that had been discriminated against by law and in everyday life in the past. By the time of this poll, half of the people from this racial group that affirmative action was intended to help did not even want the added assistance.

However, this is only one figure from one source. In order to get a better perspective on whether or not support has been mounting or diminishing for affirmative action, a more systematic analysis needs to be performed.

For over seventy years, Gallup Polls have been utilized for a number of reasons. From asking citizens about presidential actions and elections to discovering which actor should win an Academy Award in a particular year, these have been some of the most trusted polls of Americans. One of the first polls regarding affirmative action was conducted in 1979.[8] Gallup asked full-time college students on sixty campuses the following question:

> Some people say that to make up for past discrimination, women and members of minority groups should be given preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college. Others say that ability, as determined by test scores, should

5 Richard Morin and Sharon Warden, "Americans Vent Anger at Affirmative Action," *Washington Post,* March 24, 1995, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/affirm/stories/aa032495.htm (accessed April 2004).

6 Morin, "Americans Vent."

7 Morin, "Americans Vent."

8 George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1979), 105-106.

> be the main consideration. Which point of view comes closest to how you feel on this matter?[9]

These college students were overwhelmingly against the practice of affirmative action. In fact, 80% of the participants believed that test scores should be utilized, while only 14% thought preferential treatment should be employed, and 6% had no opinion on the matter.[10] When broken down into categories based on race and sex, the results still favored using test scores instead of affirmative action. For example, though women would be potential recipients of preferential treatment, many of them did not want it. Seventy-eight percent of those women polled felt that test scores should be utilized and only 17% felt that preferential treatment should be employed.[11] Another group, non-whites, were against these policies and other potential recipients of them; however, only 49% of this specific group polled believed that test scores should be utilized against the 38% who thought that preferential treatment should take precedence.[12] Thus, only a few years after affirmative action policies became a regular occurrence in the workplace and on college campuses, a majority of the people that the policies were supposed to benefit did not want the extra assistance. Instead, these people wanted to be judged on their academic merit, and in particular, their test scores.

In 1987 the Gallup Poll organization conducted another survey of American citizens. This time, Gallup surveyed the American population as a whole (as opposed to college students), asking the following question:

> The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that employers may sometimes favor women and minorities over better qualified men and whites in hiring and promoting, to achieve better balance in their work forces. Do you approve or disapprove of this decision?[13]

Because a representative sample of all American citizens was polled rather than only college students, the results did vary by a fair amount in this 1987 survey. The overall results showed that 63% of the people that participated disapproved of the Supreme Court decision, 29% approved of it, while 8% of

9 Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 105.
10 Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 105.
11 Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 105.
12 Gallup, *The Gallup Poll,* 105.
13 George Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1987), 141.

the people had no opinion.[14] When divided into subcategories, there was a substantial difference in women's opinions on this particular issue. In this case, 59% of the women polled disapproved of this decision, 32% of the women approved of it, while 9% had no opinion.[15] Hence, when all American women were taken into account, and not just full-time college students, more women felt that preferences in the workforce, as based on the Supreme Court ruling, were acceptable. In terms of minority opinions, in this poll non-whites were divided into the two major categories: African American and Hispanic. Overall, a majority of African Americans surveyed agreed with the Supreme Court decision. Fifty-six percent of the African American individuals polled approved of the decision, 34% disapproved of the decision, and 10% of these people had no opinion.[16] This is a significant difference compared to the 1979 poll. However, these differences could be based on the fact that the two questions, although similar, were not exact, as well as the fact that a sample of all Americans was polled instead of full-time college students. In addition, African Americans were not separated from Hispanics and other minority groups in the 1979 poll as they were in the 1987 poll.

It is also important to note the way that Hispanic people felt about this Supreme Court decision so that a second perspective from a minority group is taken into consideration. The results demonstrated that 47% of the Hispanics polled disapproved of the decision, 46% approved, and 7% had no opinion on the subject.[17] These statistics show that the Hispanics polled were divided in half as to whether or not they agreed with the decision to have preferential policies bestowed upon certain groups. Due to this and the separation of this ethnic category in 1987 and not in 1979, it is difficult to determine whether support of affirmative action policies were diminishing or increasing during these years. Another poll should be analyzed to see clearer results.

During 1994 the Gallup Poll organization, in conjunction with CNN and *USA Today,* conducted a survey of the United States population that asked, "Do you favor or oppose strengthening affirmative action laws for women, blacks, and other minorities?"[18] The responses to this poll definitely showed increasing support for preferential treatment policies. In general, 49% of the

14 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1987), 141.
15 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1987), 141.
16 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1987), 141.
17 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1987), 141.
18 George Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1994), 191, 232.

American people surveyed favored strengthening these policies, 43% opposed this action, and 8% of the people had no opinion.[19] Out of the three polls looked at thus far, this is the only one that demonstrates that a majority (albeit a slim one) wanted tougher affirmative action policies put into place. In fact, it is the first poll, out of the three presented, to show that a majority of people agreed with affirmative action policies to one extent or the other. However, is this a sign of an overall trend toward Americans wanting the imposition of affirmative action policies in the workforce and on college campuses for good? The only solution to this problem is to look at more recent polls of American citizens dealing with the same issue.

In yet one more poll conducted by Gallup in June 2003, before the ruling of the *Gratz v. Bollinger* case, the American people surveyed felt about the same as was demonstrated in 1994. In this particular poll, "49% of adults said they favor[ed] affirmative action and 43% did not, with blacks and Hispanics far more likely to favor the practice than whites."[20] Indeed, the percentages were the exact same in 1994 and in 2003 and were, by a simple majority, in favor of these policies. Once again, it must be stated that these questions were not worded in the exact same way. On the other hand, when looking at polls from other companies, similar results as those stated have appeared in recent years.

For example, in a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in July of 2002, the survey asked participants, "In order to overcome past discrimination, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs…designed to help blacks, women, and other minorities get better jobs and education?"[21] The results concluded that 63% of the people surveyed were in favor of this policy, 29% were opposed, and 8% did not care.[22] Also, for this particular question, 66% of women and only 48% of men favored this policy.[23] Furthermore, the survey asked another similar question regarding affirmative action policies: "In order to overcome past discrimination, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs…which give special preferences to qualified blacks, women, and

19 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), 232.

20 Mary Beth Marklein, "Despite Ruling, Affirmative Action Case is Far from Closed," *USA Today,* June 24, 2003, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-06-24-education-usat_x.htm (accessed April 22, 2004).

21 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Summary of Findings: Conflicted Views of Affirmative Action," May 14, 2003, http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=709 (accessed April 21, 2004).

22 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."

23 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."

other minorities in hiring and education?"[24] These results showed that 57% of the participants favored this practice, 35% were opposed to it, and 8% did not care.[25] The responses to this question were also broken down based on sex. In these results, 60% of women favored the policy while only 48% of men did.[26]

From this same study, participants demonstrated that "affirmative action programs in college admissions are a good thing."[27] Fifty-four percent of white respondents, as compared to 87% percent of African American respondents and 77% of Hispanic respondents, favored using affirmative action in college admissions.[28]

What do all of these results mean? To begin, there are some distinct differences between the polls of some companies as compared to those of others. In fact, some statistical and logical reasoning may exist behind those differences. First of all, huge differences exist between the ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll of 1995 and the CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup Poll of 1994. Some statistical reasons behind the differences include the wording of the question, the time of day in which the question was asked, how the specific company found their data, and to whom the question was asked.

The wording of a question is one of the most—if not the most—influential factors to consider when analyzing the results of these surveys. If a question is worded in such a way that a person cannot understand it (due to a lack of English skills, not knowing a word in the question, etc.), then a respondent will not be able to successfully answer such a question. When reviewed a second time, however, the respective questions did not employ incomprehensible language or the use of double negatives that may confuse a respondent. Therefore, another analysis must be performed.

The time of day in which the questions are asked is also a very important factor in determining the legitimacy of the results. If a poll is conducted during the day, people who go to school or work are excluded from being a part of that specific poll. The ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll was conducted from March 16 to March 19, 1995 (Thursday through Sunday).[29] Unfortunately, the times of

24 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."
25 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."
26 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."
27 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."
28 Pew Research Center, "Summary of Findings."
29 ABC News/*Washington Post,* "ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll, March 1995," ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll Series, March 1995, http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cgi bin/bob/archive2?study=3839&path=ICPSR&docsonly=yes (accessed April 26, 2004).

this poll were not listed. On the other hand, we do know that the weekend was a major part of this poll. Thus, people who worked on the weekend or were on a spring vacation would not have been available to take this survey. In addition, people from both Alaska and Hawaii were excluded altogether.[30] Finally, the company acquired their data through a telephone poll. This, of course, excluded those persons without telephones and those who chose not to pick up the phone.[31] Therefore, when broken down, even though the survey was a random sample, it automatically left certain people out, which perhaps led to skewed results.[32]

Lastly, the people first interviewed were "the adult living in the household who last had a birthday and who was home at the time of the interview."[33] Thus, there was no bias based on sex during the surveys.

The CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup Poll was conducted between November 2 and November 6, 1994 (Wednesday through Sunday).[34] While this was not a presidential election year, this poll was taken right after a number of state and local elections would have occurred. Thus, political circumstances of that particular time could have had an impact on the way in which the participants answered the question regarding affirmative action. In addition, as Gallup notes, the "findings are based on telephone interviews."[35] Like the ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll, the Gallup Poll employed a random system to choose participants with both listed and unlisted numbers.[36] However, this specific poll first wanted to interview "the youngest man eighteen years of age or older" who was at home at the time.[37] Then, as noted by Gallup, "if no man is home, an interview is sought with the oldest woman at home."[38] Thus, this poll was biased toward men. This could have made a significant difference in the results because of its inherent inequality against females.

Although these polls came out with different results, affirmative action appears to have gained much support within the last ten years from the evidence presented. The question then becomes, why is there more support for

30 ABC News/*Washington Post,* "ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll."
31 ABC News/*Washington Post,* "ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll."
32 ABC News/*Washington Post,* "ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll."
33 ABC News/*Washington Post,* "ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll."
34 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), 191.
35 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), vii.
36 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), vii.
37 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), vii.
38 Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll,* (1994), vii.

affirmative action policies now than there was thirty years ago?

It is not possible to judge the ever-evolving ideas, attitudes, and beliefs about such a controversial issue in such a short amount of space. Therefore, one needs to look at major historical events that may have contributed to this change in public opinion.

A possible explanation why affirmative action policies have had more support than in previous years, on the whole, is due to a feeling of inherent inequality that some individuals began to recognize. For example, one in nine American citizens live below the poverty line, which includes ten million youngsters.[39] Poverty, moreover, is "widespread among minority group members."[40] Consequently, due to poverty and people not being able to afford the best schools that others of higher social classes are able to do, some feel that affirmative action is necessary. If all primary and secondary schools were equal, then affirmative action would not be essential in some universities' admissions policies. However, giving a better chance for entrance into a college for a student who is a woman or a minority attempts not only to correct societal wrongs of the past, but also to correct current inequalities in the public education system.

Also, more people favoring affirmative action could be due to the growing number of minorities in the United States. It is possible that minorities in the past were not interviewed as frequently (not on purpose but due to smaller numbers), and now that the minority population is increasing rapidly, they have a bigger say over affirmative action policies that would, no doubt, affect them and their descendants. Thus, the sheer numbers of minorities could have had an impact on the polls showing an attitude toward favoring affirmative action.

A final reason why affirmative action seems to be on the rise, according to Sowell, is the idea that some Americans have been coerced into thinking that affirmative action is necessary to overcome inequalities, when, in fact, it has caused more harm than good.[41] Thus, some people may be thinking that affirmative action is good because certain political leaders and others are saying as such. Whatever the case may be, these trends have been increasing over the past ten years.

39 Thomas Patterson, *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 509-511.

40 Patterson, *We the People,* 10.

41 Thomas Sowell, *Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 166.

Preferential treatment is not a new idea in American society. Recent statistics show that affirmative action policies are currently gaining more support now than thirty years ago. Contributing to this increase could be a number of reasons, including—but not limited to—a larger number of Americans who are more concerned with social welfare, as well as more minorities who live in the United States. Whether or not this trend toward favoring affirmative action will continue remains to be seen.

Next to Godliness: Home Economics and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917

KELLY MARIE TREGLER

Domestic economy began as a study of the work of women in the home. The inclusion of women in liberal arts curriculums and the addition of science to the female-dominated field's methods would result in middle- and upper-class education in the profession of household science. Stimulated by the effects of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, home economics education is the result of this evolution. Modern philosophical studies of the field reevaluate its meaning and state, "Concern for well-being of the individual and the family in the purpose of home economics requires placing these objects of concern in some sort of relationship not only with each other but with society."[1] The inclusion of home economics creates a curriculum that defines the role of the individual woman in society.

The historical context of Progressive Era education ideology, the roles of women, the construction of home economics as a profession, and political environment each coalesced to form the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This act regulated the development of vocational agricultural programs for men and required the study of vocational-focused home economics for women, providing tools for home management efficiency and defining the relationship of the individual to society.

In order to answer how the historical context of the Smith-Hughes Act shaped the field of home economics, the roles of women, and the field of education, this paper hopes to answer six historical questions. The paper will first address the values of the Progressive Era in order to establish its purpose in educational reform during this period. The paper will then address how this climate influenced the progress of women's role in society with an emphasis on how Progressive integration of women into liberal education and the philosophy of differentiation stimulated the creation of home economics. The paper will then move to the evolution of domestic studies and the reasons that home economics became a socially accepted profession for white middle-class women and created opportunities for the development and respect for the

1 Marjorie Brown, *Philosophical Studies of Home Economics in the United States: Basic Ideas by Which Home Economists Understand Themselves* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1993), 113.

education of this type of woman. After establishing a view of the purpose and position of domestic studies before the Smith-Hughes Act, the paper will seek to answer how the political climate of this period resulted in congressional research and changes in the area of vocational education. Then, citing the specific and most notable act of home economics history, the paper will address the initial goals of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and how it reshaped the field of home economics. Based on this information, the reader will learn how the interpretation of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 redefined the role of home economics and the role of women and changed the relationship of the government with national education.

Today, the systematic development of home economics resulting from the Smith-Hughes Act continues to shape to core purposes of home economics in American education. The importance that this system places on the family and the home and the ways in which it affords educational opportunities for women have made the subject of home economics in secondary, higher, and extension education a welcomed area of study in government and education systems around the world.[2] The system of home economics education that began in 1917 has had international impact. The causes of the act that shaped this system provide insight into the continuing social goals of an international system of education.

The dominant argument of secondary sources written about this topic reference the same causes. Rima D. Apple in "Liberal Arts or Vocation Training?" states,

> Early leaders in home economics saw the field as a laboratory, extending the boundaries of domesticity beyond the individual household; women could and should use their education to improve the larger world. Unfortunately, the institutionalization of their hopes was mediated by bureaucratic mechanizations mostly beyond their control.[3]

Apple's historical question clearly addresses the heart of the issue—vocational education. The interpretation of the vocational act was a manifestation of all of the factors that Apple lists. The forms of control that segregated

2 Lela O'Toole et al., eds., *The International Heritage of Home Economics in the United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1988), i.

3 Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti, *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 94.

the sexes and reinforced the stereotypical middle-class patriarchal roles were a manifestation of the times that persisted to shape the movement and the process of education that continues today.

However, the focus of this paper is less Apple's "Liberal Arts or Vocation Training?" and more the historical context in which it arose. Her work includes bolder research into the history of legislation for vocational education and continues to tell the history of home economics education after this period. This information may be valuable, but digresses from the act itself.

The individual and societal goals of the Smith-Hughes Act will be addressed instead of the general topic of home economics as a vocational education. Many sources evaluate the effects of the act and analyze it from the home economics perspective as written by those from the field as recently as the 1960s, as opposed to the educational perspective of today.

Isabel Bevier, a teacher at a woman's college in the east, was selected to head the new department of household science at the University of Illinois, a land-grant university, in 1900. Bevier's 1935 book, *The History of the Department of Home Economics at the University of Illinois: 1900-1921,* is her attempt to tell the evolution of household science at the University of Illinois in 1900, beginning with a background on her college experience. It is a reflection on her years during the formative period of home economics and home economics training programs. Because the mid-1930s was a time of re-examining the status of curriculum development (emphasizing problem-solving methods and the immediate needs of pupils),[4] Bevier's depictions of the effects of differentiation, the process of curriculum development, and changes from the Smith-Lever and Smith-Hughes Act fully align with all data documenting this time period. Bevier was the first vice president of Ellen Richards' American Home Economics Association, the creators and documenters of much of home economics education's history. As a result, she has an interesting insight on the fields of education and women's education, the development of a home economics department at a land-grant university, and the climate of the Progressive Era. Told from a first-hand account of the changes within the field, Bevier's historic voice appears in a memoir format.

The documentation of Isabel Bevier's history is found at the University of Illinois library. There is no indication that this document has been peer

4 Janet Laster and Ruth E. Dohner, *Vocational Home Economics Curriculum: State of the Field* (Peoria, IL: American Association of Home Economics, 1986), 174.

reviewed or used in any other source. This copy is a Xerox photographic reproduction from the carbon copy of Bevier's report as recorded by the library in 1963. This document may have been put into this format due to its popularity during this era. With a rise in interest in both self-evaluation within the field of home economics and women's studies, this document may have been a popular item.

Public Law No. 347, 64th Congress of the Smith-Hughes Act is the published government document of the 1917 act. Coupled with the analysis of a document from an agricultural history report, this document is a valuable resource to those studying the effect of the 1917 act on home economics because it reveals something generally not clearly stated by secondary sources focusing on this topic. Very little is clearly expressed about the inclusion of home economics in this program. It is also useful for the analysis of the success and effects of these programs in secondary curricular literature.

Another book to provide valuable primary insight is *Significant Writings in Home Economics: 1911-1979,* which includes Ellen Richards' "The Social Significance of the Home Economics Movement" from a 1911 *Journal of Home Economics* and Isabel Bevier's 1917 publication from the same journal titled "The Development of Home Economics." Also included is Isabel Bevier's 1904 publication, *The House,* which describes lessons for her curriculum and reflections of the interdisciplinary view of home economics.

