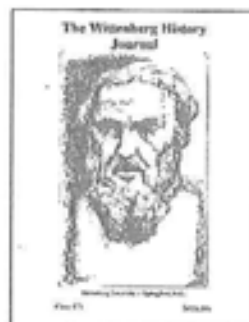




THE WITTENBERG HISTORY JOURNAL

Wittenberg University • Springfield, Ohio

Volume XXV
Spring 1996



— 1996 Cover Design —

Special thanks to Erik Porter for his help with the anniversary cover.

THE WITTENBERG HISTORY JOURNAL

Wittenberg University • Springfield, Ohio

Volume XXV

Spring 1996

Editor's Note:

In this, the thirtieth anniversary of *The Wittenberg History Journal*, we, the editors, felt a need to reflect on the benefits that the *History Journal* has offered to both its staff and its readers. A knowledge of history offers an empowering experience. It enables students of history to discover the past and in turn to understand our common heritage. The staff of the *History Journal* enjoys the exploration of history for its own sake. When considering papers for publication we often discover new topics that ignite in us a desire to study new areas of history. We hope that the papers in the *History Journal* do the same for those who read it. If *The Wittenberg History Journal* sparks within its readers a new interest in history, then it has accomplished its mission. It is in this interest of increasing historical-mindedness and celebrating history that we observe this 30th anniversary of *The Wittenberg History Journal*.

We would like to thank the following for their assistance in the production of this journal: the Wittenberg History Department for its support, Dr. Charles Chatfield for his invaluable assistance as our advisor, the *History Journal* Staff for their commitment and hard work, and Carol Kneisley in Publications for her patient attention to our efforts. Finally, thank you to all of our contributors, published and unpublished. The number and quality of the papers we received made our work both difficult and enjoyable: difficult in their selection, yet enjoyable to have had so many worthwhile papers from which to choose.

History Journal Staff

Co-Editors Jennifer Gehlhausen
David Norton

Staff April Helderman
Susan Klump
Dawn Lucas
Seth Martin
Kristin Spalding
David Thomas
Elizabeth Vanlier

Faculty Advisor Dr. Charles Chatfield

Table of Contents

The CIA, Carlos Castillo Armas, and Communism in Guatemala	1
<i>by Susan Klump</i>	
Pagans and Christians: A Brief Discussion	9
<i>by Brett Norris</i>	
The Ironclad Attack That Was Not Ironclad: Fort Sumter, April 7, 1863	14
<i>by April Helderman</i>	
No riot Here: Martinsburg, West Virginia's Role in the Great Strikes of 1877	17
<i>by David Thomas</i>	
Carl Sandburg: Historian for the Masses	19
<i>by April Helderman</i>	
Justice Denied: The Groveland Case	26
<i>by Matt Schroeder</i>	
Vietnamese Doi Moi: Southern Motivated Initiative for Change, 1985-86.....	29
<i>by Seth C. Bridger</i>	
Bar Belles: Springfield, Ohio's Crusade	33
<i>by David Thomas</i>	

Address correspondence to:

Editor
The Wittenberg History Journal
History Department
Wittenberg University
Springfield, Ohio 45501

The CIA, Carlos Castillo Armas, and Communism in Guatemala

by Susan Klomp

REVOLT LAUNCHED IN GUATEMALA; LAND-AIR-SEA INVASION REPORTED; RISINGS UNDER WAY IN KEY CITIES¹

June 18, 1954 — Guatemala has been invaded by land, air, and probably by sea in a drive to unseat the communist infiltrated government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman. Leading the revolt from neighboring Honduras is Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, a forty year old exile who has publicly opposed the Arbenz regime since his escape from a Guatemalan prison in 1951. Individual supporters of his Liberation army have confirmed that the country's gasoline and oil reserves have been bombed and uprisings have been reported in Puerto Barrios, Zacapa, and Quezaltenango. While Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello has charged both the United Fruit Company and the United States as playing a major role in the invasion, the White House denies any knowledge of the attack.²

PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA OUSTED BY ARMY JUNTA; NEW LEADERS OPPOSE REBEL CHIEF³

June 27 — After nine days of fierce fighting in Guatemala, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas and his Liberation army have successfully stopped communist aggression in Guatemala. President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, under pressure from his military advisers, ended his four year regime tonight when he publicly announced his resignation in a national radio broadcast. He has turned the reins of leadership over to a military junta headed by Colonel Enrique Diaz, a strong anti-communist. The Guatemalan people are breathing a sigh of relief tonight as is the White House. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has been quoted as saying that while "communism is still a menace everywhere, the people of the United States and other American republics can feel that at least one grave danger had been averted."⁴

These two news reports are reflective of the romantic light in which the Guatemalan incident was portrayed by the United States media. While not completely false,

these reports fail to mention the decisive role that the Eisenhower Administration played in the toppling of the Arbenz regime.⁵ The Administration was able to cover up its involvement largely because most reporters simply accepted on faith "the diet of news reports" supplied by Washington, Castillo Armas' American press agents, the United Fruit Company, the U.S. embassies in Guatemala and Honduras, and also the Nicaraguan and Honduran governments.⁶ Practically no one questioned these reports or raised any vital questions as to where Castillo Armas had found his soldiers and pilots; where he had gotten his weapons, planes, and trucks; and why he had been permitted by the Honduran and Nicaraguan governments to set up camp and train his small army in their countries. If they had, they might have discovered a multimillion dollar CIA covert operation, codenamed PBSUCCESS, that had been financed by the Eisenhower Administration. For those ten days of Armas' so-called invasion involved not only an underdeveloped country in Latin America, but also the most powerful capitalist nation in the world.⁷

The Eisenhower Administration based its judgement for the 1954 coup heavily on the conclusion that it must not only protect national interests, but also stop the spread of communism in Guatemala. These conclusions, however, were based largely upon misperceptions and exaggerations of Guatemalan government policy. What the United States did in 1954 was to mistake a nationalist and reformist political movement in Guatemala for a communist one. And while Operation PBSUCCESS was initially viewed as a short-term success for the Eisenhower Administration, its long-term effects would leave, a bitter aftertaste.⁸

In 1944 Guatemala, plagued by the oppressively brutal, fourteen year dictatorship of Castenada Jorge Ubico and a stagnant economy, underwent a series of revolutions led by urban middle-class students, intellectuals, business people, and the military. Looking to their northern neighbors, these revolutionaries based their ideals upon the democratic reforms of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the United States and Lazaro Cardenas in Mexico. By advocating a "new deal" for

Guatemala which would reform a governmental system rife with corruption and an economic order plagued by extreme inequality and poverty, they were able to win the support of the majority of the Guatemalan people. This support, in turn, led to the success of the revolution.⁹

The 1944 revolution "marked a new era in Guatemalan politics, one of social and economic reform."¹⁰ Elected by a whirlwind vote of support and inaugurated on March 15, 1945, the once-exiled school teacher, Juan Jose Arevalo Bermez, immediately set out to reform the political and economic structure of Guatemala. His presidency of "spiritual socialism" would be guided by four priorities: "agrarian reform, protection of labor, a better educational system, and consolidation of political democracy."¹¹ Arevalo, through the popularity of the October Revolution, was able to achieve many of his goals in his first few years as president: social security and labor code laws, the building of schools and hospitals, the formation of political parties and labor unions, and credit programs for small farmers. By 1948, though, unrest had begun to grow. Even though most of Arevalo's reforms were moderate and did not make any sweeping changes in the social structure, Guatemala's traditional power elite, comprised mainly of land owners and the aristocracy, nonetheless felt threatened. As the opposition mounted, Arevalo was challenged time and again. By the time he left office in March 1951, he had survived over twenty-five coup attempts.¹²

The task of carrying out the revolution's aims now fell to Jacobo Arbenz Guzman. One of the revolution's original military supporters and Arevalo's Defense Minister, Arbenz faced a grave challenge for the presidency in 1950 from Francisco Arana, Arevalo's rightist chief of staff. Arana's sudden assassination in July 1949, however, cleared Arbenz's path to the presidency. Although Arana's supporters tried to claim power after his assassination, the Arevalo government successfully quelled the coup. These rightists, though, would later prove to be a thorn in Arbenz's side.¹³

Although Arevalo had made giant steps within the political and economic structures of Guatemala, Arbenz realized that his task of continuing reform in an increasingly unstable Guatemala would not be an easy one. Yet he was strongly committed to the expansion of democracy through capitalist economic reforms. In particular, he wanted to help the plight of the country's poor peasants and establish an economy less dependent on foreign interests.¹⁴

In June 1952 Arbenz was able to achieve both his goals when Decree 900 or the Land Reform Bill passed in the National Assembly. The bill gave the government the right "to expropriate any uncultivated land held in estates larger than 700 acres."¹⁵ Once expropriated, the government would then compensate the land owner for the land's taxable value with government bonds. Within

one year of the bill's passage 740,000 acres from 107 farms had been redistributed. Eight thousand small farmers received the land from sixty-one farms, while the land from the remaining forty-six farms was distributed among cooperative ventures. While Arbenz's land distribution made him extremely popular with Guatemala's Indian and peasant populations, it outraged both foreign and Guatemalan plantation owners. One specific company was so outraged at its loss of 400,000 acres of land that it went directly to the United States government for help. That company was United Fruit.¹⁶

The United Fruit Company, an American-owned firm, had enjoyed a long and prosperous relationship with Guatemala's dictatorial governments. It all began in 1904 when Manuel Estrada Cabrera, the current dictator, offered one of United Fruit's owners, Minor Keith, the opportunity to build a railroad reaching from Puerto Barrios, a Guatemalan port city, to the capital. Keith was also able to buy up lots of land from Cabrera and establish his own telegraph line as well. By 1906 the company, operating the nation's only transportation line and controlling its only Caribbean port, was able to drive out small time competitors and take over the country's banana market. From then forward the company enjoyed great prosperity as Guatemala's largest land owner and Latin America's main banana exporter. The bananas, however, did not come without a price, and that price was paid by the Guatemalan people.¹⁷

While United Fruit boasted that its seasonal workers received the highest wages in Guatemala, the harsh economic reality for most of its workers was that their \$1.36 weekly salary could not support their family. This was especially true if they lived on the company plantations where the cost of living was among the highest in Guatemala. When its workers went on strike in 1946 to demand higher wages, better working conditions, and fringe benefits, United Fruit turned to the Arevalo government for support as it had done in the past with the country's dictatorial leadership. The Arevalo government, however, stood strongly behind the striking workers. Then in 1947 it passed the Labor Code which required companies to establish compulsory labor-management contracts, pay a minimum wage, and provide for its workers' safety and fringe benefits. The code also allowed for the formation of labor unions and set up labor courts to hear management-worker disputes. Tropical storms in 1949 and 1951 as well as adverse decisions by these local labor courts made matters worse for the company. By the time Arbenz's agrarian reform took effect, United Fruit was an embattled and unpopular company determined to retain its economic control at all costs.¹⁸

In the early 1940's the United Fruit Company, worried with its public image both in the United States and in Guatemala, hired Edward Bernays, a brilliant and shrewd public relations expert, to give the company a

more positive image. At first Bernays just "opened up" the banana firm to public scrutiny.¹⁹ However, the election of Jacobo Arbenz in 1950 bothered both Bernays and his bosses at United Fruit. Fearing Arbenz might attempt nationalization of their lands, the company set out on a campaign to protect its capitalist interests by painting the Arbenz regime a deep shade of red. Bernays began in early 1952 to put together press junkets where United Fruit would provide all-expense-paid fact-finding tours of Guatemala for American journalists. Not caring that the trips compromised their objectivity, journalists once back to the states turned out article after article on the communism in Guatemala. The company also lobbied senators and congressmen on both the right and left.²⁰

By early 1953 Bernays's campaign had planted a deep suspicion in the hearts and minds of the United States government, as well as its citizens, about the nature and intentions of the Guatemalan government. It had cost United Fruit over a half a million dollars a year, but their efforts would soon pay off. For in February 1953 United Fruit's attorney, Thomas Corcoran, lodged an official complaint with the State Department over the seizure of the company's land. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who had been a former partner in Cromwell and Sullivan—the law firm representing United Fruit, strongly backed the company. When Dulles was not able to convince Arbenz to pay United Fruit \$15,844,749 for the expropriated land, instead of the \$1,185,000 the Guatemalan government had earlier offered, he sent Thomas Corcoran to see his brother Allen (Dulles), then director of the CIA. Shortly thereafter, Eisenhower's approval for a CIA covert operation was obtained, and the White House began with the utmost stealth to plan Arbenz's demise.²¹