The Progressive ideology is a belief that professional decisions can help shape the individual for the common good. During this period, America was still growing and changing as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution and resulting Gilded Age; however, the nation now questioned the success of the entire society without the aid of professional consultants whose scientific research would provide answers to alleviating social ills. Technological and research developments had increased production, increased the need for cheap labor, and concentrated a population composed of immigrants and rural laborers in the urban centers. Without legislation, the living condition of the urban poor was a plague to the urban elite.

Progressives believed that the scientific research that had created the new industrial era would solve this problem through technology and education as created by specialists. The New Liberal ideology was the notion that none but an elite few were capable of rational thought. Progressive Era New Liberals believed that the traditional academic curriculum was not fitting the capabilities of its students. Students without exceptional ability would be trained in

vocational or "differentiated" curriculum.[5] This rejection of equality is recognized in today's criticism of the curriculum's ability to "channel, control, and limit the choice of the individual" as its training program forces students to accept inequality of life as they are banned from a variety of education experiences.[6] In 1876, the Manual Trade Movement began stimulating public interest in industrial training and in 1906 founded the Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, later the American Vocational Association.[7]

Progressive thinking—that family life could be improved through education—means learning the "right" philosophy and technology differentiated for individual needs. Theorists believed that women's native tendencies made them more apt to judge situations based on feeling, limited in intellectual capacities, and the neater of the two genders.[8] For women, this philosophy of differentiation would mean a separate curriculum for women, or home economics. For home economics the "right" systems meant the organization of furniture, the systems of cleaning, and instructing the student to maximize family output of social worth for the housewife to create. Much of the early home economics movement was a result of the application of the principles of science to the details of the home environment and focused on sanitation and nutrition when poverty was high. Until the mid-1930s, home economics education was assumed to be the work of women.

In order to reach the audience of the larger society, education would need to be provided for working students. The result of Progressive education reform would be the creation of technical schools, manual training, kindergarten, land-grant colleges, scientific schools, and women's colleges. In early home economics history, the first influential school of this era was the land-grant university. The goal of the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 described the purpose of the university:

> At least one college where the leading subject shall be,
> without excluding other scientific and classical studies and
> including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning
> as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts…in order

5 Karen Graves, *Girls' Schooling During the Progressive Era: From Female Scholar to Domesticated Citizen* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 232.

6 Graves, *Girls' Schooling,* 242.

7 Hazel T. Craig, *The History of Home Economics* (New York: Practical Home Economics, 1945), 24.

8 Graves, *Girls' Schooling,* 242.

> to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.[9]

Land-grant universities would teach agriculture and mechanic arts to the uneducated rural population for whom the educational divide had deepened with the evolution of the industrial sector of the urban population. In order for them to survive, land-grant colleges would put America's rural sons in touch with technological professionals that Progressives had put their faith in.

Isabel Bevier wrote, "In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the aristocratic ideal had lost in the North by 1860 and common, free, tax-supported, non-sectarian, state controlled schools had been created, but the development of national life, the Industrial Revolution, the discoveries of science, and the demand for education was constantly changing."[10] More educational opportunities developed for women at women's colleges and coeducational institutions, along with the enactment of Land-Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890, which emphasized practical education.[11] Land-grant universities opened their doors to women between 1870 and 1880. Home economics would allow women to study and work outside the home and still stay within the socially accepted sphere of domesticity. Women's acceptance into land-grant universities' domestic science, domestic arts, or domestic economy recognized a new demand for differentiated education for women.

In the same era as the creation of the New Liberal was the New Woman. The New Woman took part in municipal politics and social welfare reform. As personified by Lizzie Kander, chronicler of the New Woman's experience, the New Woman was a settlement house worker, a school board member, a pacifist, and an advocate of progressive educational reform during the depression before World War I.[12] New Women would meet at their women's clubs to debate "the merits of tariff, free trade, Socialism, child labor laws, working conditions for their poorer sisters, suffrage, and other timely subjects" and through their connections with major social institutions forever tied themselves to education.[13]

9 Marjorie East and Joan Thomson, eds., *Definitive Themes in Home Economics and Their Impact on Families: 1909-1984* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1993), 2.

10 Isabel Bevier, *History of the Department of Home Economics at the University of Illinois 1900-1921* (Urbana, 1935), 1.

11 East and Thomson, *Definitive Themes,* 2.

12 William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1986), 30.

13 Reese, *Power and the Promise,* 41.

The New Woman was not a feminist but was part of the larger steps towards education for women when compared to the older literary women's clubs made up of dominant society women.[14] These groups viewed public policy as exclusively for men. New Women were able to validate the expression of their opinions on the basis of mothers being the defenders of purity and safety coupled with the Progressive belief of the elite taking care of the whole. What the New Woman was opposed to was not domesticity but a static interpretation of middle-class women's rights and duties.[15] New Liberal education both put great weight on the role of the woman in the domestic sphere, but at the same time allowed women to begin analyzing the systems that their motherly characteristics permitted them to judge such as the education their children received. Although not allowed onto the school boards in some areas, at the middle and high school level, the New Women of women's clubs helped initiate many of the social welfare and Progressive education reforms that segregated the sexes and divided the curriculum. Educational expansion and extension were the trademarks of the Progressive Era, as the schools broadened their influence in local neighborhoods and in the lives of children.

Domestic science was another example of the influence of the sex-stereotyped Progressive ideology that supported its growth as an avenue for women's economic and social growth. Although its origins were not in the Progressive Era, the study of professional home management, its growth in the universities, and entrance into the middle school and high school levels was a perfect solution to finding a role for women without their leaving the domestic sphere, giving prestige to the work of educated middle-class white women, and informing society of the social consequences of uneducated urban immigrants and rural poor.

The dominant American belief that continues today is that a woman's role is to be a wife, mother, and homemaker. The feminist social justice movement called for the equal rights to work in the public sphere at the same time women cried for suffrage. Feminists of this period joined efforts for the women's suffrage movement and began attending separate universities and were accepted into private and land-grant schools by the last decade of the nineteenth century, but their status was still founded on a separate curriculum that was by no means equal. They received degrees in a variety of fields such as the languages

14 Reese, *Power and the Promise,* 33.
15 Reese, *Power and the Promise,* 42.

and sciences but with great struggles and many barriers. Their acceptance into liberal education did not last long and did not move far until the issue of differentiation and sex-stereotypes resurfaced to mainstream women's educational efforts.

President Eliot of the Association of American University Women addressed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the college in 1907 by saying,

> It used to be said that the health of college women could not stand the strain of a college course, that their morals and manners would suffer by daily contact with men, that their mental capacity would be inferior. Having shown falsity of all these statements, it would appear that women might spend some energy in developing courses of study of particular interest to themselves.[16]

By 1907, the hope of continuing the progress towards an equal university curriculum for men and women was overtaken by the dominant Progressive ideology shared by women and men—differentiation. As women were increasingly graduating from liberal education programs, a conflict arose with women's traditional social roles. Differentiation, liberal education, and social conflicts are the origin of home economics. The works of early domestic writers such as Catherine Beecher and Christine Fredrick proposed systems of education that preserved nineteenth-century ideals but allowed job opportunities as well as personal gratification for women.

Progress during the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution precipitated the separation of spheres by gender. Catherine Beecher, the first leading domestic writer, believed that the public was declining in morality with industry and commerce; home economics provided a solution to protect the family from competition and materialism to preserve virtue, education, and morals. During the 1840s through the 1870s, Beecher believed that the role of women should be to stay at home, but be trained as professional workers to "redeem women's profession from dishonor" through following her manuals on "habits of system and order."[17] She personally succeeded in bringing boarding and finishing schools from England to America based on practical subjects such as

16 Bevier, *History,* 3.

17 Susan Strassler, *Never Done: History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 180.

the domestic arts.[18] Beecher believed that her dreams of domestic order could never be realized until schools trained girls to do domestic work, but an educational system run by men had not provided this training.[19] She never suggested that a woman would prefer employment to marriage and family life, but a woman should be a wife, mother, and homemaker whose limitations in society would help her to "ascend total hegemony over the domestic sphere."[20] During Beecher's period of influence, modernization of technology and organization had lightened the load of "housework" and added to the importance of "home making." Her belief was that her methodology and ideology would reassert the status of the housewife and glorify home making. *Beecher's Treatise on Domestic Economy,* published in 1841, served as the foundation of many home economics secondary curricula in the first decade of the 1900s.[21]

The second leading woman in the evolution of domestic studies is Christine Frederick. She was a writer of popular domestic economy books, headed committees, and promoted products during the era of home economics growth.[22] She is an example of what Nancy Tomes describes as the advancement of personal and class interests by setting the domestic as a professional and political and social reformer who can enjoy the new avenues for economic independence and personal satisfaction.[23] By 1911, the United States Department of Commerce had released documentation acknowledging the fears of upper-class women as it states that immigrant workers were devaluing homework.[24] Elitist home economics such as the work of Frederick would add methodology and prestige to dignify the work of a housewife with standards and class divisions.

In 1899, Ellen H. Richards, the first woman graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, paired with Progressive education leader Melville Dewey to lead the First Lake Placid Conference, a unified action to build the field of home economics on the same principles of the work of Beecher and

18 Sarah Abigail Leavitt, *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 55.

19 Strassler, *Never Done,* 191.

20 Janice Williams Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), xiv.

21 Laster and Dohner, *Vocational Home Economics,* 172.

22 Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer,* 1.