While the United Fruit Company with its "crude Red-baiting" helped influence U.S. foreign policy from 1944 on, it was not the only reason why the U.S. government decided to intervene in Guatemala.²² Amidst Cold War tensions abroad and McCarthy's accusations at home, State Department officials under both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations had been monitoring the Arevalo and Arbenz regimes and were convinced the revolution had taken a Marxist turn. As proof for their conclusions, they pointed to the increasing frequency of strikes and other forms of labor disputes, the nationalization of a communist party—the Guatemalan Labor Party—an increasing number of communist supporters within the government, and Guatemala's lack of support for the U.S. effort in Korea. In particular they worried that a communist Guatemala would "undermine the Rio Treaty, threaten the Panama Canal, inhibit U.S. economic interests, and ultimately lead to the presence of Soviet military might very near America's borders."²³

In 1952 the Truman Administration, seeing "Arbenz's land reforms as a general attack upon private

property and his attacks against United Fruit as an assault on the United States, approved a plan formulated by United Fruit for a Nicaraguan-led, Central American crusade to overthrow Arbenz.²⁴ Operation FORTUNE, led by colonel J.C. King of the CIA, used United Fruit Company ships to carry arms and ammunition to Guatemalan exiles in Nicaragua. The arms, however, never reached the exiles, for President Truman, under the advisement of Dean Acheson, his Secretary of State, cancelled the venture in mid-operation and rerouted the arms shipments to the Canal Zone.²⁵

In early 1953 the Eisenhower Administration, responding to United Fruit's desire to resurrect an anti-Guatemalan plot, decided to take covert action against Arbenz. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen, CIA Director, decided to give Colonel J.C. King the job once again. Bruised by his first venture, King tried a new tack. King, after successfully approaching disgruntled right-wing officers within the Guatemalan military, arranged to send them arms in March 1953. Colonel King's organized guerilla revolt in the Guatemalan town of Salama, however, failed miserably with almost all of its two hundred supporters arrested and jailed.²⁶

As a result of the abortive Salama revolt, CIA leadership for the coup planning was given to Frank Wisner. Under Wisner the operation, codenamed PBSUCCESS (after the successful Iranian coup in 1953), evolved into two separate parts. The first part, a diplomatic offensive orchestrated by the State Department, consisted of shifting U.S. diplomatic personnel in Central America to insure support for Arbenz's fall and securing a resolution from the Inter-American Conference in March 1954, condemning communism. The second would be a military operation planned by the CIA, but operated by Guatemalan exiles, who would invade the country through neighboring Honduras and overthrow Arbenz.

By the end of 1953 Dulles had sent new U.S. ambassadors to every single Central American country, except for Nicaragua where Thomas Whelan, serving since 1951, was a close confidant of Antonio Somoza, the country's rightist dictator. Of course the most important member of this thoroughly anti-communist ambassadorial team was John Peurifoy, as he was assigned to Guatemala and would be responsible for playing a key role in the coup's planning and execution.

Once ambassadorial support for the coup had been secured, Dulles in March 1954 moved on to secure a more outright condemnation of the Arbenz regime at the Inter-American conference in Caracas, Venezuela. He introduced a draft entitled "Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States Against International Communism." While Dulles did not specifically mention Guatemala in his presentation, there was no doubt that its government was

the subject of the draft. Although Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello vigorously protested the conference's 17-1 vote, his Central American neighbors did not budge in their support of Dulles. And even though Dulles had to threaten possible dissenters with economic reprisals in order to obtain a favorable vote, the conference was nonetheless a huge success for the Eisenhower Administration. The U.S. Information Agency by making a special project out of the resolutions passage, was able to mobilize popular support against the Guatemalan regime. Congressional rhetoric toward the Arbenz regime also heated up as a result.²⁷

Meanwhile Wisner was secretly orchestrating his half of Operation PBSUCCESS. His first major decision was to choose a field commander. Although Wisner had approached Kermit Roosevelt, who had led the successful CIA coup in Iran, about the job, Roosevelt declined saying the coup would not get support from the Guatemalan people. The job was then given to Colonel Albert Haney, the current CIA station chief in South Korea. Under Haney operational planning became quite sophisticated. Due to Arbenz's popularity and the fact that he controlled Central America's largest army at five thousand men, Haney realized the key to Operation PBSUCCESS lay not in military might, but in its allusion. Through propaganda and psychological warfare the CIA intended to frighten both the government and the Guatemalan people into accepting a rebel victory.²⁸

To carry out this plan Haney, running the operation out of a deserted military base in Opa-Locka, Florida, recruited around one hundred CIA agents and contracted outside persons and "spent nearly \$20 million organizing a guerilla army and secret air force, setting up secret radio stations and training camps in Central America, and searching for a leader. . . to replace Arbenz."²⁹ His search ended with Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, an open opponent of the Arbenz regime. Armas, jailed in 1950 for his attempt to overthrow the Arbenz government, had escaped from a Guatemalan prison in 1951. Since that time he had "been casting about for someone to sponsor a military strike against Guatemala." When approached by the CIA in the fall of 1953, Armas accepted their offer without any conditions or objections.³⁰

By April 1954 Operation PBSUCCESS was in place. All the Eisenhower Administration had to do was "trap Arbenz into making a false move."³¹ Only one month later he unknowingly obliged with what later would be known as the Alfhem incident. Arbenz, growing increasingly worried about Armas' impending invasion, had decided secretly to purchase arms from behind the Iron Curtain. On May 15, 1945, the Swedish ship carrying these arms, the Alfhem, docked in Puerto Barrios. While the CIA had known about the ship's departure since late April, it had not been able to confirm the contents of its cargo until that day. News of the

Alfhem shook Washington as the Administration realized Arbenz intended to distribute the majority of his 1900 tons of Czech arms to the peasants. Two days later Secretary of State Dulles leaked his knowledge of the arms shipment to the press. The congressional and public outrage that followed, combined with the Administration's knowledge of Arbenz's intentions for the arms, spurred the launching of operation PBSUCCESS.³²

A "war of nerves" was now on.³³ While the United States stepped up its pattern of public attacks against Guatemala and urged the search and seizure of all ships bound for Latin America, the CIA operated Voice of Liberation, located in a ramshackle barn in Nicaragua, began to broadcast twenty four hours a day urging the Guatemalan people to join in revolt with Castillo Armas. Within Guatemala a well-organized plot to overthrow the government had been discovered by the Minister of the Interior, and Arbenz, in an effort to retain control, began to crack down on the opposition by ordering their arrests and suspending constitutional guarantees.³⁴

On June 18, 1954, Castillo-Armas and his 'army' - a small force in trucks - crossed the border from Honduras and encamped six miles inside Guatemala. His air force, a mixed handful of B26s and P-47 fighter planes, dropped leaflets over Guatemala City, made strafing runs in outlying districts, and even dropped a bomb or two. Perhaps even so many as three, the point being that the attacks were militarily insignificant while contributing to widespread fear of all-out raids. Meanwhile, the Voice of Liberation was active around the clock, broadcasting meaningless 'orders' to fictitious rebel forces, reporting 'battles' and spreading rumors.

In the capital city Arbenz, isolated with a small group of advisers, was being bombarded with conflicting reports. While his "leftist supporters urged an all out resistance," the 'military temporized,' and the Guatemalan people grew increasingly scared and restless.³⁶ Arbenz, not knowing which reports to believe or whose advice to take, was confused, excited, and alone. His foreign minister Guillermo Toriello had left for the United Nations in hopes of receiving help to resolve the crisis. He also tried to seek a diplomatic resolution with the Eisenhower Administration, but as the Guatemalan government soon discovered, its appeals were too late.³⁷

Back at CIA headquarters a problem had arisen. Two of Armas' three fighter planes had been lost, and as a result, the operation stood in jeopardy. Without the planes Dulles deduced, Castillo Armas' show of force would be considerably weakened and his chances of success reduced to almost zero. With victory seemingly close at hand, Eisenhower ordered the sale of two air

force planes to the Nicaraguan air force. CIA pilots were then able to fly additional sorties. One such sortie led to the accidental sinking of a British ship, the *Springford*, which was thought to be carrying gasoline and other supplies to Arbenz's forces. Its cargo, however, was later discovered to be Guatemalan cotton and coffee.³⁸

The sinking of the *Springford* along with fears of a civilian militia drove the military into pushing for Arbenz's resignation. On June 27, 1954, at 9:15 P.M., Arbenz, in a national radio broadcast, informed his fellow countrymen he had made "a sad and cruel judgement."

.In the hope of containing this aggression and bringing peace back to Guatemala, I have decided to step down and place the nation's executive power in the hands of my friend Colonel Carlos Enrique Diaz, chief of the armed forces of the republic.³⁹

Arbenz then left the country for Mexico where he had been granted asylum. It is hard to know how many Guatemalans heard his speech, as most had now tuned into the *Voice of Liberation* to monitor the events of Castillo Armas' so-called invasion.⁴⁰ The anti-communist military junta headed by Colonel Diaz proved to be short-lived. The Eisenhower Administration and United Fruit found him to be an unacceptable leader and after several days of wrangling, power was turned over to Colonel Castillo Armas, who arrived victorious in Guatemala City on the plane of U.S. ambassador John Peurifoy. Castillo, Armas, elected provisional president by a military junta on July 7, was later confirmed as Guatemala's constitutional president in the October national elections.⁴¹

The victory of Castillo Armas, to the informed public and the Eisenhower Administration, was "the first clear-cut victory for the West since the battle for Greece." In their eyes he was a "true champion of democracy," a "hero to be emulated by oppressed peoples everywhere." In order to showcase him in front of the whole world, the State Department invited Castillo Armas to the United States in late 1955. In addition to recognizing Castillo Armas, the State Department also applauded the Guatemalan people, who had courageously stood up against the threat of Communism, letting the Soviets know that "their brand of slavery would not be tolerated by those who loved freedom."⁴²

The Administration, generously lauding the success of Castillo Armas' coup, however, never once publicly acknowledged their involvement. In fact, spearheaded by the State Department's efforts, the Administration began a massive cover-up and by 1957 all official government documents were reflective of their efforts. The euphoria of the 1954 coup, though, to those involved: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the CIA, was still alive. It, along with the earlier success of the 1953 CIA

coup in Iran, had launched the United States on a new foreign policy path by replacing direct action against communism with the subversive tactics of the CIA. And on the heels of its victory in Guatemala, the Administration took another step along the path. That step led them toward Cuba and plans to overthrow its leftist leader, Fidel Castro. The Bay of Pigs Operation, based largely upon Operation PBSUCCESS, however, would not reach fruition until the presidency of John F. Kennedy. The CIA's efforts in Cuba, unlike Guatemala, however, would result not in success, but in abject failure.⁴³

Failure also plagued the United Fruit Company from the late 1950s through the early 1970s. By securing U.S. action against the Arbenz government in 1954, the company had hoped to retain its vise-like grip on the Guatemalan economy. In the wake of the successful 1954 coup, though, United Fruit did anything but prosper. Unable to persuade the Justice Department to drop its anti-trust suit against its Guatemalan operations, the United Fruit Company was forced to surrender some of its trade and land to local Guatemalan businessmen. In a subsequent law suit the company was also forced to give up its ownership interest in IRCA, Guatemala's only railroad. Facing a corporate merger craze as well, the United Fruit pulled out of Guatemala completely in 1972 by selling its remaining holdings to the Del Monte corporation.⁴⁴

The aftermath of the 1954 coup also haunted the Guatemalan people, who discovered "in peace a bitter aftertaste;" for all of the advances made by the democratic government of Jacobo Arbenz were taken away and replaced with wide scale repression under the dictatorship of Carlos Castillo Armas.⁴⁵ Economically Castillo Armas returned the country back to its traditional reliance on coffee and bananas by driving the peasants from the plots of land they had won under the Arbenz government, and giving them back to their original owners. The peasants, then, largely excluded from economy, returned to a life of wretched poverty, while the aristocracy prospered.

Castillo Armas, also wanting to exclude thousands of Guatemalans from the political system, among other actions, repealed universal suffrage, delayed national elections, and revised national laws so the organization of labor unions and political parties was illegal. Guatemalans unwilling to give up their newly found freedoms were either jailed or killed by firing squads. The reign of terror that existed during Castillo Armas' three-year presidency was so encompassing that it is still unclear today how many Guatemalans died at his hands.⁴⁶

The violence within Guatemala, however, did not die in 1957 with the assassination of Castillo Armas; neither did the country's deteriorating social and economic conditions. From 1954 to the present Guatemala has been ruthlessly ruled by successive military dictatorships,

who have retained their power primarily through the use of death squads. And while the Guatemalan armed forces has not only grown in size to 14,000-members, its wealth has also substantially increased.

In marked contrast the majority of Guatemalans are struggling to survive with one-third of the rural population malnourished, another 85 percent without access to piped water, and 96 percent without electricity. Medical care is also scarce.⁴⁷ Those not plagued by stifling economic conditions live in a charged atmosphere of violence where as one Guatemalan explains "opponents of the government are killed or kidnapped in the streets and just disappear . . ."⁴⁸ These street corner murders by the military's death squads have reached into every sector of national life in Guatemala affecting lawyers, journalists, schoolteachers, politicians, religious workers, priests, students, professors, trade union organizers and others.⁴⁹

Since 1955 a small and militant number of Guatemalans have been fighting back against the government. These rebels have used much the same tactics of the government: planting bombs, kidnapping individuals, and murdering political opponents. The guerillas, tracing their lineage to Operation PBSUCCESS, say

the counterrevolution, put in motion by the U.S. Government and those domestic sectors committed to retaining every single one of their privileges, dispersed, and disorganized the popular and democratic forces. However, it did not resolve any of the problems which had first given rise to demands for economic, social and political change. These demands have been raised again and again in the last quarter century, by any means that seemed appropriate at the time and have received the same repressive response as in 1954.⁵⁰

The United States government, throughout Castillo Armas' dictatorial rule and the succession of military

dictatorships that followed, supported the actions of these repressive governments through both military training and millions of dollars aimed at crushing the guerrilla opposition. As a result of both the 1954 coup and their later actions, the United States has lost face in not only Guatemala, but in Latin America as a whole. For far from rejoicing in the 1954 coup, Latin America reacted with great hostility toward the United States by burning flags and conducting mass demonstrations.⁵¹ As Thomas Powers, an ex-CIA agent points out, "far from being secret, the CIA's role seemed so blatant to Latin Americans, it amounted to an insult."⁵² Latin America, though, had learned a valuable lesson. U.S. actions in Guatemala, they felt clearly illustrated that the United States was not only more interested in unquestioning allies than democratic ones, but also that those Latin American governments who did not wish to follow along Washington's lines could be replaced.⁵³

The Eisenhower Administration, unable to foresee the long term consequences of its actions, overthrew the Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in 1954 for two main reasons: to protect U.S. economic interests and to stop the spread of communism. However, as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, himself, later admitted, there was no communism in Guatemala in 1954.⁵⁴ Acting then primarily on the basis of protecting economic interests in Guatemala, the United States in 1953-54 operated and financed a CIA-covert operation that overthrew a popular democratic regime and replaced it with a legacy of military dictatorships.

From a historical perspective, no one could judge the outcome of the 1954 coup as happy. In the long run, none of the participants in the coup benefited from its results: not the United States government, not the CIA, not the United Fruit Company, and certainly not Guatemala. As a result, Operation PBSUCCESS, once lauded as a one of the greatest victories for democracy in the Cold War, can only be seen as a disastrous failure.

Endnotes

¹ Banner headline, *New York Times*, June 19, 1954, p. 1.

² Milton Bracker, "Resistance Force Announces Action," *New York Times*, June 19, 1954, p. 1-2; Walter A. Wagoner, "U.S. Contacts Cut, But Reports Assert the Revolt is Serious - Capital Watchful," *New York Times*, June 19, 1954, p. 1, 2, 4.

³ Banner headline, *New York Times*, June 28, 1954, p. 1.

⁴ Paul F. Kennedy "Arbenz is Deposed, U.S. Is Asked to Help End the Bloodshed as Regime Shifts," *New York Times*, June 28, 1954, p. 1, 3; "State Department Hails Guatemala," *New York Times*, July 1,

1954, p. 1-2.; "The Text of Dulles Speech on Guatemalan Upset," *New York Times*, July 1, 1954, p. 2.

⁵ Stephen C. Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 187-8.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 266; Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin,

TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 179.

⁸ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 101 and 7; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 227.

⁹ Morris J. Blachman, William M. LeoGrande, and Kenneth E. Sharpe, *Confronting Revolution: Security Through Diplomacy in Central America*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 25; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 26; Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 43.

¹⁰ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 46.

¹¹ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 32, 35, 37.

¹² Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 56-57; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 38, 40-42.

¹³ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 49; John E. Findling, *Close Neighbors, Distant Friends: United States Contributions in American History Series*, no. 12, *Central American Relations*, (West Port, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1987), 109; Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 60.

¹⁴ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 49.

¹⁵ Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 110.

¹⁶ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 65; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 85; John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, (New York: William and Morrow Company, Inc., 1986), 98-99.

¹⁷ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 68, 75, 69; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 70; Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 73-75.

¹⁸ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 75-77; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 110.

¹⁹ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 81.

²⁰ Ibid., 82, 86-87; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 112.

²¹ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 87, 90, 97; Prados, *Presidents'*, 98-99; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 112; Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 81 and 133.

²² Blachman et al., *Confronting Revolution*, 27.

²³ Scott D. Breckinridge, *The CIA and the U.S. Intelligence System*, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1986), 233; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 111.

²⁴ Blachman et al., *Confronting Revolution*, 27.

²⁵ Prados, *Presidents'*, 100; John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 265.

²⁶ Ibid., 265; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 102-103.

²⁷ Prados, *Presidents'*, 99; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 112.

²⁸ Prados, *Presidents'*, 98-99; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 110-111.

²⁹ Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 113; Ranelagh, *The Agency*, 266.

³⁰ Ronald M. Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala 1944-1954*, Foreign Policy Research Institute Series, no. 7, (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1958), 305; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 124, 126.

³¹ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 142.

³² Powers, *The Man*, 86-87; Richard and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of the CIA," *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 October 1954, 20; David Atlee Philips, *The Night Watch*, (New York: Antheneum, 1977), 243; Harkness, "Mysterious Doings," 20; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 114.

³³ Schneider, *Communism*, 310.

³⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate For Change: The White House Years 1953-1956*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1963), 424; Philips, *Night Watch*, 243; Schneider, *Communism*, 310.

³⁵ Powers, *The Man*, 87.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 169, 170, 172.

³⁸ Eisenhower, *Mandate*, 425; Prados, *Presidents'*, 106.

³⁹ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 194 and 199.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Powers, *The Man*, 87; Findling, *Close Neighbors*, 114.

⁴² Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, 5.

⁴³ Ibid., 182 and 194-197.

⁴⁴ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 229.

⁴⁵ "In peace, a bitter aftertaste," *Life*, 19 July 1954, 24-25.

⁴⁶ Blachman et al., *Confronting Revolution*, 28; Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 233.

⁴⁷ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 251 and 253-254.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 252.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 251.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 253.

⁵¹ Ibid., 232, 237, 238, 245, 247; "Red's priority: pin war on U.S.," *Life*, 5 July 1954, 8-13.

⁵² Powers, *The Man*, 88.

⁵³ Schlesinger et al., *Bitter Fruits*, 254; Ranelagh, *The Agency*, 268.

⁵⁴ Prados, *Presidents'*, 107.

Bibliography

Articles

- Harkness, Richard, and Gladys Harkness. "The mysterious Doings of CIA." *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 October 1954, 19-21+.
- "In peace, a bitter aftertaste." *Life*, July 19, 1954, 24-25.
- "Reds priority: pin war on US." *Life*, July 5, 1954, 8-13.

Books

- Ambrose, Stephen. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*. 7th ed., New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Blachman, Morris J., William M. LeoGrande, and Kenneth E. Sharpe. *Confronting Revolution: Security through Diplomacy in Central America*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Breckinridge, Scott D. *The CIA and the U.S. Intelligence System*. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1986.
- Chafe, William H. *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*. 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Mandate for Change: White House Years 1953-56*. New York: New American Library, 1965.
- Findling, John E. *Close Neighbors, Distant Friends: United States-Central American Relations*. Contributions in American History Series, no. 122. West Port, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Immerman, Richard H. *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982.
- Philips, David Atlee. *The Night Watch*. New York: Atheneum, 1977.
- Powers, Thomas. *The Man Who Kept Secrets*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979.
- Prados, John. *Presidents' Secret Wars*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986.
- Ranciegh, John. *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.
- Schlesinger, Stephen C., and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: the Untold Story of the American coup in Guatemala*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982.
- Schneider, Ronald M. *Communism in Guatemala 1944-1954*. The Foreign Policy Research Institute Series, no. 7. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1958.

Newspapers

- New York Times*. May 21; June 19, 21, 28; July 1, 1954.

Pagans and Christians: A Brief Discussion

by Brett Norris

No event in history has influenced and changed the course of Western Civilization more than the triumph of Christianity over Paganism. According to Robin Lane Fox, "the transition from Pagan to Christian is the point at which the ancient world still touches ours directly."¹ In order to make this tremendous impact on our society however, Christianity had to survive overwhelming odds. It appeared to possess everything a religion of the ancient Mediterranean was forbidden to possess. The Christians actively dismissed the existence of any other god but their own, they refused to sacrifice, they were secretive, they believed in sin, they put value in poverty, and they believed in an afterlife. All of these ideas were unlike any religion of the time, and it is for these reasons why the Christian minority was so bitterly hated by the Pagan majority. Yet despite the amazing forces which opposed Christianity, it managed not just to survive, but to thrive, defeat Paganism, and become the most powerful religious force in the Western world.

Today, practically every historian will agree that something happened nearly two thousand years ago which tipped the religious scales from Paganism to Christianity.

The problem for historians however, lies not in the question of whether a religious revolution occurred or not, but in the question of why did it happen? Why did the Christians win and the Pagans lose? What exactly was it which prompted the Pagan people of the ancient world to abandon the religions of their ancestors, religions which were older than Christianity is today, in favor of a new religious alternative? For centuries historians have probed into these questions, and their answers have varied greatly. Perhaps the best way to attack these problems is to try to answer the question: What was the vitality of Paganism between the second and fourth centuries?, and what motivations did Constantine have for his conversion? The following paragraphs will examine these two crucial questions, and hopefully shed some light on one of history's greatest uncertainties.

The oldest and most traditional explanation for the switch from Paganism to Christianity was provided by

Edward Gibbon during the eighteenth century in his book, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It was here that the decline theory was first presented. In this landmark publication Gibbon attempts to divide and categorize the period between the first and fifth centuries into various stages of Pagan descent. For Gibbon this descent begins during the first century; when Paganism appeared to be in the midst of a "religious crisis." This century of religious uncertainty ended at the beginning of the second century, when suddenly there appeared to be a growth in Pagan beliefs. Midway through the second century, however, the revival had ended and Paganism entered its "age of anxiety" - an age which leads up to Gibbon's "decline of Paganism" in the second half of the third century (MacMullen 64).² From this point on, says Gibbon, the Pagans as a religious group collapsed under the pressure of the ever growing Christian community, and as a result slowly died off and ceased to exist. In short, Gibbon argues that it was not the strength of Christianity but the weaknesses of Paganism, which advanced Christianity to its religious victory.

Jacob Burckhardt, a contemporary of Gibbon's, echoes this belief in the decline theory. For Burckhardt, Paganism's decline manifested itself both internally and externally. Burckhardt believes that Paganism suffered internally because it was a religious practice which lacked direction; its theology "depended largely on the feeling of the individual."³ As a result, the once faithful Pagan people became fair-weather supporters and diverted their faith to other beliefs, such as philosophy. Externally, argues Burckhardt, Paganism had been weakened by its generous acceptance of foreign cults. This "willful intermixture from without" watered down the bonds of Paganism and greatly contributed to its decline.⁴ So, much like Gibbon, Burckhardt strongly believes that Christianity's triumph can be attributed to Paganism's poor vitality.