23 Nancy Tomes, *Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 139.

24 Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer,* 88.

Frederick, and to support the official development of an education system to support it. For five years, the conference gathered specialists from a range of disciplines to complete the philosophical mission with a natural science emphasis. Richards would later state, "The present aim of the Lake Placid conference is to teach the American people, chiefly through the medium of schools, the management of their homes on economic lines as to time and energy. Once the essentials of the home life are settled, they must be made a part of every child's education."[25] In 1909, the American Home Economics Association was founded. Hoping to overcome the disintegration of the family unit and deteriorating social situation, the Conference was successful in building home economics as a distinct occupational field.[26] Richards' experience as a distinguished graduate in the field of science gave her the political power to work for her social goals while not displacing herself in a male-dominated world. As a home economist she enjoyed the acceptance of staying within the women's sphere and established her importance within society.

Richards defines the role of women in relation to society according to the same principles as much of the Progressive Era by seeing the individual as part of the whole. Both the impoverished and the wealthy have had many extra burdens accompany them since the development of technology and industry. For example, Richards states, poor women do not have time to understand the complexities of the home when they are working long hours and, more important, the housewives of the merchant, businessman, manufacturer, and engineer have been instructed to stay in and work much harder as a domestic "engineers."[27]

Educated professionals like Ellen Richards and Isabel Bevier were able to receive a special liberal education and preserve their feminine identity while working in the field of home economics. Under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862 (or land-grant system), the University of Illinois opened in 1868. In April of 1900, Isabel Bevier was welcomed to be the designer of the new household science department at the University of Illinois. Through the study of other household science programs that shared her vision of a scientific foundation, Bevier was allowed to define the goals and curriculum of the field to her

25 East and Thomson, *Definitive Themes,* 37.

26 Earl J. McGrath and Jack T. Johnson, *The Changing Mission of Home Economics* (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1968), 11.

27 Bonnie Rader, *Significant Writings in Home Economics: 1911-1979* (Peoria, IL: American Association of Home Economics, 1987) 18.

discretion. Early in her writing in a 1917 *Journal of Home Economics,* Bevier made the distinction between the scientific studies, the university, and the "practical" of which are emphasized in levels below university where it is "impossible" to teach its science.[28] Pulled in many directions, her most difficult battle was to ensure the scientific aspects for her interdisciplinary field were preserved and respected as those tailored to the traditional roles of men.

Bevier admits to taking directions from women such as Catherine Beecher, Mrs. Willard, and Mary Lyon. Bevier states that Beecher's most significant contributions to the education of women were the importance of the scientific basis and economic independence for women. She incorporates the interdisciplinary philosophy of the field when she states, "Moreover, with the house, its evolution, decoration, and care may be associated much that is interesting in history, art, and architecture, as well as much that has a direct bearing on the daily life of the individual."[29]

In her eyes, integration had been a difficult battle but the war would not be won until there was equal respect for the work of women embodied in home economics. If challenging courses were offered to increase the status of this profession, differentiation as proposed by the educational ideologies of Elliot and Brown would increase the respectability of the field. Overemphasis of the scholastic achievements of women had left them with little knowledge of the role of homemaker and had decreased the status of these women. During the course of Bevier's career, home management was first defined as work-centered emphasis on efficiency and simplification of tasks, a person-centered analysis of managing the home, and a final approach incorporating both.[30]

"Educational programs for home makers…gained broadened recognition and government support of Home Economics Extension occurred during the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914."[31] The Smith-Lever Extension Program provided education on home management, wholesome food, family wardrobes, and child management. The Smith-Lever Act was the first win for the battle of acceptance of home economics education, establishing a cooperative extension service to help land-grant universities relate practical home economics to rural families.[32]

28 Rader, *Significant Writings,* 22.
29 Bevier, *The House,* i.
30 East and Thomson, *Definitive Themes,* 36.
31 East and Thomson, *Definitive Themes,* 4
32 McGrath and Johnson, *The Changing Mission,* 68.

Under the influence of the pressures of the Society for Promotion of Industrial Education of the Manual Training Movement, Congress authorized a commission to study the need for federal assistance to industrial education.[33] The origins of the 1917 act can be traced to the Smith Resolution of 1913 for the establishment of a commission to fund agricultural and industrial schools. In 1910, the nearly 3 million southern farms constituted 43.9 percent of the nationwide total, while the same year the southern states accounted for 40.5 percent of the overall farm population of about 32 million. More important, the plots were smaller and less valuable than most farms.

What Smith-Hughes called for did not originally include home economics. "When the Commission presented its findings before 'representative of all Government bureaus and departments concerned, the National Education Association, labor organizations and the Federation of Women's Clubs, no one from the field of home economics was called.'"[34] Home economics was inserted in the bill in a last-minute revision and Martha Van Rensselaer, president of the Home Economics Association, and Anna Borrows, professor of home economics at Columbia University, were invited to a 1916 meeting. According to Marjorie East and John Thompson,

> The inclusion of home economics as one of three areas of the Smith-Hughes Vocational Actor of 1917 was a significant thrust in further expansion. The Act was recognition that one-fourth of women over 10 years of age were gainfully employed and that home economics was concerned with occupational skills as well as homemaking.[35]

While the official government document states that the "Treasury will provide the salaries of teachers, supervisors, directors of agricultural subjects, and teachers of the trade, home economics, and industrial subjects," its interpretation is best found in Hazel T. Craig's *History of Home Economics* and described as the following:

1. That education be given in schools under public control all day, evening, and part-time.
2. That education shall be made available to any person four-

33 Craig, *The History of Home Economics,* 24.
34 Craig, *The History of Home Economics,* 24.
35 East and Thompson, *Definitive Themes,* 4.

teen years or older in the all-day schools and sixteen years or older in the evening schools planning to enter the vocation of home making.

3. That the state or local community provide the necessary plant and equipment with the approval of the Federal Board.
4. That at least half of the instruction be given to practical work on a useful basis.
5. That teachers of vocational subjects have at least four years of college work in their fields.[36]

Under this bill, $3 million was provided for agriculture, trades, and industrial education and home economics. The salaries of schoolteachers were provided for and college preparation was subsidized. By 1920, 6,000 high schools offered courses in home economics and in 1938, the U.S. Office of Education found that 76 percent of seventh and eighth graders attended home economics programs.[37] During this time, equipment and space were limited, small proportions of teachers would meet the requirements, not all states had approved teaching institutions, and only a few states had state supervisors.[38] There were many deficits that would have to be resolved to complete the goals of the bill.

Bevier wrote "The Development of Home Economics" for the *Journal of Home Economics* in 1917, the same year as the introduction of the Smith-Hughes Act. In this writing she lists a number of questions:

> What can home economics do for (vocational training)? What will (vocational training) do for home economics? Both questions are yet unanswered. To some it seems certain that the vocational school will revise very greatly the methods of teaching home economics. To others it seems some danger that home economics in the vocational school shall be judged solely by its power to produce commercial products.[39]

Because of Bevier's own interest as the head of the science-focused univer-

36 Craig, *The History of Home Economics,* 24.
37 McGrath and Johnson, *The Changing Mission,* 12.
38 Craig, *The History of Home Economics,* 24.
39 Rader, *Significant Writings,* 27.

sity, this article focused less on this bill as much than on the Smoot Bill that would provide federal aid for research or experimentation in the experiment stations of land-grant universities. She was writing at a time in which she could not gauge the effects of the Smith-Hughes laws on her developing field.

There were many benefits to the Smith-Hughes Act at the land-grant university as well as problems. Programs in colleges and universities continued to expand in number and scope and the salary of the home economics faculty increased and provided more personnel.[40] The greatest influence in "undercutting the status of the field of home economics at research universities" was the Smith-Hughes Act's provision of "funding for home economics training" and "the education of home economics teachers for primary and secondary schools as a central part of the mission of collegiate home economics."[41] The curriculum focused on education for the students in a form of vocational training instead of favoring the scientific aspects encompassed by the field. The Smith-Hughes Act influenced land-grant curricula toward preparing secondary and middle school teachers so much that little research took place. It was for this reason that the field remained insecure and threatened by hostile members of the university's more established disciplines.[42] The act had derailed the university's programs from their original goal, but had led them down a new path that benefited the program in a new way.

In a 1929 analysis of the teacher training program that resulted from the Smith-Hughes Act, Gladys Alee Branegan proposed the future of the field would be best suited by combining their teaching and scientific research efforts in order to build the field of home economics and its teaching.[43] There were many suggestions made for the improvement of this new field as sponsored by land-grant institutions. Through their education at these institutions, teachers trained under this bill acquired a system of values and developed a frame of reference, which involved operational interpretations made by or through teacher educators.[44] These frameworks, whether considered beneficial or not, increased in the number of institutions to partake in this program and

40 McGrath and Johnson, *The Changing Mission,* 12.

41 Stage and Vincenti, *Rethinking Home Economics,* 94.

42 McGrath and Johnson, *The Changing Mission,* 9.

43 Gladys Alee Branegan, *Home Economics Teacher Training Under the Smith-Hughes Act 1917-1927: A Study of Trends in the Work of Seventy-One Institutions Approved Under the National Vocational Education Act* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University), 149.

44 William Howard Martin, *Operational Interpretations of the Smith-Hughes Act as Reflected in the Writings of Teacher Educators in Vocational Agriculture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press), 29.

perpetuated the view of the role of these fields for generations to come.

No one can refute the act's ability to bring home economics to a much wider range of people and provide job opportunities for many women. According to Karen Graves, "A conversion in course of study patterns provided one measure of the shifting emphasis from female scholar to domestic citizen" in her research population of St. Louis high school students. The message was the role of women's studies would be from the perspective of future wives and mothers and perhaps teachers, office workers, or domestics.[45]

This act was President Wilson's first attempt to provide training below the college level.[46] In an era of constant revision of the educational system, this act cemented the relationship of home economics and the government. Additionally, the act helped "join practical education and liberal education avoiding the inequalitarian 'two-track' system of higher education that was common in Europe where vocational education was segregated and considered inferior."[47]

In the 1920s, young women would flock to the university in numbers not again met until 1980, but professional life still forced them to forego marriage and family life. Young college women enrolled in "home economics courses learned that while a career was appropriate for a few women, it was a mistake for most of them."[48] The battle for suffrage continued through the war, but after it was secured and "normalcy" returned, middle-class women lost interest in the reform and other social issues, resulting in the death of the New Woman and a "post-feminist" phase of American history.[49]

The period before World War I, during which the Smith-Hughes Act was passed, was a time of change. Faith in education, a greater understanding of science, changes in women's education, and the state of politics would reflect in the core of this act's application to junior and high school students of vocational education, shaping the opportunities for women and the field. In the words of Ellen Richards, it was "nothing less than an effort to save our social fabric from what seems inevitable disintegration."[50]

The inclusion of home economics in the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 redirected the profession with new government funding to aid the development

45 Graves, *Girls' Schooling,* 242.
46 Craig, *The History of Home Economics,* 24.
47 McGrath and Johnson, *The Changing Mission,* 8.
48 Margaret Marsh, *Suburban Lives* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 136.
49 Marsh, *Suburban Lives,* 135.
50 Graves, *Girls' Schooling,* 256

of land-grant teacher education programs, programs for the middle and high school levels, and the salaries of the teachers and the supervisors of these programs. The new role for the domestic female was a vocational one, favoring practicality over the traditional feminine role, erasing the hopes of creators to bring science into this interdisciplinary field, but creating different economic opportunities. According to Rima D. Apple, the Smith-Hughes Act defined home economics as a vocational field from 1917 to 1963 and ended with the Vocational Education Act, which eliminated much of its funding.[51] The 1990 passage of the Perkins Act changed the vocational purpose of earlier legislation like the Smith-Hughes Act by mandating a curriculum that is truly interdisciplinary by teaching the lessons of consumerism, environmentalism, and family and consumer relationships in the same way that the 1976 Vocational Education Act confronted sex-stereotyping.[52] But the purpose, method of teaching, and age level targeted continues in the middle and high school grades and the systems of teaching have spread to international status, affecting all levels of American life and the developing countries around the world.

51 Stage and Vincenti, *Rethinking Home Economics,* 93.
52 Stage and Vincenti, *Rethinking Home Economics,* 94.

A Moralistic Victorian Transformed: Henry Mayhew in the Low Lodging Houses of Mid-Nineteenth Century London

CANDICE DOHMAN

Henry Mayhew was a pioneer in his field of research. He was one of the first of his time to investigate how the poor lived day to day in London. The poor made up a very large portion of nineteenth-century London's population. The way the poor existed and the fact that they were most often stuck in poverty rested on the simple truth that wages were below a living standard, and middle- and upper-class people did not want to be bothered by them. But after Mayhew had published just a few articles in London's *Morning Chronicle* in 1849, he and his editors at the paper realized how popular his stories on the poor were. People could not get enough of the accounts of how residents of low lodging houses, dockers, needlewomen, and street sellers lived. They loved to hear about people who lived in such a different world yet not more than a mile from where they lived. The exotic and the unknown fascinated London's middle and upper classes and made them want to know more about the previously unknown—or at least ignored—poor. These people lived in a prosperous time for London, as well as England. England was the most powerful country in the world, and London was the largest, wealthiest city in the world. Yet there were those who had never experienced power or prosperity and rarely had three filling meals a day. The context in which they lived is extremely important to understanding the social history of London.

The focus of this paper is the poor in lodging houses. The majority of those living in the low lodging houses that Mayhew investigated were boys under the age of 20. When first encountering the poor in these places, Mayhew had the attitude and belief that those who lived in low lodging houses were criminals who could not find substantial work due to laziness and lack of skills. However, evidence shows that Mayhew's attitudes changed throughout his *Morning Chronicle* articles. By listening to the men and boys that he interviewed, Mayhew came to the conclusion that many of them were poor not by any wrongdoing, but because the pitiful wages that they earned were not enough to afford them any nicer dwelling.

Henry Mayhew is regarded by many to have opened new doors of investigation, journalism, and interviewing. He was the first of his time to take an active interest in the poor of London. In many sources written about the mid-

nineteenth century poor, Mayhew is cited several times. In the recent past, however, Mayhew has come under some scrutiny. Historians such as Gertrude Himmelfarb have pointed out that Mayhew sensationalized the poor and had biases that made his interviewing and reporting less than credible. Himmelfarb has argued that Mayhew sensationalized the poor to sell papers and books. Additionally, F. B. Smith wrote about Mayhew in a negative way in his work "Mayhew's Convict." He believed that Mayhew was gullible in the case of David Evans, a young criminal whose extraordinary life seems too bizarre to be true. Smith accuses Mayhew of being lax in his investigative skills and not attempting to verify information about Evans. He says that, "Mayhew, despite his claims, either did not try to verify them as he could have done, or did check them and still decided to print Evans's story."[1] Both of these misdoings by Mayhew make Smith critical of the rest of Mayhew's work. Lee Beier would agree with Smith in that Mayhew did print falsehoods that have been exposed about his convict, David Evans. But Beier would also argue that there is another way to look at Mayhew's work on Evans. He maintains that there may be more to learn from the interviews with Evans than first meets the eye.[2]

A more positive look at Mayhew comes from historians like Eric Evans, Victor Neuburg, and Eileen Yeo, who are major supporters of Mayhew's work. They look at his work in context. Being a part of the Victorian middle-class in London would have caused a reporter such as Mayhew a great deal of difficulty cutting all of the biases out of his work because his belief system was very different than that of the poverty-stricken people he was interviewing.

In his book *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* Evans states that the unskilled, casual migrant worker would have been forgotten if not for "the extraordinary investigative talents of Henry Mayhew."[3] Yeo discussed the human side of Mayhew and his work. She believed that Mayhew treated his interviewees as real people with real troubles, not just as work that he needed to get done.[4] Yeo also believed that Mayhew was in control of every part of the work that went into his articles and books. If this is indeed

1 F. B. Smith, "Mayhew's Convict." *Victorian Studies* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1979), 441.

2 Lee Beier, "Identity and Language in the Making of the Victorian 'Criminal Class': Mayhew's Convict Revisited." Unpublished paper made available courtesy of the author (Department of History, Illinois State University).

3 Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (London: Pearson Education, 2001), 215.

4 Eileen Yeo and E.P. Thompson, "Mayhew as a Social Investigator," *The Unknown Mayhew* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 82.

true, it was a major accomplishment because of the huge amount of work that went into interviewing and reporting all of the different poor individuals documented in both *The Morning Chronicle* and *London Labor and the London Poor*. Neuburg agreed with Yeo that Mayhew "saw what he described at first hand."[5] This gives a lot of credibility to Mayhew's work because as a journalist, he was and is expected to have witnessed what he reported.

Lionel Rose, the author of *Rogues and Vagabonds: Vagrant Underworld in Britain 1815-1985,* often used Mayhew as a source. In describing the poor in lodging houses, Rose described the environment as a notorious breeding ground for beggars and thieves. But to really show how awful they were in the eyes of English Victorians, he quoted Henry Mayhew several times. He said that Mayhew branded the common lodging houses as "wretched dens of infamy, brutality, and vice."[6] Rose also included longer quotations from Mayhew's *London Labor and the London Poor*. He goes through two cases of individuals that Mayhew interviewed while they were living in these lodging houses, using Mayhew's examples as evidence for the argument in this particular chapter on lodging houses that many of the youngsters living in the houses were deeply unhappy. Although this would not be difficult to prove, as it would seem like common sense, he did use Mayhew as a source to back up his argument because he agreed with him.

This use of Mayhew's work shows that he is given credibility. He has come under scrutiny by different historians and social scientists, but when taken in the correct context, his work is very valuable. The lives of the London poor were largely undocumented until Mayhew came along. Scholars such as Rose (who has referenced many different sources, not just Mayhew) have considered the context in which he was writing and taken that into account when using him as a source. The information that Mayhew has in his articles and books may be somewhat distorted and may even have some things that are not entirely true, but the information is still extremely valuable.