As convincing as Gibbon's and Burckhardt's arguments may be, they have prompted a great deal of criticism from historians bearing more recent evidence. One such historian is Ramsey MacMullen. By taking a

closer look at the characteristics of Christianity and Paganism, MacMullen concludes that the differences between the two were only slight, and that Christianity could have been easily mistaken for another Pagan cult. Furthermore, MacMullen believes that Paganism never experienced a decline. Instead he believes it to have been very lively during the rise of Christianity. Rather than a decline MacMullen argues that a very gradual transition took place - a transition from the belief in one cult to another, or, more specifically, the transition of belief from Paganism to Christianity. Paganism gave way to Christianity not by tumbling over like the last stegosaurus, but it was smothered, and built upon - much like a coral reef.⁵ Today, MacMullen believes that Paganism lies under the surface of Christianity, perhaps dead, yet still supporting the outer shell of Christianity.

If a historical spectrum were to be drawn, Gibbon and Burckhardt would lie to the extreme left, MacMullen would lie in the middle, and Robin Lane Fox would be placed on the far right. Fox attacks the Gibbon-Burckhardt decline theory, and MacMullen's transition theory with a mountain of evidence and his own new theory. When dealing with the decline theory, Fox argues that Christianity did not rise from the smoldering ashes of Paganism's corpse, rather it challenged the very roots of Paganism and rose above the inferno of the lively ancient cults. In Fox's mind, Paganism was not a meek opponent for the ambitious Christian religion. Christianity had to fight not just for its success, but for its survival.

Fox also dismisses MacMullen's transition argument. Christianity and Paganism, believes Fox, were never molded into one singular religion. Instead it was the differences between the two, not the similarities, which propelled Christianity into the religious drivers seat. Fox argues that Christianity was both unique and distinct from Paganism. Unlike the Pagan cults it came with a focus and a clear set of rules on how to live. For example, the Christians

changed the ways in which people regarded life's great encounters, between man and woman and also between people and their gods . . . they changed attitudes to life's one certainty: death. They also changed the degree of freedom with which people could acceptably choose what to think and believe.⁶

As a result, the Pagan ship, despite its incredible buoyancy, was in dire need of a captain. The Christian ship on the other hand, found its strength not in its ability to float, but in its ambitious sense of direction.⁷ In short, Fox claims that both socially and spiritually change was the theme of early Christianity, and it was this attitude which helped to defeat the lively Pagan cults.

Through his use of recent evidence, Fox is able to provide the most convincing explanation. There is no

doubt: Paganism was indeed alive and kicking during the rise of Christianity. Furthermore, it was the differences, not the similarities, between the two which created the religious switch over. Christianity however, was not victorious by its uniqueness alone. The fundamental theological differences between Christianity and Paganism certainly played a large role in Christianity's success, but to stop the explanation here would be a terrible attempt to minimize the causes of this religious transition. Fox, however, is not guilty of practicing poor history. He strengthens his powerful argument by showing that it was the genuine conversion of Constantine which solidified the Christian victory.

Not everyone would agree with Fox though. The validity of Constantine's conversion is a topic shrouded with inconsistencies and disagreements. Some historians see Constantine as a shrewd manipulator who would stop at nothing to consolidate power, some regard him as a brave religious pioneer, while others believe he lies somewhere in between. Whatever Constantine's motives were, it can be said that his conversion is a critical turning point in the religious battle between Christianity and Paganism, and it is for this reason that the event deserves scholarly attention.

Burckhardt takes the most extreme view in examining Constantine's conversion. He sees no religion in any of Constantine's decisions. "In a genius driven without surcease by ambition and lust for power there can be no question of Christianity and paganism, of conscious religiosity or irreligiosity; such a man is essentially unreligious, even if he pictures himself standing in the midst of a churchly community."⁸ Burckhardt claims that Constantine was driven by political gain and not by religious inspiration. He sees him as a man who will stop at nothing to gain power - even if it means switching religions. "Constantine observed how Christianity might contribute and be useful to a clever ruler" and as a result this spurred his decision to side with the religion which was "bound to conquer" Paganism.⁹

Gibbon, who was in agreement with Burckhardt on the decline of Paganism, is not quite so harsh on Constantine as his colleague is. For Gibbon, Constantine represents a man driven by power, who eventually becomes a true Christian. "The specious piety of Constantine, if at first was only specious, might gradually, by the influence of praise, of habit, and of example, be matured into serious faith and fervent devotion."¹⁰ As emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine knew that people would follow him in his decision. In short, while Gibbon believes that Constantine's religious journey began ill-heartedly and was spurred by political goals, he firmly believes that his faith gradually became genuine. From a modern perspective Constantine was by no means a typical Christian; "he was distinguished by the splendor of his

purple, rather than by the superiority of his wisdom or virtue, from the many thousands of his subjects who had embraced the doctrines of Christianity."¹¹ Nevertheless, Constantine, argues Gibbon, straddles the definitions of conspiring politician and spiritual leader. While his marriage with Christianity may have started out as one of convenience, it eventually developed into something more meaningful.

If Burckhardt and Gibbon are correct in believing that Constantine's conversion was not a result of his religiosity but rather a result of his hunger for power, one must then look at what political gains he stood to reap. According to A.H.M. Jones, "the Christians were a tiny minority of the population, and they belonged for the most part to the classes of the population who were politically and socially of least importance."¹² With this fact in mind, what then did the Christians have to offer Constantine? They certainly did not have the money or political clout which Burckhardt and Gibbon claim Constantine craved for. Could it be that Burckhardt and Gibbon's arguments are too one sided? Whatever the case, this fact significantly detracts from the power of their theories. There are, however, plenty of other reasons given for the conversion.

Andre Piganiol, for example, sees Constantine as a confused leader who stumbled upon Christianity by accident. This is not to say that Piganiol denies that there was a genuine conversion. In fact he believes that Constantine was "a sincere individual who sought the truth."¹³ What happened then, believes Piganiol, was that Constantine became confused between the Pagan symbol for the sun god, Sol, and the Christian symbol of the cross. Thus, Constantine's conversion was genuine, even if it was not a conversion to Christianity. "Constantine had thought that he had conquered in the name of Sol. The priests seeing the symbol which was dear to him, exclaimed that he had conquered in the name of Christ. Constantine believed it. He was a Christian without knowing it . . . the symbols were the same."¹⁴ Unlike Burckhardt and Gibbon, Piganiol believes that Constantine truly was a religious man, the problem however, lies in the focus of his religiousness.

Andreas Alföldi is another historian who believes that Constantine had a twisted view of Christianity. Rather than stumbling blindly onto it, as Piganiol suggests, Alföldi believes that Constantine actively accepted Christianity, however this acceptance was on his own terms. Constantine's Christianity had a Pagan-like orientation, and it was riddled with superstition. "The Christianity of Constantine, then, was not wrapped in the glory of the true Christian spirit, but in the darkness of superstition."¹⁵ With his conversion then, Constantine brought a Pagan element into the religion, and according to Alföldi, lowered its standards. While hundreds and maybe even thousands of Christian martyrs

had died in the persecutions in search of the afterlife, Constantine's Pagan state of mind forced him to look for success not after death, but during his time on earth. This was a very unchristian belief to have and thus proves that "the subtle speculations of theology were a closed book to him."¹⁶ Theology was a strange practice to the Pagan mind, and for Constantine, argues Alföldi, it was a difficult set of rules to live by. Nevertheless, the rest of the Christian community was eager to accept Constantine into their ranks; he was a leader who was able to promote the minority religion. The fact that he was an ignorant man practicing a debased form of Christianity did not matter, he could still do a lot for the religion. After all, do the people at Wheatees really care if Michael Jordan eats their cereal for breakfast? The hard fact is that he, much like Constantine was, is a good representative and a fantastic promoter.

To say that Constantine was duped into becoming a Christian, or to apply modern standards to his ancient mind are two ways to answer whether or not his conversion was genuine, but that is not to say that they are correct. Piganiol tends to oversimplify matters. Could a man, capable of leading the entire Roman Empire single handedly, be daft enough to allow simple bishops to trick him into switching religions? No matter how uneducated Constantine may have been, surely he would have noticed the drastic theological differences between a Pagan sun god, and the strict dogmatic structures of Christianity. It is true that the symbol of Sol and the symbol of Christ were similar, but when comparing their religious practices, the two are as different as night and day. Alföldi, on the other hand, commits the worst possible historical sin by applying modern views to ancient events. Constantine had been born and raised in a world governed by superstition. It was only natural then, that upon his conversion, that Constantine would carry some of this superstition over to the Christian religion. A genuine conversion in modern terms, could not possibly have taken place within the span of one individual's lifetime. It would take generations before the remnants of Pagan superstition were forgotten by society.

There are historians, believe it or not, that actually argue that Constantine offered himself fully and completely to the Christian church. Both Robin Lane Fox and Norman H. Baynes both claim that Constantine's conversion was a result of his genuine religious beliefs. Fox points out that after his conversion, one of Constantine's first moves was to restore to the Christians "the property which they had lost under the first edict of the persecution."¹⁷ Furthermore Fox argues that Constantine was a devoted member of the church, who "promoted the Christians' cult as his personal religion, not as the official religion of the Roman state."¹⁸ For Baynes, Constantine represents an individual who

completely broke with Rome's Pagan past in order to take up Christianity and become God's servant.¹⁹ In a quote taken from a speech, Constantine proclaims,

God sought my service and judged that service to achieve His purpose. . . I have come to the East which was in sorer need of my aid. At the same time I am absolutely persuaded that I owe my whole life, my every breath, and in a word my secret thoughts to the supreme God.²⁰

Most historians agree that the Christian population in the Roman Empire during the time of Constantine's conversion was somewhere between one tenth and one twentieth. By converting to Christianity, Constantine decided to join a very small portion of the population. Not only were the Christians a small minority, but according to Baynes they were also a divided one. There was a Donatist schism in Africa, one which had tormented the Christian church, and one which Constantine desperately wanted to mend.²¹ Surely he could not, as Burckhardt and Gibbon accuse, have believed that by becoming a Christian he was opening a whole new world of political opportunity. Rather, by

associating himself with a severed minority he was greatly reducing and limiting his political choices. Even if Paganism was experiencing a decline, the Pagans still made up an overwhelming majority within the Empire, and by becoming a Christian, Constantine alienated himself from all of those people. As Jones describes, Constantine not only tolerated the Christians, but he actively favored the church.²²

Thus Constantine was neither an opportunist nor a fake. Not since Jesus had Christianity had such an inspirational leader. For over two hundred years before him, the Christians had struggled under the oppressive hand of the Pagans. Despite the persecutions, and disrespect the Christians faced, they managed to overcome the odds and successfully challenge Paganism. Thus, it was Christianity's ambitious uniqueness, combined with the religiously inspired leadership of Constantine which enabled the Christians to triumph over Paganism. These two factors, not only came together to change the ancient Mediterranean, but they also changed the course of world history. This indeed is one of history's most significant events, and its ramifications continue to surround us today.

Endnotes

¹ Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Francisco, Harper, 1986) 11.

² Ramsey MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 64.

³ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great* (New York: Doubleday, 1956) 115.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ MacMullen, *Paganism*, 136.

⁶ Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 23.

⁷ Robert Cutler, Lecture notes on October 3, 1995.

⁸ Burckhardt, *Age of Constantine*, 281.

⁹ Ibid. 268, 203.

¹⁰ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Handout.

¹¹ Gibbon, *History of Decline*, 21.

¹² A.H.M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 73.

¹³ Andre Piganiol, *L'Empereur Constantin* Handout, 45.

¹⁴ Ibid. 45.

¹⁵ Andreas Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* Handout, 75.

¹⁶ Ibid. 74.

¹⁷ Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 611.

¹⁸ Ibid. 613, 610.

¹⁹ Norman H Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, Handout 53.

²⁰ Ibid. 59.

²¹ Ibid. 61.

²² Jones, *Constantine*, 75

Bibliography

Alfoldi, Andreas. *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*.

Hand out material.

Baynes, Norman H. *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*.

Hand out material.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Age of Constantine the Great*. New York:

Doubleday, 1956.

Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. San Francisco: Harper, 1986.

Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman*

Empire. Hand out material.

Jones, A.H.M. *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*. Toronto:

University of Toronto, 1989.

MacMullen, Ramsey. *Paganism in the Roman Empire*. New Haven:

Yale University Press, 1981.

Piganiol, Andre. *L'Empereur Constantin*. Hand out material.

The Ironclad Attack That Was Not Ironclad: Fort Sumter, April 7, 1863

by April Helderman
(1996 Hartje Award runner-up)

The weather was clear and bright and the water as calm as a lazy river as the nine Union ironclads slowly maneuvered into a single-file formation inside the Charleston bar.¹ The squadron's flagship, *New Ironsides*, had given the signal to move just minutes before, at noon, and so the iron column began its journey up the main ship channel towards the formidable and heavily armed Fort Sumter.² The fleet's goal on this day, April 7, 1863, was to bombard the fort—the symbolic heart of secession and the war's beginning—into submission. After capturing Fort Sumter, Union strategists argued, it would be only a matter of time before Charleston surrendered, shutting the Confederacy off from one of its most vital seaports and military strongholds. The U.S. military believed that if and when their supposedly indestructible ironclads destroyed Fort Sumter and defeated its defenders, including the "detestable" General G.T. Beauregard, who was instrumental in the Confederate capture of the fort and the initiation of this bloody civil war, then the Union would be a giant step closer to overcoming the Confederacy.

The ironclads' crewmen soon discovered that these newfangled metal-plated ships were not as indestructible or flawless as they had hoped. As the ironclads chugged into formation following *New Ironsides* signal, the heavy anchor chain of the *Weehawken*, the lead monitor, became entangled with the raft designed to clear torpedoes from the fleet's path, delaying movement of the squadron for more than an hour.³ Finally, at about 1:15 p.m., the vessels started up the channel past Morris Island once again, but their difficulties were just beginning, for wild steering, frequent stopping and starting of the engines, and continued problems with *Weehawken's* torpedo-catcher further impeded their progress. The ironclads' crewmen, who had arisen that morning feeling invincible in battle, were overcome by anxiety and frustration as they bathed in their sweat within the oven-like ships. This was to be the greatest fight of their lives, they believed, yet it seemed as if the battle would never begin.

As the iron column steamed into the harbor, the silence was almost deafening. The only sounds to be

heard as the fleet made its way past Cummings Point on the northernmost tip of Morris Island were the grinding of the ships' engines and a patriotic tune which floated out on the breeze to them from somewhere in the distance. No shots were fired by either side as the fleet passed the outer batteries, and so the *Weehawken*, *Passaic*, *Montauk*, *Patapsco*, *New Ironsides*, *Catskill*, *Nantucket*, *Nahant*, and *Keokuk* approached the inner works of Charleston harbor in ominous, solemn quietude.⁴

This quietude was broken suddenly at three o'clock when the *Weehawken* came within range of Fort Moultrie, located northeast of Fort Sumter on Sullivan's Island. Moultrie opened fire, and soon after Fort Sumter, Cummings Point, and the rest of the batteries on Sullivan's Island followed suit. The *Weehawken* and her ironclad compatriots, who had joined her on the northeast side of Fort Sumter, returned fire, and the battle began.

As the squadron became hotly engaged in fighting, the *Weehawken's* commander spotted in front of him a series of underwater obstructions connecting Fort Sumter and Sullivan's Island. He veered hard to starboard in order to avoid becoming ensnared in the web of nets and rope, but in doing so, his ship hit a torpedo which exploded directly underneath her. The explosion lifted the ironclad out of the water for an instant, dropped her back down with a splash, and left the entire fleet confused and struggling to avoid a collision with her as the enemy assaulted them with a hail of shot and shell.⁵

Adding to the confusion during the battle were the actions of *New Ironsides*. Soon after the fighting began, the flagship dropped anchor and hoisted a flag signalling for the squadron to disregard the movements of their leader. Because she had a deeper draft than the rest of the ironclads, the flagship was unmanageable in the shallow water of the harbor. She could not avoid being hit during the battle, but by hanging back from the forts, she avoided grounding in Confederate cross-fire.⁶

The duel between the forts and the ironclads continued for nearly two and a half hours before the fleet's admiral ordered them to retreat, and all in all, the battle was a very uneven event. The Confederates were

much better armed, and they had the ability to fire much more rapidly. While the ironclads fired only 154 rounds, 45 of which hit Fort Sumter, the Confederates shot 2,209 times at the fleet.⁷ None of the ironclads escaped the fight unscathed, while Fort Sumter survived relatively safe and secure.⁸

The Union military had envisioned this battle to be the beginning of the end for the Confederacy. They had had the utmost optimism that their indestructible

ironclads could reduce Fort Sumter to a pile of rubble. Instead, Fort Sumter proved to be indestructible in the battle that day and its defenders capable of inflicting great damage on ironclad attackers. The Union had attempted to take Fort Sumter and failed that April day in 1863, and not until Sherman's march to the sea two years later did Fort Sumter once more become property of the United States.

Endnotes

¹ For an in-depth examination of the development and use of ironclads in the civil war and illustrations of various ironclads, see Tony Gibbons, *Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War*, (New York: Gallery Books, 1989); or James Phinney Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933).

² Charleston stands on a peninsula four miles from the outer edge of a vast harbor. The harbor's mouth is formed by two islands — Sullivan's Island to the north and Morris Island to the south. Fort Sumter sits on a shoal directly between the two islands. In order to reach Charleston via the main ship channel in 1863, a vessel had to approach from the south, cross the bar, and travel along Morris Island until it passed Cummings Point on Morris Island's northernmost tip. Just past this spot, at the mouth of the harbor, the main ship channel turned west and ran between Fort Sumter and Sullivan's Island. It was here that Charleston had its main defenses: Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie, which was located on Sullivan's Island. For a more detailed description and map of Charleston harbor and its defenses, see Wittenberg University graduate Stephen R. Wise, *Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor, 1863*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 1-5.

³ Alvah Folsom Hunter, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, ed. Craig L. Symonds (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 49. The raft was about fifty feet in length and made of very heavy timbers which crossed to form a

series of right angles. It was shaped somewhat like a boot-jack, and the bow of the ship fit within its notch. Chains attached the ends of jaws of the raft to the bow of the ship.

⁴ Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative*, vol. 2, *Fredericksburg to Meridian* (New York: Random House, 1963), 228.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 30. In her efforts to avoid grounding, however, *New Ironsides* encountered another danger, unbeknownst to her. She dropped anchor directly over a huge submerged torpedo which could be detonated from an observation post ashore nearby. Fortunately for her, the torpedo would not detonate. A wagon had run over the wires that connected the ignition switch and the torpedo, cutting them in two.

⁷ U.S. War Department, *the War of the Rebellion*, series I, vol. 14, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885; reprint, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: National Historical Society, 1985), 242, 243, 255.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 241, 247-48, 252-53, 437. Five of the ironclads were seriously disabled as a result of the battle, and a sixth, the *Keokuk*, was so riddled with shell holes that she sank the next morning in shallow water off Morris Island. Some time later, Confederate troops recovered her guns and mounted them at Fort Sumter. Fort Sumter was not significantly damaged in the battle, and the only injuries which it sustained were a breached and loosened right flank parapet and numerous pock marks in its brick walls.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Ammen, Daniel. *The Old Navy and the New*. Philadelphia: J.B.

Lippincott Company, 1891.

"The Bombardment of Fort Sumter." *Harper's Weekly*, May 2 1863, 280.

"Charleston." *Harper's Weekly*, April 25, 1863, 270.

Hunter, Alvah Folsom. *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of*

Fort Sumter, edited by Craig L. Symonds. Columbia:

University of South Carolina Press, 1987.

"Iron-Clads." *Harper's Weekly*, May 2, 1863, 274.

"The Iron-Clads at Charleston." *Harper's Weekly*, April 25, 1863, 269.

U.S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.

Series I, vol. 14. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing

Office, 1885; reprint, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: National

Historical Society, 1985.

Secondary Sources

Ammen, Daniel. *The Atlantic Coast. The Navy in the Civil War*

Series. New York: Scribner, 1883.

Anderson, Bern. *By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil*

War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.

Barnes, Frank. *Fort Sumter*. National Park Service Historical

Handbook Series. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing

Office, 1952.

Baxter, James Phinney. *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Foote, Shelby. *The Civil War: A Narrative*. Vol. 2, *Fredericksburg to*

Meridian. New York: Random House, 1963.

Gibbons, Tony. *Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War*. New

York: Gallery Books, 1989.

Hunt, O.E., ed. *The Photographic History of the Civil War*. Vol. 3,

Forts and Artillery and the Navies. Secaucus, New Jersey: The

Blue and Grey Press, 1987.

McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*.

New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.

Pollard, Edward A. *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the*

War of the Confederates. New York: E.B. Treat and

Company, 1867.

Porter, David D. *Naval History of the Civil War*. Secaucus, New

Jersey: Castle, 1984.

Soley, James Russell. *The Blockade and the Cruisers. The Navy in*

the Civil War Series. New York: Scribner, 1883.

U.S. Navy Department, Naval History Division. *Civil War Naval*

Chronology, 1861-1865. Washington, D.C.: Government

Printing Office, 1971.

Wise, Stephen R. *Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor,*

1863. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

No Riot Here: Martinsburg, West Virginia's Role in the Great Strikes of 1877

by David Thomas
(1996 Hartje Award runner-up)

I am informed that the rioters constitute a combination so strong that the civil authorities are powerless to enforce the law. If this is so, prevent any interference by rioters with the men at work, and also prevent the obstruction of justice.¹

Late in the evening of July 16, 1877, Governor Matthews of West Virginia issued this order to Captain Charles Faulkner, Jr. The next morning, Captain Faulkner and the state's Berkeley Light Guard Infantry arrived in Martinsburg, West Virginia, where they took part in the opening round of 1877's great railroad strikes.² Violence and destruction marked the events of this year, beginning with a shooting at Martinsburg on July 17. Later, the United States Adjutant General's Office report claimed, "the police of Martinsburg were powerless to cope with the situation, and a body of the state militia sent to that point on the morning of the 17th were fired upon and driven back."³ However, the situation before, during, and after the shootings of John Poisal and William Vandergriff was far from the riot Captain Faulkner was dispatched to quell.

In early July 1877, the Baltimore and Ohio railroad decided to reduce its workers pay by ten percent. A memorandum circulated, stating that on July 16, 1877 the wages of firemen would decrease from \$1.75 and \$1.50 per day to \$1.58 and \$1.35, respectively, with brakemen's pay coming down by a relative amount.⁴ The announcement sparked great concern, but no immediate open action. Indeed, Joseph Dacus observes that:

Along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, everything presented the usual appearance Intimations of coming trouble the managers had had, but they trusted that the "hard times" would deter the men from carrying into execution any purpose they might have formed of deserting their posts of duty on the road.⁵

Some signs of peaceful discontent could be seen in Martinsburg. Allan Pinkerton points out that, although the town seemed calm, there were a number of "unusual

gatherings," "conversations," and "gesticulations" on July 16.⁶ The crew of a train passing through town stopped at the station and refused to continue. Eventually, "a fireman announced to the dispatcher that the cattle train was forced to stop there, as its crew, conductor, included, [sic] had struck and no one could be found to fill their places."⁷

By 5:00 PM, reports arrived of a work stoppage at Baltimore's Camden Junction, prompting between sixty and seventy firemen and brakemen to leave their posts. They calmly explained to their supervisors that no trains would leave Martinsburg until the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad restored their wages. These workers and others, including local canal boatmen, began to gather without incident.⁸ In response, the town's mayor dispatched the local police force, who apparently did nothing but observe the crowd. After being jeered by the otherwise peaceful assembly, Martinsburg's mayor appealed to Governor Matthews in Wheeling for assistance.⁹

By 9:00 AM the next day, Captain Faulkner arrived with seventy-five members of the state militia's Berkeley Light Guard Infantry. With troops walking on either side, the cattle train attempted to leave the station through a crowd of strikers and onlookers. Noticing that a switch would send the train onto a siding, militia member Jon Poisal moved forward to correct the device. William Vandergriff, a striker, stepped out and ordered him to stop. When Poisal ignored him, Vandergriff drew a pistol from his belt, aimed, and fired two shots at the soldier, grazing him. The unit returned fire, fatally wounding Vandergriff. However, no other shots were fired by either side. The crowd withdrew and remained calm, but did not disperse.

Shortly afterward, Faulkner and his militia returned to Wheeling. Politicians and Baltimore and Ohio officials in Martinsburg and elsewhere remained in a state of great agitation as the strike spread around the Midwest. Indeed, workers around the region did threaten the operation of the Baltimore and Ohio for a short time. However, the events at Martinsburg in the early days of the 1877 strikes were not as violent as either Governor

Matthews or the Adjutant General believed. Clashes with state and Federal forces occurred in several other town and cities, including one that left twenty-six dead in

Pittsburgh. However, the people of Martinsburg, remained peaceful.