The low lodging houses that were home to the poor in London during the mid-1800s disgusted Henry Mayhew. He saw them as places infested with people who did not work either because of a lazy nature or lack of job opportunities. Through reading his letters for the *Morning Chronicle*, it becomes obvious

5 Victor Neuburg, "Introduction," *Henry Mayhew: London Labor and the London Poor* (England: Penguin Books, 1985), xviii.

6 Lionel Rose, *Rogues and Vagabonds: Vagrant Underworld in Britain 1815-1985* (London: Routledge, 1988), 49.

that he did have some pity for those that were trapped in these places with almost no hope of upward social mobility. He realized that with the low rates of pay for jobs they may get for a day or two, they would just barely be able to feed themselves and pay for a place to sleep. It was reassuring to find that Mayhew did seem to empathize with those that he interviewed.

To recount the poverty of these people, Mayhew described the rooms he first entered at a low lodging house and described the men he saw as "ragged, greasy wretches."[7] Mayhew was not accustomed to the people and places he came into contact with during his investigations of the poor. When it came to the people in the low lodging houses, he assumed that they must be there because of their ineptness in the workplace or their lazy nature.

One of the attitudes that Mayhew had in going into these low lodging houses could be described as both moralistic Victorian and Christian. In the *Morning Chronicle* he described a day that he walked in a poor neighborhood on his way to a low lodging house. He depicted the streets as filled with people, including women he did not think were dressed appropriately, parties, and Jewish shops that were open. This did not seem, at first, like something that would bother Mayhew, as he had been going into these neighborhoods collecting information for a number of months. The difference was that day was Sunday. In Mayhew's words, "Had it not been that here and there a stray shop was closed, it would have been impossible to have guessed that it was Sunday."[8] This example shows that Mayhew assumed everyone would preserve his holy day as he did. Whether this attitude falls under moralistic Victorian or Christian is hard to tell. Obviously Mayhew held attitudes from both, so it is most likely a combination of the two.

Mayhew presented his information through both interviews and tables of statistics. There were thirty-four pages of interviews in the *Morning Chronicle* and two pages in *London Labor and the London Poor.* Thirty-four pages of interviews were in contrast to only forty-one pages of his narrative in the *Morning Chronicle*. This shows that he put a lot of time and effort into collecting information on this group. Although he also had forty-one pages of his own narrative, he dedicated 45 percent of his time to interviewing the "wretches" that he found in the low lodging houses. In the *Morning Chronicle* alone, there were twenty pages of tables. He used these to back up his evidence. For example, on

7 Henry Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: the Metropolitan Districts,* ed. Peter Razzel (Horsham, Sussex: Caliban Books, 1981), 1: 90.

8 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 97.

pages 166 and 167 of the *Morning Chronicle*, he had a table from the metropolitan police returns showing the crimes committed by sailors during the last decade. From another table on offenses of sailors belonging to the Port of London he concludes "it appears that drunkenness and disorderly conduct are vices to which sailors are peculiarly addicted."[9] The attitudes that Mayhew had going into these low lodging houses were no doubt confirmed by the large numbers of those who had been arrested. However, it is difficult to know how many men were thrown in jail for crimes they did not commit or for stealing or begging, both of which they would have been forced to do as they could not get out of poverty.

The ways that Mayhew collected information shows a lot about his style. To research the poor in lodging houses, he interviewed the men that he met in them. He was taken by a guide to find the places he sought. When it came to the sailor's lodgings, he interviewed both sailors and boarding masters. The people he interviewed in both sailors' and regular lodging houses were entirely made up of men, most of whom were under the age of thirty. Along with interviews, he was interested in obtaining tables of information from the metropolitan police and including them in his articles. This shows that he wanted to have his information easily readable for the public. Mayhew wrote about a whole population of people that had never been studied. The newspapers featuring his articles flew off the shelves as did his books that were later published. Mayhew's interviews showed that the men in the lodging houses wished they could work more and earn more. He let that shine through, so although Mayhew has come under attack for embellishing and perhaps leaving things out due to attitudes and biases he may have held, he was willing to see that these were men who were dealt a tough life. Not all of them were there because of a lack of ambition.

The poor living in the low lodging houses of London that Henry Mayhew interviewed in the 1850s and 1860s were mainly young men and boys. Interested in why they had stooped to living in these awful conditions, Mayhew made many assumptions, but also asked many questions. Mayhew came to the conclusion that the young men in the low lodging houses were not to blame for their poverty. He found that they really did work hard, but with the wages as low as they were, it was impossible to get ahead.

As previously mentioned, Mayhew showed his initial attitudes about the people living in the low lodging houses beautifully in just three words: "ragged,

9 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 169.

greasy wretches."[10] It sums up his opinions of people that would live in such dire, filthy places very well. Another easy way to see that Mayhew held a low estimation of these people was the questions that he asked in interviews. For example, on page 93 of the *Morning Chronicle*, he asked how many had been in prison. Obviously he was assuming that the majority of them had been in prison, or he would not have asked the question. Indeed he was correct: eighteen of the twenty-nine had been incarcerated for one reason or another. What Mayhew did not know at the time, but would come to find out, was that they were arrested and given harsh sentences for petty crimes such as wandering the streets or begging for food because they were unable to make a living wage. On page 107 of Mayhew's *Morning Chronicle*, he wrote that two of the fifty-five he was interviewing had signed the temperance pledge. This indicates that he asked how many of them drank. Asking that question shows the Victorian moralist and Christian values that Mayhew held. He was imposing his beliefs on the poor again, undoubtedly already assuming they all drank and that it was a big part of their unemployment.

Showing his abhorrence of one of the lowest lodging houses, Mayhew called it a "den of iniquity."[11] He then commented on the fact that common prostitutes, thieves, and beggars were allowed to sleep together "promiscuously" in one small room. If he were to look around, he might have seen that they did not have much of a choice. The rooms there were undoubtedly all that those poor could afford. On page 97 of the *Morning Chronicle*, Mayhew indicated that he was disgusted by the lack of respect that the poor gave Sunday. He commented that "Had it not been that here and there a stray shop was closed, it would have been impossible to have guessed that it was Sunday."[12] Mayhew felt here that his moralistic Christian views should be upheld by everyone.

On the same page of the *Morning Chronicle*, he asked why the young men preferred theft to work. This is a question that probably received a chaotic response. Obviously asked by someone of a middle- or upper-class background, the question most likely invoked feelings of bitterness. Why would Mayhew ask such a question? Could he really have been so naïve as to think that men would rather risk jail than get a job? Perhaps he truly believed that being poor meant they must somehow deserve it and really were lazy and worthless creatures. At first, Mayhew believed that perhaps their poverty and lack of jobs could have

10 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 90.
11 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 107.
12 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 97.

been inherited factors. He shows this by remarking, "After this, I sought to obtain information as to the occupations of their parents, with the view of discovering whether their delinquencies arose from the depraved character of their early associations."[13] This indicates that Mayhew really was interested in finding out why these men and boys were so poverty stricken, but that he was going about it by asking questions that made sense to him. He made his questions and interviews out of his preconceived attitudes that poverty and unemployment and homelessness were some kind of sickness that only the weak in society fell prey to.

Mayhew held negative and moralistic attitudes and beliefs about the London poor before conducting his interviews. He probably still held some of these attitudes even after he was finished interviewing and had seen all he wanted to see. But to his credit, he allowed the opinions and attitudes that the poor in low lodging houses held about themselves to come through in the *Morning Chronicle.* Because we do not have his original notes, we cannot be sure what he cut out and what slipped through the cracks, but we can see through reading his interviews that the answers to some of his questions contradict the attitudes he had about the poor. This proves that although he did have biases, he was willing to listen to the poor and put in writing what they said about themselves.

An example of an answer given to Mayhew in reply to an obviously biased question is one given by a young lodger in the first low lodging house where he conducted interviews. The question was why they preferred theft to work, and the reply was simply: "We don't, it's precious hard work having to walk the street, I can tell you; but we can't get nothing to do."[14] This straightforward answer shows that the lodgers did not think ill of themselves. They would prefer not to be vagrants and criminals, but were unable to find work. After that young man had spoken up in response to Mayhew's question, another man cried "Look at me; who'd give me a day's work in the state I am! Why the best job I've had I only got 3d. We couldn't live on what we get."[15] Mayhew described this man as a "mass of rags and filth," which is what he must have been referring to when he insisted "look at me." The statements that he made show that no matter how hard they looked for well-paying jobs, they were not to be had by people that looked like him. This was clear to the men living in the low lodging houses. They were not blind. They could see that they were not well groomed

13 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 104.
14 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 93.
15 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 93-94.

or clothed like the middle- and upper-class Londoners that did not live far from them, yet seldom wandered into their side of town. They knew that they were looked down upon and despised by the people of Henry Mayhew's class, and yet they were in a situation where there was no room for upward social mobility.

But even knowing all this the poor did not think less of themselves. On page 106 of the *Morning Chronicle*, Mayhew asked young men in a low lodging house what their motives were for stealing in the first place. Their answers varied from running away from home to stealing in order to go to the theatre. One answer was that "they had been imprisoned for vagrants, and found that the thief was better treated than they."[16] This was the reason given by the largest number in the group for having stolen for the first time. Whether or not Mayhew reported this completely accurately we will never know, but supposing that it is correct, it gives the contemporary reader a look into the heart of the poor youth in London in the 1850s. They were imprisoned for vagrancy, basically for being homeless, but found that thieves were better treated—no doubt more respected by other criminals—than those who accepted their homelessness without a fight. This shows that many of these young boys were literally forced into becoming thieves to survive, not only health wise, but also on the streets in terms of respect from others. Mayhew allowed their attitudes and beliefs to shine through here.