Endnotes

¹. Governor Matthew, quoted in Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives* (New York, NY: G. W. Dillingham, 1900), 147.

². Fifteen thousand workers engaged in action throughout Missouri, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Kentucky, marking the turning point in the history of American labor. John R. Commons argues in volume 2 of *History of Labour in the United State* that, "The spirit of labour solidarity was strengthened and made national...[It] began to assume a political aspect, and during the next two years the territory covered by the strike wave became a most promising field for labour parties of all kinds and description" (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1919; reprint, New York, NY: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966, p. 191) (page reference is to reprint edition).

³. U.S. Adjutant General's Office, *Federal aid in Domestic disturbances, 1787-1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 189.

⁴. Joseph A. Dacus, *Annals of the Great Strikes in the United States* (Chicago, IL: L.H. Palmer and Co., 1877), 27.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶ Pinkerton, 142.

⁷. *Ibid.*

⁸. Here, the Dacus and Pinkerton accounts differ slightly. Pinkerton, a strong opponent of organized labor, describes the group as a mob of Baltimore and Ohio employees, "tramps," and other "undesirables" (pp. 143-44). Dacus characterizes it as a congenial group of workers and town residents (pp. 29-30). Both, however, observe that the assembly was peaceful.

⁹. Pinkerton says that the crowd "had reached the point where sense vanishes, and passion and uncurbed turbulence assume the reins and drive men's minds to madness and violence." However, the only evidence he can point to consists of jeers and ridicule from the crowd (144).

Bibliography

Commons, John R, et al. *History of Labour in the United States*. Volume II. New York, NY: MacMillan, 1918; reprint, New York, NY: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966.

Dacus, Joseph A. *Annals of the Great Strikes in the United States*. Chicago, IL: L.H. Palmer, 1877.

Fried, Albert R. Ed. *Except to Walk Free: Documents and Notes in the History of American Labor*. Garden City, NY: Anchor

Books, 1974.

Pinkerton, Allan. *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*. New York, NY: G.W. Dillingham, 1900.

United States Adjutant General's Office. *Federal Aid in Domestic Disturbances, 1787-1903*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903.

Carl Sandburg: Historian for the Masses

by April Helderman

What is a historian? Must a person be graduated with a degree in history from some great university to be considered a historian, or can a historian be any person who has a deep interest in the past and attempts to write his or her own interpretation of past events? According to the former definition, Carl Sandburg's famous Lincoln biographies are not history, for the writer did not use the style of a degreed, professional historian. Instead, the biographies are, as one critic has described them, "romantic and sentimental rubbish."¹ However, if the latter definition of a historian is true, Sandburg was definitely a historian, for his profound interest in Lincoln produced award-winning books about the United States' Civil War President. It is this latter definition of a historian which this paper expounds, and furthermore, this paper shall demonstrate that in spite of some rather obvious "inadequacies of historical scholarship,"² Carl Sandburg was indeed a historian.

Sandburg, born in Galesburg, Illinois, on January 6, 1878, thirteen years after Lincoln's death, became interested in the President at an early age,³ and while studying at Lombard College, collecting stories, books, newspaper articles, and "subjective impressions" of Lincoln became a virtual obsession for Sandburg,⁴ although he did not major in history. The two men were similar in many ways, for both were "prairie figures" from the Midwest,⁵ and both "shared . . . [a] tender regard for the common folk."⁶

Sandburg, who spent much of his early literary career composing poetry and children's stories, finally gained an opportunity to write about his beloved Lincoln in 1923, when the New York publisher Alfred Harcourt suggested that he write a biography of Lincoln for children and teenagers.⁷ However, as the book progressed, Sandburg and his publisher realized that the biography was far too "complex" and lengthy to be a children's book.⁸ Beginning in the year 1776, thirty years before Lincoln's birth, and ending in 1861 as Lincoln left for Washington to be inaugurated, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* gives a detailed, 900-page description of Lincoln's pre-presidency life.

The two-volume work contains a seemingly endless number of anecdotes and stories which Sandburg gathered from individuals who had known Lincoln either personally or through mutual acquaintances.⁹ Indeed, Sandburg's method of collecting data for his book was "unlike that of any biographer since Homer,"¹⁰ for he travelled across the United States to gather any and all information that could be found—from written documents, collections of Lincoln artifacts, and interviews with people who claimed to know something about the so-called "real" Lincoln.¹¹

Although *The Prairie Years* received some harsh criticism from the historical community, Sandburg's followers praised his first attempt at history, for they believed that *The Prairie Years* "told the story of the great Emancipator" . . . with a simplicity, a luminous realism and a poetic vividness that immediately placed it with the great portraits of the early Lincoln.¹² *The Prairie Years* quickly became a best-selling book, and with the profits amassed from this first Lincoln biography as well as those gained from the sale of Sandburg's less known *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow*, a biography of Lincoln's wife, published in 1932, Sandburg was able to write a second Lincoln biography, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, which details Lincoln's five years as president.¹³ *The War Years* also was a success, and in 1940, Sandburg was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for history.¹⁴

In spite of Sandburg's successes, a number of Lincoln historians criticized the biographer's "scholarship and research methods"¹⁵ and described Sandburg's work as "a kind of classic of good writing and bad history."¹⁶ They argued that Sandburg had distorted history, and one critic, Edmund Wilson, went so far as to say that "there are moments when one is tempted to feel that the cruellest thing that has happened to Lincoln since he was shot by Booth has been to fall into the hands of Carl Sandburg."¹⁷ Sandburg's critics voiced many complaints about the biographies, including the author's lack of citations or bibliography, the misuse of interviews as a source of information, the omission of

facts contradictory to Sandburg's version of history, factual errors, a lack of historical interpretation or insights, and the ahistorical use of poetic and literary license.

Sandburg's critics were very disturbed by the fact that the author had provided neither citations nor a bibliography of his sources, for an examination of the sources of evidence would be essential if one were to determine the validity or invalidity of Sandburg's work. The historians were unsure about where Sandburg had obtained all his material for *The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*, and in fact, they often wondered whether certain stories, facts, or minute details in the biographies were actually true or simply the product of Sandburg's fertile imagination.¹⁸ For this reason, among others, many in academic circles frowned upon Sandburg's work.

When it was revealed that a sizable portion of Sandburg's material was obtained through interviews with individuals who claimed to know something about Lincoln, the historians were again outraged. Sandburg, they claimed, had accepted everything that he was told as fact and had not questioned his sources for authenticity or validity as an astute historian would.¹⁹ "[M]uch of Sandburg's material was based on rumor and hearsay," wrote Victor Hicken, author of the short essay "Sandburg and the Lincoln Biography: A Personal View,"²⁰ and even those stories that did contain some historical truth surely were not accurate in every detail, for as tales are communicated orally from one person to another, facts and details commonly are unconsciously altered or forgotten, thereby compromising the validity of the information.²¹

According to Hicken, the critics also believed that the use of biased sources such as Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, compromised the validity and historical accuracy of the Lincoln biographies. Herndon provided Sandburg with a great amount of information about Lincoln, for like Sandburg, Herndon also had conducted interviews with residents of the Salem-Petersburg area, the land of Lincoln's youth and formative years, although Herndon's interviews had been conducted at a much earlier time, soon after Lincoln's assassination. However, the critics argued that Herndon was biased and that he sought to prove certain beliefs that he held about Lincoln and his family, regardless of whether these beliefs were true or not.²²

For instance, many historians believe that Herndon strongly hated Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and therefore, Sandburg's critics proposed, Herndon concocted an imaginary tale of Lincoln's lost love, Ann Rutledge, which Sandburg unfortunately accepted as truth and incorporated in his book, partly because "it fitted his own romantic concept of Lincoln's prairie years."²³ According to *The Prairie Years*, a young,

bachelor Lincoln fell in love with a certain Ann Rutledge while living in New Salem, Illinois. However, the book goes on to say, the young lady died at a very early age, devastating Lincoln, and as a result, Lincoln suffered bouts of depression for the rest of his life—memories of this lost love forever haunted him. The critics attacked Sandburg for this unhistorical anecdote and his naive acceptance of the tale without question, for, they agreed, the historical evidence can prove only that the two, Lincoln and Rutledge, knew each other, but nothing more.²⁴

Not only did Sandburg include historical untruths in his books, said the critics, but he also ignored historical facts that contradicted his version of history and allowed emotions to cloud his judgments. Unlike a true historian who includes information that both supports and detracts from his argument for the sake of a more balanced historical picture, Sandburg "selected his material in such a way that the end result was the truth as he saw it, but not the whole truth."²⁵ He seemed to believe that if a fact did not agree with his version of Lincoln as a so-called "country boy," then it was not worth mentioning in his books. In addition, Sandburg's extreme love for Lincoln led the author to reveal an unscholarly anger and disapproval towards individuals such as John Wilkes Booth and Mary Todd Lincoln who inflicted pain and distress on the President.²⁶

Evident factual errors also lessened the respectability and validity of Sandburg's Lincoln biographies. Critics pointed out that the author made such obvious errors as stating that Crawfordsville, Indiana, lies on the Wabash River, which it does not, and that the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley "had drowned in an Italian lake rather than in the Gulf of Spezia."²⁷ By making such simple mistakes, Sandburg lost the respect of critics.

Many Lincoln historians also believed that Sandburg's biographies could not be considered history because Sandburg "had added little, if any, information and indeed virtually no insights to what had already found statement."²⁸ Unlike a reputable historian, they argued, Sandburg declined to interpret certain events or to provide his own insights into his characters' motivations or reasoning, and as a result, his books read more as an anthology of Lincoln lore than as a true work of historical research and writing.²⁹

Lastly, Sandburg's critics argued that the Lincoln biographies were not historically accurate because they were replete with imagery,³⁰ sentiment, and "corn."³¹ The author often strayed from the established facts, it was believed, and at times, driven by an obsessive need to record every detail of Lincoln's life, whether documented or not, Sandburg unprofessionally allowed his imagination to dictate his writing. Historians argued that Sandburg's liberal use of the imagination was unprofessional, for "Sandburg followed the man[Lincoln]

every step of the way; and wherever the next step was shadowy he speculated, sometimes in a kind of free-verse fantasy. . . . Sandburg had practiced poetic license in a genre that requires the strictest adherence to fact."³²

However, in spite of all this criticism, many individuals praised Sandburg for his "monumental" Lincoln biographies.³³ Sandburg, these supporters claimed, had written "the fullest, richest, most understanding of all the Lincoln biographies,"³⁴ for in addition to including all the previously known information about Lincoln, the author revealed new knowledge and secrets involving the Civil War president.³⁵ Furthermore, these supporters argued, Sandburg not only found the "real" Lincoln,³⁶ but he also painted a fantastic historical portrait of the society and times in which Lincoln lived³⁷—Sandburg the historian "had created a portrait of a man, a myth of a hero, and a panorama of a maturing nation."³⁸

While Sandburg's backers admitted that the biographer failed to provide citations or a bibliography of his sources, they denied the claim that Sandburg's work was inaccurate and unacceptable as historical writing. Both *The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*, the author's promoters pointed out, contain many quotations from "newspapers, letters, and other respectable documents that would give any history a distinct authenticity."³⁹ Sandburg depended upon historical documents such as newspaper articles and printed speeches whenever possible while writing *The Prairie Years*,⁴⁰ and in order to write *The War Years* as accurately and completely as possible, the biographer hired librarians, historians, and book dealers to assist him.⁴¹ What resulted, Sandburg's supporters claimed, was "well documented" history—"factual, solid, meticulously detailed."⁴²

Unlike the critics who argued that the Lincoln biographies could not be considered true history because they were filled with rumor and hearsay, Sandburg's followers believed that it was necessary for the author to include nearly every story he had heard about Lincoln, regardless of whether each detail was one-hundred percent accurate, in order to present a complete history of the President. Sandburg's supporters compared the biographer to the Greek historian Herodotus, for both refused to be "pedantic about legends."⁴³ According to Márk Van Doren, author of the book *Carl Sandburg*, Sandburg knew that legends and myths "have their own truth, even if in this case it is no more than the truth concerning what people thought Lincoln was."⁴⁴ Sandburg believed that Lincoln was a man of the people,⁴⁵ and therefore, the author's followers implied, it was important to know what the people thought of the man.

Furthermore, Sandburg's backers obstinately denied that the biographer had ignored historical data which contradicted his interpretation of Lincoln. Sandburg was

faithful to the historical actors and events in his books, supporters argued,⁴⁶ and therefore, he did not attempt to omit or overlook Lincoln's flaws, weaknesses, errors, or failures as his critics had alleged.⁴⁷ According to his followers, Sandburg portrayed Lincoln as an honest man, yet he told of political deals and circumstances in which Lincoln did what was easiest and quickest rather than what he felt in his heart was right.⁴⁸ *The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*, Sandburg's supporters claimed, were not one-sided, for the biographer had described Lincoln in both a positive and a negative light.

In response to the critics' accusations that Sandburg's writing was riddled with factual errors and mostly the result of the author's overactive imagination, Sandburg's followers sought to excuse his factual missteps and to justify his use of literary license.

Sandburg was human, his supporters argued, and therefore bound to make some mistakes in his six volumes of Lincoln biography. Furthermore, listing all his minor errors would be trivial and spiteful, they claimed, for "rare indeed is the work of even the most cautious professional historian—documentation and all—without its factual mistakes."⁴⁹

In addition, Sandburg's followers objected to the "literalistic killjoys"⁵⁰ charge that the use of literary license was unscholarly, for, they argued, Sandburg merely practiced some literary freedom in order to create a complete historical portrait of Lincoln. The author attempted to fill gaps which existed in the knowledge of Lincoln's life,⁵¹ the supporters claimed, and he recreated certain historical events, such as the death of Lincoln's mother, about which there was no written information.⁵² According to Gay Wilson Allen, author of *Carl Sandburg*, "these symbolic details [of Lincoln's life which Sandburg's critics accused him of making up] do not seem exaggerated, but possible and convincing"⁵³—these details, supporters implied, only added to Sandburg's historical writing rather than to detract from it.

Sandburg's supporters also did not believe that the absence of a central thesis, interpretation, or insights detracted from the Lincoln biographies. Sandburg "had no ax to grind"⁵⁴ and "had not used his material for his own aggrandizement"⁵⁵ as other historical writers had done in the past, his followers argued, and therefore, a central thesis or premise was unnecessary. Sandburg, they claimed, "was not out to settle disputed points; he was not trying to introduce much new information. He was creating—or rather, solidifying—an American myth,"⁵⁶ for Sandburg believed that "only when the people learn to remember, to profit from the past, will they come into their own."⁵⁷ In short, Sandburg, his followers believed, did not write to further his own interests; instead, he wrote in order to educate his country's people about their past.

Upon further study of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, one may more fully understand Sandburg's desire to educate and give the people a sense of their history. The Lincoln biographies were written just prior to and during the Great Depression, when despair and gloom plagued the country. The nation's citizens needed a hero—someone or something to give them hope in the future—and Sandburg did just that. Through his historical writings, Sandburg reminded the people that Lincoln too had suffered, for he had been born into a poor pioneer family, yet with time, young Abe became a success, for he fulfilled every child's dream of becoming the President of the United States. Sandburg created a "Cinderella hero"⁵⁸—not only was he a celebrated historian among the people, but he was also an inspiration for the people.

As a historian for the people, Sandburg did not believe that extensive footnotes or endnotes were needed in the Lincoln biographies. He "did not intend these volumes to be a set of reference books for the reader to browse in and select details from;"⁵⁹ instead, the books were designed specifically for the common man to read and enjoy. Footnotes and endnotes are often merely a source of intimidation and irritation for "almost everyone except professional historians,"⁶⁰ and therefore, it seems that only the professional historians were irritated by the lack of citations. These professionals attempted to discredit Sandburg as a historian for this reason, among others, but many common readers might actually thank Sandburg the historian for omitting such annoying footnotes and endnotes.

Even without footnotes, the reader is able to determine Sandburg's sources and basis for his thoughts, for included in the preface to *The Prairie Years*, the foreword of *The War Years*, and the final pages of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*, an abridged compilation of the two earlier Lincoln biographies which was published in 1959, are lists of Sandburg's sources. The lists, although not in proper bibliographic style, are quite comprehensive, for Sandburg believed that "if he is to play fair with his readers, the historical writer can hardly omit all mention of the materials he has used,"⁶¹ yet they are not so large as to be overwhelming. Sandburg realized, as any good historian should, that he was obligated to list his sources so that others could judge the validity of his writing, yet he did so in such a way that the common people for whom he wrote could understand.

Although Sandburg was not a professionally trained historian, he understood the importance as well as inherent dangers of using primary sources as a basis of evidence. In the preface to *The Prairie Years*, the historian revealed what he thought to be the most significant source of evidence about Lincoln: "Of all the sources from which men are to gather impressions of the

personality of Lincoln, the foremost singly important one is the collection of his letters and papers, the speeches and writings of the man himself,"⁶² for in order to know the man, one must know what he said, what he thought, and what he did. Sandburg, like a true historian, understood the value of using primary sources as close as possible to the actual event or person, and furthermore, for extra emphasis and proof of validity, copies of many of Lincoln's letters and documents are included in the biographies.

In addition to letters and documents actually written by Lincoln, Sandburg often quotes in his books individuals who had known Lincoln personally, had heard of him through mutual acquaintances, or were the descendants of Lincoln's associates. The historian interviewed such individuals as a niece and a grandniece of Stephen A. Douglas, a granddaughter of Jefferson Davis, a niece of Confederate Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens, a granddaughter of a man who as a boy had played with Lincoln's sons at the White House, and countless others who had some unique story to tell about Lincoln. Although Sandburg realized that some of these individuals may have tried "to twist facts to their own ends,"⁶³ one cannot deny the overall validity of these sources. These individuals could describe, as perhaps no other sources could, the ways in which Lincoln and his compatriots lived their lives.

While many of these individuals' observations had been recorded prior to Sandburg's Lincoln biographies, other insights were captured on paper for the first time by Sandburg. For this reason, Sandburg's critics argued that such interviews were unreliable—few, if any, written documents existed to substantiate these individuals' testimony. If the evidence could not be physically examined, it seems, Sandburg's critics would not accept it as truth.

Such has been the fate of much historical writing based on oral testimony, for "historians in modern, mass-literate, industrial societies—that is, most professional historians—are generally pretty sceptical about the value of oral sources in reconstructing the past." The majority of historians argue that oral sources are "notoriously unreliable and . . . untrustworthy,"⁶⁵ for the mind is apt to forget or embellish, but one should not deny the value of oral testimony to historical works such as Sandburg's. Through interviews such as those conducted by Sandburg, one can gain the unrecorded knowledge and input of those individuals ignored in previous document-driven studies. A true historian is expected to investigate all known sources in order to write a "complete" and accurate history, and Sandburg did just that, for he studied not only the documents of the times, but the people of the times as well.

The best historian, according to Cambridge historian George Macaulay Trevelyan, should also combine

"knowledge of the evidence with the largest intellect, the warmest human sympathy and the highest imaginative powers"⁶⁶ in order to create an accurate yet vivid portrait of the past. This too Sandburg accomplished, for through thirty years of research, a deep respect for Lincoln and the people, and a poetic flair for writing, he created the "fullest, richest, most understanding"⁶⁷ Lincoln biographies ever written. Although Sandburg's artistic, imaginative details irritated his critics, one might suppose that the imagery would appeal to Sandburg's intended audience, the common reader, for such artistic details help to bring a historical picture to life.

Time also has proven that Sandburg was indeed a credible historian, for not only did his Lincoln biographies become best-sellers, but in spite of some criticism, he also was and often still is recognized by others in the field of history as the author of valuable historical writing. He was awarded the 1940 Pulitzer Prize for history—history, not literature—and his *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* has been noted by *Civil War Times Illustrated* as one of the "best books ever written on the Civil War."⁶⁸ (August 1981): 46.

Many distinguished Lincoln and Civil War historians, including Bruce Catton, T. Harry Williams, and Roy Basler, acknowledge Sandburg as a source of information, and he has contributed articles to and been quoted in such journals, magazines, and newspapers as *American Heritage*, *National Geographic*, and the *New York Times*. Surely, if Sandburg is used as a source so frequently by other outstanding historians and publications, then he must be a historian himself.

In order to be considered a historian, an individual need not have had professional training in the field; instead, what is essential is a deep interest in the past, a respect for the facts, and the ability to accurately convey a period of history to the reader. Carl Sandburg had this interest, respect, and ability, and the success of his Lincoln biographies are evidence of these. Sandburg, the historian for the masses, the people, succeeded in the field of history, in spite of some harsh criticism. Sandburg was indeed a historian—his *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* are located in the historical nonfiction stacks of the university library!

Endnotes

¹ Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 115.

² Victor Hicken, *Sandburg and the Lincoln Biography: a Personal View*, in *The Vision of This Land*, ed. John E. Hallwas and Dennis J. Reader (Macomb, Illinois: Western Illinois University, 1976), 112.

³ Gay Wilson Allen, *Carl Sandburg* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵ Richard Crowder, *Carl Sandburg* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), 94.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷ Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 27.

⁸ Hicken, *Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio.*, 107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁰ Robert E. Sherwood, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, by Carl Sandburg, in *New York Times Book Review*, 3 December 1939, 1.

¹¹ On page 107 of *Sandburg and the Lincoln Biography*, Victor Hicken notes that Sandburg conducted "boozy interviews" with Joseph W. Fifer, a former governor of Illinois. It is improbable that Fifer knew

Lincoln personally, but he had heard "a multitude of stories about Lincoln, and under the influence of Kentucky Straight with branch water, he was much inclined to talk."

¹² Edward Larocquetinker, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, by Carl Sandburg, in *New York Times Book Review*, 10 September 1939, 25.

¹³ Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 31.

¹⁴ For the sake of brevity, this paper will focus its attention upon the controversy surrounding the historical credibility of Sandburg's two Abraham Lincoln biographies, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*.

¹⁵ Hicken, *Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio.*, 110.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁷ Wilson, *Patriotic Gore*, 115.

¹⁸ Hicken, *Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio.*, 105.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

²¹ Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 28.

²² Hicken, *Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio.*, 110-11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 96.

- 26 Michael Yatron, Carl Sandburg, chap. in *America's Literary Revolt* (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1959), 158; R.L. Duffus, review of *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, 4 December 1932, 3.
- 27 Hicken, Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio., 108.
- 28 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 8.
- 29 Ibid., 97.
- 30 Ibid., 101.
- 31 Hicken, Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio., 108.
- 32 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 95.
- 33 Robert E. Sherwood, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, 10 October 1954, 10.
- 34 Sherwood, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, 1.
- 35 Hicken, Sandburg and the Lincoln Bio., 108.
- 36 Ibid., 106.
- 37 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 97.
- 38 Ibid., 95.
- 39 Ibid., 129.
- 40 Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 30.
- 41 Ibid., 31.
- 42 Ibid., 32.
- 43 Mark Van Doren, *Carl Sandburg* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1969), 2.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 129.
- 46 Ibid., 101.
- 47 Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 32.
- 48 Ibid., 30.
- 49 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 97.
- 50 Sherwood, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years*, 29.
- 51 Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 28.
- 52 Ibid., 29.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 133.
- 55 Ibid., 102.
- 56 Ibid., 96.
- 57 Ibid., 120.
- 58 Allen, *Carl Sandburg*, 29.
- 59 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, 107.
- 60 Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954), vii.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), xiii.
- 63 Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), xiii.
- 64 Gwyn Prins, Oral History, in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park, Pennsylvania: the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 114.
- 65 Ibid., 130.
- 66 Barbara W. Tuchman, The Historian as Artist, in *Practicing History: Selected Essays* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), 47.
- 67 Sherwood, review of *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, 1.
- 68 Behind the Lines, *Civil War Times Illustrated*.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Sandburg, Carl. *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*. 2 vols. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1926.
- _____. *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954.
- _____. *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*. 4 vols. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939.
- _____. *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.

Secondary Sources

- Allen, Gay Wilson. *Carl Sandburg*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972.
- "Behind the Lines." *Civil War Times Illustrated* 20 (August 1981): 46-47.
- Crowder, Richard. *Carl Sandburg*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964.
- Duffus, R.L. Review of *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, December 4, 1932, 3.
- Hicken, Victor. "Sandburg and the Lincoln Biography: A Personal View." In *The Vision of This Land*, ed. John E. Hallwas and Dennis J. Reader, 105-13 Macomb, Illinois: Western Illinois University, 1976.