From the beginning of his letters about the poor in low lodging houses in the *Morning Chronicle*, the reader can see Mayhew's attitudes. At the start, his questions and writings indicated that he held a negative view of the poor. But throughout the reading, it is obvious that his attitudes begin to shift. He sees that, although these young men are filthy and live in dismal conditions, it is not entirely their fault. A growing sympathy for these young men becomes evident. Writing about the "bunks" that the men sleep on in the sleeping quarters of the lodging houses, Mayhew wrote that "The stench of the room was overpowering, and I hurried from the place, indeed, a wiser and a *sadder* man."[17] The word "sadder" was italicized in the *Morning Chronicle,* showing that Mayhew wanted to emphasize his feelings after seeing the wretched condition that the poor lived. This feeling of sadness shows me that he looked past his judgmental attitudes of the poor to feel for them. The word "wiser" indicates that Mayhew knew he had witnessed something that few of his class had seen or cared to see.

16 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 106.

17 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 95.

After spending some time with and among them, he was becoming aware of the lives that they lived and the places that they slept. After meeting and talking with them, it was impossible for him to simply judge them because he now connected with them and could see, to a certain extent, why they lived the way they did.

The conclusion that Mayhew came to was one that is obvious to the reader. He began to see that with the meager wages the poor earned for the menial jobs they were able to acquire, they were unable to move out of poverty. As stated before, he began to look beyond judging them and could empathize with them. An interesting statement that Mayhew made regarding the men in the low lodging houses was that "Indeed their errors seem to have rather a physical than either an intellectual or moral cause."[18] He made this comment after having interviewed several different groups of young men in the low lodging houses. It shows that he acknowledged that these men were not criminals or living in these despicable places because they were ignorant or immoral. Mayhew was showing that he was attempting to keep an open mind when it comes to the moral characters of these men. This comment is surprising when taken out of context, because in the beginning of his letter to the *Morning Chronicle* about the poor in low lodging houses, Mayhew condemned the activities and lifestyles of the poor. For example, on page 97 he discussed the fact that the poor did not preserve Sunday in the proper manner. But throughout the interviews and comments discussing the poor in the low lodging houses, Mayhew's attitudes were transformed to include a slight understanding. He sympathized with the men he interviewed. He could not help but do so, for many of them told him how they attempted to get jobs every day, but always came up lacking enough money to buy more than one meager meal a day and sometimes not even enough to have a roof over their heads at night.

This shifting of attitude that Mayhew had concerning the poor in low lodging houses was the most interesting to read in the *Morning Chronicle.* It showed how a moralistic, biased middle-class man could be changed by going in among the poor and opening his mind to the ideas and attitudes of them. He constructed his attitudes more around the evidence of a lack of jobs and living wages and less from the judgmental beliefs that had ruled his opinion of the poor before conducting his interviews. His transformed attitudes indicate that Mayhew was not just investigating the poor to sell papers, as Gertrude Him-

18 Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle,* 107.

melfarb argued in her chapter "The Culture of Poverty." He may have written more than originally intended because of the popularity of his articles, but he began to have a real interest in the lives of the poor. And in the case of those in low lodging houses, he empathized with their situation and saw things through their eyes and to a certain extent, through their hearts.

In conclusion, a few questions remain. How do the low lodging houses compare to the homeless shelters of today? Also, why is there a gender gap in Mayhew's interviews? Were there not poor women and young female children? Low lodging houses in London in the 1840s and 1850s were homes for people who could not afford to sleep anywhere else. They were at the bottom of the social and economic ladder and many were not able to move up because the pitiful jobs that they were able to acquire were temporary and had very low wages. The homeless of that time could be compared to the homeless in the United States in the early twenty-first century. We still have homeless shelters that offer meals and warm beds for minimal prices. They are often run by religious organizations that feel compelled to help the poor in the surrounding areas for spiritual as well as health reasons. The attitudes of society about the poor in mid-nineteenth century London are very similar to those of twenty-first century America.

First of all, the actual structure of homeless shelters has come a long way. In the *Morning Chronicle,* Mayhew described a lodging house as having unplastered walls, filth everywhere, and an overwhelming stench. Cleanliness standards have come a long way and current homes for the poor must be kept clean and orderly with everyone in them being accounted for. As stated before, they are often run by religious organizations that feel it is their duty to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves. This is a wonderful advantage for society because, for the most part, people do not want to think about, let alone come into contact with, the poor. Perhaps it is because an odd sense of guilt comes over them; perhaps because they are disgusted by the way they look and smell. No matter what the reason, the attitudes of society have not changed a great deal since Mayhew's investigations. There are many people who still feel like Mayhew felt when going into the low lodging houses—that the poor should get jobs, stop drinking, and stop committing crimes. That way, they could move out of homelessness and into "middle-class" society with "everyone" else. The fact that these attitudes have not changed explains why there are not enough shelters for all of the homeless.

An interesting thing about Mayhew and his description of the low lodging

houses was that he never mentioned women being there except when he described the cheapest of the low lodging houses, and then he is only mentioning that there were men and women sleeping together in the same rooms huddled on the floor. He did not bother to interview any of the women or young girls while there, though. This is puzzling because when talking about the lodgings and provisions for the poor, it seems natural for women to be there. After all, women and young children made and still make the lowest wages in society (of course, it is now illegal for young children to work). The only reasonable explanation is that many of the women were working as prostitutes and possibly lived in brothels or other kinds of low lodging houses. Perhaps Mayhew was waiting to use women for his section on prostitution. Whatever the reason, the fact that there are no interviewed women in all of the low lodging houses made me wonder why Mayhew would have left out such a large group of the poor.

World War II on Postage Stamps: A Source for the Historian

JAMES CHAD SHAFFER

Numismatics, or the study of coins and currency, has long been recognized by historians as a viable source of recorded history. Conversely, the philatelic study of stamps has never received such attention; in fact, its contributions to the discipline have been largely ignored. Admittedly, historians are partial to written documents that provide concrete evidence of the past, yet this is a regrettable practice because postage stamps, as primary source materials, offer historians a cumulative picture of the sociopolitical landscape within a given culture. In-depth analysis of postage stamps, moreover, can provide even the most casual observer with an awareness of governmental propaganda, to which the minds and actions of a people are socially conditioned. Although some may criticize the importance of stamps for their seemingly negligible role in society, stamps can be inferred to be a subconscious medium through which imagery and symbolic representation are used to convey targeted messages and advance certain agendas. Specifically, this research will focus on United States World War II stamp issues from 1940 to 1945 and the corresponding World War II commemorative stamp series from 1991 to 1995. Before exploring the intricate detail of these stamps and their historical significance, an appreciation for wartime propaganda should be in order.

Only six months after the United States entered World War II, the government launched a major propaganda campaign aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the country in order to more successfully prosecute and win the war. In June of 1942, the Office of War Information (OWI) was established as the central figurehead of the movement. The OWI, taking an active part in winning the war, wanted to express American objectives during the battle, while at the same time preparing the way for postwar stabilization efforts. In the First World War, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) played much the same role by propagating government policy in the best light possible. Both the OWI the CPI shared a similar agenda and their objective was clear: win the war of public opinion and provide the federal government with the political mandate necessary to execute its policy initiatives.

During World War I, the growing technology of the early twentieth century had made worldwide communications a reality; consequently, all warring nations took advantage of the situation by creating public offices with the sole

intention of assisting their war efforts. For example, the British created multiple organizations to address both domestic information and to negate propaganda from enemy states. Similar to British actions, France, Germany, Japan, and all other key players in the war used every asset at their disposal to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the world. Unlike other nations, the United States developed "the most systematic centralization of propaganda" through the CPI. This committee, much like the OWI in World War II, sought to unite the public behind the war effort. This enormous task was achieved through the use of posters and pamphlets that dehumanized Germans, prompting hateful contempt from the public who even went as far as to rename sauerkraut "liberty cabbage" and hamburger "Salisbury steak."

Much like previous wars, World War II propagandists under the Franklin Roosevelt administration would engage in the art of altering public opinion, but this time the campaign involved a much broader theme with worldwide implications. Initially, the aim of government officials was to inform the public about aggression on the European continent, thus making them mindful of the ensuing threat. Subsequently, the goal was to build up the nation's defenses and mobilize the armed forces in case battle with the Axis powers became necessary. The heart of this movement can readily be seen on three 1940 National Defense Issue stamps entitled "Statue of Liberty," "90-Millimeter Anti-Aircraft Gun," and the "Torch of Enlightenment," respectively. These stamps, like the OWI, propagated the government's agenda through the use of symbolic representations, a process which Donald Reid calls "a system of communications."

Upon investigation, the 1940 "Statue of Liberty" stamp reveals the torch of Lady Liberty upholding the "twin pillars of industry and agriculture" in order to incite the prosperity and progress, which they represent. Moreover, the 1940 "Anti-Aircraft Gun" stamp depicts the country's most advanced piece of artillery, the 90-mm anti-aircraft gun, holding up two words, "Army" and "Navy," in an effort to reflect the nation's military strength and resolve to defend its freedom at any cost. The third stamp in the series, the 1940 "Torch of Enlightenment" issue, shows a hand grasping a flaming torch and pointing it upwards towards the words "education, security, conservation, and health." This stamp obviously served the government's cause by asking Americans to place their country and its longevity above themselves. In all three stamps, symbols are used to convey a message about patriotism and sacrifice. In fact, towards the bottom of each issue the words "for defense" appear, as if the

theme of strength and security had not been clear enough.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his January 6, 1941, message to Congress, spoke of the "four essential human freedoms"—freedom of speech and expression, freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom of religion. Roosevelt, moreover, claimed, "Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory." This pre-war address exemplified the pervasive thought of the administration, which the stamps merely tried to perpetuate. In fact, the 1942 "Win the War" issue did just that. This stamp (in my estimation) constitutes the most overt form of symbolic meaning in that it depicts the American eagle with both wings pointing upwards, thereby forming a large letter "V" (as in "Victory"). Encircling the eagle are thirteen stars, representing the thirteen original colonies; across the bird's chest reads, "WIN THE WAR" in boldface type. The stamp was first issued on July 4, 1942, a day of special meaning for all Americans.

The 1941 State of the Union address, delivered by FDR, clearly espoused a shift in American foreign policy by placing tyrannical regimes like that of Nazi Germany into a "new order" defined by its aggressive and imperial subjugation of other countries. Unlike the "new order" of tyranny, Roosevelt claimed that democracies were that of a "moral order," which stress individual freedoms, and more expressly the "Four Freedoms." This government edict, having emanated from the top down, served to guide the apprehensive nation through the onset of World War II. In celebration of President Roosevelt's speech, 1943 saw a "Four Freedoms" postage stamp, showing Lady Liberty holding the lit torch of freedom and enlightenment. Moreover, the symbolic figure is seen presiding over a scroll offering each of the four freedoms in bold print. This initial "Four Freedoms" stamp would be followed by a 1945 issue commemorating the death of President Roosevelt. This stamp, entitled "Map of Western Hemisphere and Four Freedoms," honored FDR and his wartime leadership, but more important, the stamp praised his efforts to extend these liberties to other nations around the globe.

In tribute to all free nations, in 1943 the United States Postal Service issued an Allied Nations stamp entitled "Allegory of Victory." On this stamp, the observer can see a number of upright swords, representing the allied nations, raised in unity against the forces of tyranny. These swords are seen united behind a single palm branch that, according to postal authorities, "is a symbol

of peace and prosperity." Thus, this stamp transmits a message that peace is always the first option, but if necessary all freedom-loving people will unite to defend what is rightfully theirs.

Likewise, the United States government issued a series of thirteen consecutive stamps from 1943 to 1944, entitled the "Overrun Countries Issue." These stamps were meant to call attention to the many sovereign states that had been invaded by the combined forces of the Axis powers. One may believe these stamps to be a depressing issue, but in fact they were intended to honor the internal resistance efforts. According to the stamp-issuing agency, "they also conveyed the belief that those countries would triumph over their tormentors." These stamps definitively had a targeted message; they exhibited the flags of overrun countries (such as France) amidst the background of radiant beams of light, representing the spirit of freedom that the totalitarian aggressors could never vanquish. These stamps, featuring nations such as Poland and South Korea, show a phoenix and the image of a female figure beside the country's national flag. The phoenix, a mythological bird known for its death and rebirth, obviously parallels each overrun country and its hopeful transformation from oppression to freedom. The woman, on the other hand, is shown to be breaking her shackles and raising her hands to the sky. These metaphoric images hold specific detailed meaning in that they put forth the belief that freedom will triumph over all forces of opposition.

Coupled with themes of international solidarity, United States postage during the World War II era increasingly honored the armed forces and their service to the nation. The first of these issues coming in 1945 would be remembered as the everlasting symbol of the Allied victory and the United States Marine Corps. This issue, entitled "Marines Raising Flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima," shows a group of soldiers hoisting Old Glory just prior to one of the bloodiest battles in all of American history. From this stamp, we may safely assume that the more harmless side of war was chosen over competing scenes that show war and its human costs. This selective interpretation of wartime events, however, closely resembles that of other period stamps through its use of symbolism, meant to elicit a deep emotional attachment and patriotic sympathies.

A prime example of this practice can be readily spotted while observing the 1945 army issue, titled "United States Troops Passing Arch of Triumph." This stamp not only uses symbolism, but also combines forces with former issues that praise American military might. This tantamount imagery, having

not been shown in a stamp since the onset of the war, somehow reemerged as Americans began to celebrate the successful invasion of the European mainland and subsequent defeat of fascist Germany. From the issue, I infer that when the outcome of the war was uncertain, the American propaganda machine became more subtle in its interpretation of the military prowess, opting instead to illustrate themes of the national character taken from the mouth of the nation's leader, President Roosevelt. This stamp, in particular, coalesces all competing forms of symbolism, seeing as it represents victory (the Arc de Triomphe), as well as the pervasive power of the United States military (six American bombers flying overhead).

The 1945 navy issue, termed "United States Sailors," shows the image of nearly eleven smiling sailors dressed in their military best. Like other military issues, this stamp places a sunny expression on the face of a dark war. At best, this stamp offers the observer a general knowledge of period fatigues by neglecting the harsh realities of naval life, especially in the Pacific theatre in which Japanese pilots regularly flew warplanes into naval fleets. Along with the navy, army, and marines, several stamps were issued to commemorate the coast guard and the merchant mariners, although neither would engage in the art of realism. Overall, wartime issues from 1940 onward were used by the United States government as a means of propagating covert messages of strength, international camaraderie, and liberal democracy.

Unlike wartime stamp issues, the 1991-1995 fiftieth-anniversary World War II commemorative stamp series does not show the glorified side of war. In fact, these stamps appear to be far more realistic and honest in their interpretation of wartime events. Of course, these issues do not succeed in the wartime practice of symbolic imagery; however, they do seem flawed in a variety of other ways. If we take, for instance, the totality of all five sets issued from 1991 through 1995, there appears only one stamp honoring the sacrifices of the Allies, that being the 1991 "A World At War" series, in which President Franklin Roosevelt is seen sitting beside his English counterpart, Sir Winston Churchill. This stamp, moreover, was meant to remember the forging of the Atlantic Charter in 1941 that would set the stage for postwar internationalization in the form of the United Nations, created in 1945. Categorically, these modern commemoratives emerge as the product of a post-Cold War environment, which oftentimes provides revisionist pieces of history by inadvertently looking at wars and other historical happenings from the perspective of a superpower, rather than that of a fledgling democracy.

Although the 1990s commemorative issues did neglect the contributions of other nations in the defeat of fascist regimes, they were far more honest in their presentation of war and its capricious evils. For instance, on a 1995 commemorative stamp, we see a group of Jewish men behind the barbed-wire fence of a Nazi concentration camp. Moreover, in a 1994 issue commemorating the battle for Leyte Gulf, large battleship guns are seen blasting rounds towards the enemy. Another stamp, issued in the same year, depicts U.S. troops clearing a Saipan bunker with a flamethrower. The realism among these stamps seems to be quite representative of the larger set in that every stamp issued shows, to some degree, the reality of the event that it was meant to commemorate.

In fact, the "new realism" of the World War II commemorative set came to a boil in December 1994, when the United States Postal Service announced its intention to issue the final collection of stamps, entitled "Victory at Last." This series was to depict the major events of 1945, thereby concluding the fiftieth-anniversary edition. However, one stamp in the series would cause a great deal of controversy. The USPS had, in effect, created an A-bomb stamp showing an atomic mushroom cloud followed by the inscription, "Atomic bombs hasten war's end." Immediately, the Japanese government protested the move, citing its gross insensitivity towards the people of Japan, but most especially towards the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which had suffered the most.

In response, the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, along with Ambassador Kuriyama, voiced their opposition to both the stamp's design and ensuing slogan. Initially, the United States responded that "it was too late to change the design of the stamp" and with the mindful eye of veteran groups it opted to go forward with the issue. Japan vigorously responded by threatening to issue a stamp of its own that would call America's actions on December 7, 1945, a "crime against international law." Under pressure from international authorities, President Clinton personally intervened, asking post office officials to replace the A-bomb image with that of President Harry Truman announcing the end of the war.

The Second World War was one of the most important events of the twentieth century, given the enormous changes it brought and the lasting effect of its memories. This war continues to "attract more interest and to provoke more controversy than any other topic." From the narrative, it is clear that stamps add distinct primary source materials to the discipline of history, and more specifically, the Second World War. In effect, stamps provide a window through which historians can learn a great deal about earlier generations. It

may be argued that philatelists alone consciously inspect stamps, because for the most part we all fail to identify with their symbolic meaning. Although we may never become philatelists ourselves, we must begin to recognize the value of the stamp in the larger context of historical research. Using stamps to decipher the intentions of a former government, for example, can lend positive insight about a society that is essentially foreign to one's own. Therefore, I assert that the philatelic art of collecting and analyzing stamps should be grafted into the larger and more comprehensive field of history as a means of gaining a more complete picture of the past.