- Larocquetinker, Edward. Review of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, September 10, 1939, 25.
- Prins, Gwyn. "Oral History." In *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke, 114-39. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.
- Sherwood, Robert E. Review of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, October 10, 1954, 10.
- _____. Review of *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, by Carl Sandburg. In *New York Times Book Review*, December 3, 1939, 1 and 14.
- Tuchman, Barbara W. "The Historian as Artist." In *Practicing History: Selected Essays*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1981.
- Van Doren, Mark. *Carl Sandburg*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1969.
- Van Gelder, Robert. "An Interview with Mr. Carl Sandburg." *New York Times Book Review*, May 31, 1942, 2 and 14.
- Wilson, Edmund. *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Yatron, Michael. "Carl Sandburg." Chap. in *America's Literary Revolt*. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1959.

Justice Denied: The Groveland Case

by Matt Schroeder
(1996 Hartje Award winner)

On July 16, 1949 the morning sun was still hours away when Willie Padgett brought his car to a halt on the side of the road. He and his wife Norma, later referred to as "that honest little cracker girl" by assistant attorney A.P. Bulle, had just finished an evening of dancing when their car suddenly stalled.¹ As he tried in vain to resuscitate his lifeless automobile, Willie could not have possibly anticipated the fire storm that was about to engulf him and Norma, their small Florida town, and the nation. His first clue was the car containing four black youths that pulled up behind him. . . .

Approaching the car ostensibly to offer assistance, the four young men beat Willie unconscious and then fled with Norma and his wallet. They released Norma some time later. The next day she was reunited with her husband.² This was the initial incident in a series of events that would later become known as the Groveland rape case. This case had a phenomenal impact not only on the individuals involved but also on the nation as a whole. Yet few people know about it and fewer still are aware of its importance. The purpose of this essay is to shed some light not only on the details of the events that make up this case but also on how it affected the legal system.

Within hours, the Lake County Sheriff's department had three suspects in custody and a manhunt was underway to find a fourth. As with many Southern criminal cases involving black defendants and white victims, a positive identification made by a white man or woman constituted all the evidence necessary to persuade local law enforcement of the defendant's guilt. Thus, when Walter Irvin, Charles Greene, and Sam Sheperd refused to corroborate Norma Padgett's story that they had abducted and raped her, the police decided to speed up the wheels of justice by beating a confession out of them. After enduring numerous blows from billy clubs, fists, and rubber hoses, Sheperd and Greenlee finally confessed.³ Irvin refused, setting a precedent of tenacious resistance against white scare tactics which he maintained through the trial.

Ironically, instead of placating the outraged Groveland community, the confessions unleashed a wave

of mob violence. Many local black businesses and homes were destroyed as roving mobs of angry whites terrorized the rural community.⁴ Eight days later, another tragic chapter was added to this story of mushrooming violence when a fourth suspect, Ernest Thomas, was shot and killed by a deputized posse.⁵ The trial of the three remaining suspects began on September 2, 1949 in an atmosphere charged with anger and outrage which the local press perpetuated.⁶ The defense had difficulty assembling a team of lawyers and subsequently had very little time to construct a case. Defense attorney Alex Akerman attempted to delay commencement of the case by filing motions against the exclusion of blacks from the pool of potential jurors and by asking for a change of venue, claiming that due process was jeopardized by the highly publicized hysteria surrounding the case. The judge refused both requests.

Thus, the trial began on the originally scheduled date. The prosecution offered as evidence testimony by Norma Padgett and plaster casts made from footprints matching shoes Deputy Sheriff James Yates confiscated from Irvin's home. The defense relied on the testimony of Irvin, Sheperd, and Greenlee, who denied being in the vicinity of the crime when it occurred. They neither presented an alibi witnessed nor did they attack Yates' plaster casts other than objecting to the illegal manner in which he obtained Irvin's shoes. The jury deliberated for two hours before returning with death sentences for Irvin and Sheperd, and a recommendation of life imprisonment for the sixteen-year-old Greenlee. The defense team immediately appealed, winning an opportunity to present the case in front of the Supreme Court.⁷ The Court ruled that due process had been compromised and ordered a new trial: a second chance for the under-funded and underprepared defense team.⁸ On November 7, 1951, Sheriff Willis McCall unwittingly thrust the case into the world spotlight when he killed Sheperd and seriously wounded Irvin while transporting them to a pre-trial motion hearing. McCall claimed he shot them in self-defense and was cleared by a coroner's jury. However, national and international outrage flooded the papers. This outrage identified American racial inequality as the

underlying cause of the murders.⁹

Although the defense team presented a much more persuasive case at the second trial by challenging the validity of Yates' casts and the testimony of Norma Padgett, on February 14, 1952 the jury of the second Groveland trial returned with the same verdict and sentence.¹⁰ Fortunately, the defense's case did convince Florida Governor Leroy Collins to commute Irvin's death sentence.¹¹

Judicially and politically the events described above had far-reaching consequences too numerous to list here.

However, one American judicial milestone that has its roots the Groveland case deserves a brief comment. NAACP attorney Jack Greenberg identified Groveland as "the single most influential experience persuading me to launch the LDF capital punishment program." This legal crusade resulted in a temporary ban on the death penalty and the abolition of capital punishment for rapists.¹² Thus, although the name Walter Irvin has faded from the memory of American mainstream culture, his battle against injustice continued to influence history long after the Groveland had ended.

Endnotes

¹ Parke, Richard H, "Irvin is Convicted, Sentenced to Die," *New York Times*, February 15, 1952, 42.

² Accounts of the events described thus far basically agree. For additional information, see Jack Greenberg's *Crusaders in the Courts*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 993-95; *Shepard V. Florida*, 341 U.S. 50 (1951); and *New York Times* article, "Florida Sheriff Talks 'Pretty Fast' to Mob," July 18, 1949, 10.

³ Greenlee later told NAACP lawyers that he changed his plea only after being tortured: "I first told him no; and then the other one started helping him whip me-both at the same time. Everything they say then I say " 'Yeah,' they hit me across my back and legs and face. I was bleeding all over, my arms, face and all was bloody." (Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 94).

⁴ "Florida Mobs Burn Negro Houses; Troops Set Up Wide Barricades," *New York Times*, July 19, 1949, 4.

⁵ For more details about the shootings and the highly controversial coroner's jury verdict, see the *New York Times* article entitled "Posse Kills Negro, Florida Fugitive," July 27, 1949, 48 and Stetson Kennedy's article "Ocala: Echo of Injustice" in *The Nation*, March 1, 1952, 203-204.

⁶ The local press issued a barrage of inflammatory headlines that assumed the guilt of the suspects, sensationalized the rioting and called for harsh punishment. Examples include "Night Riders Burn Lake Negro homes" and "Flames from Negro homes light night sky in Lake County." The press also ran a cartoon drawing four electric chairs with the words "No Compromise-Supreme Penalty" scrawled across the top (*Shepard V. Florida*).

⁷ The defense team, which included NAACP lawyers Jack Greenberg and Thurgood Marshall, argued that the State of Florida had obstructed due process by excluding blacks from the pool of potential

jurors and by conducting the trial in a violent atmosphere that presupposed the guilt of the defendants. (Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 89).

⁸ Justice Jackson commented that, "[T]his case presents one of the best examples of the worst menaces to American justice" (*Shepard V. Florida*). He was referring to the tendency of the press to destroy objectivity in controversial cases by presupposing the guilt of the accused before and during the trial.

⁹ Possibly in response to attacks by such high profile Cold War enemies as Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky, the federal government began to show an interest in the *Groveland* case, initiating an FBI investigation into the incident (Florida Shootings by Sheriff Upheld," *New York Times*, November 11, 1951). For a detailed discussion of Irvin's account of the incident, see Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 141-142. McCall's testimony is reprinted in the November 11, 1951 issue of the *New York Times*.

¹⁰ In a later case tried by NAACP lawyers, two former Lake County deputies testified that Yates had falsified the footprints in the same manner. The FBI conducted an investigation and compiled enough evidence to indict Yates for falsifying evidence. (Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 146-147).

¹¹ Jess Hunter, who served as prosecuting attorney in the second *Groveland* trial confessed on his deathbed that he doubted Irvin was guilty. This was not the first time Hunter appeared to question the validity of his own case. One evening he joined Greenberg at a local restaurant and admitted for no apparent reason that "McCall's a brute" (See Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 148, 258). In addition to Hunter's confession, the defense claim that Yates had falsified evidence also caused Collins to doubt the validity of the jury's verdict. He conducted his own investigation which corroborated the defense team's assertions about Yates' evidence.

¹² Greenberg, *Crusaders*, 93.

Bibliography

- "Attack on Sheriff Denied by Victim" *New York Times*, November 9, 1951, 20:3.
- Bombing Kills Negro Leader; Wife Hurt in Florida Home" *New York Times*, December 27, 1949, 1:2.
- "Florida Mobs Burn Negro Houses; Troops Set Up Wide Barriades" *New York Times*, July 19, 1949, 4:3.
- "Florida Sheriff Talks 'Pretty Fast' to Mob, Balks Efforts to Seize Two Negro Prisoners" *New York Times*, July 18, 1949, 10:3.
- "Florida Shootings By Sheriff Upheld" *New York Times*, November 11, 1951.
- Greenberg, Jack. *Crusaders in the Courts*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.
- Kennedy, Stetson. "Ocala: Echo of Infjustice." *The Nation*, March 1, 1952, 203-204.
- Parke, Richard H. "Irvin is Convicted, Sentenced to Die" *New York Times*, February 15, 1952, 42:1.
- Parke Richard H. "Racial Trial Shift Barred in Florida" *New York Times*, February 11, 1952, 22:1.
- "Posse Kills Negro, Florida Fugitive" *New York Times*, July 27, 1949, 48:3.
- "2D Race-Case Jury, All White, Chosen" *New York Times*, February 12, 1952, 33:1.
- "Rape Trial is Shifted" *New York Times*, December 7, 1951, 30:3.
- "U.N. Truce 'Tactics' Irk Progressives" *New York Times*, November 19, 1951, 3:1.

Vietnamese Doi Moi: Southern Motivated Initiative for Change, 1985-86

by Seth C. Bridger

It takes only a quick study of Vietnamese history for an observant historian to begin recognizing the uniqueness of the Vietnamese people. Their experiences throughout history have been, often, very turbulent and tragic. From early Chinese influences to the French colonial rule, and then again during the Vietnam War, Vietnam as a region has recorded an unparalleled past. The country experienced yet another unique phenomenon in 1986, when widespread discontent with the country's poor economic status led to drastic reforms by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP). The reform effort was known as Doi Moi, or renovation, and it opened the door toward the establishment of a free-market system within Communist Vietnam.

To adequately convey and explain the historic metamorphoses initiated by Doi Moi, we must first begin with a glance back to the period just following the Vietnam War. Communist forces from both the North and South had fought a long and bloody war, using primitive guerrilla tactics, which ultimately defeated a frustrated American military force fighting against the spread of communist ideas. On April 30, 1975, the last remaining U.S. soldiers left Vietnam from the ports of Saigon, leaving the newly liberated people of South Vietnam openly exposed to both North Communist rule and ideology.¹ American influences in the region were no longer physical in nature, but in many sectors of the South there remained a spirit of American capitalism and a fondness for free-market trade.² During the elongated U.S. campaign, southern businessmen and shop owners had flourished from an increased consumer market and, therefore, developed a lasting appetite for open market economics.

The two divided Vietnams were reunited in 1976, but for all practical purposes, their unification was more a conquest than a merger. The new communist leaders, based in Hanoi, moved quickly to bring the South under socialist reign.³ The South had no previous experience with socialist planning, prior to unification, and this rapid transformation period led to widespread alienation and resentment by southern residents.⁴ Ignoring southern petitions against the full-scale collectivization of

agriculture and the elimination of all free trade, government officials pushed forward a communist agenda. These communist approaches and ideas dominated the new unified regime, and resulted in both a suppression of the people and a smothering of their capitalist southern spirit. Discontent mounted as inefficiencies and poor planning by the VCP government drove the entire economy of Vietnam into widespread stagnation. During the first five years of VCP rule, Vietnam's unified economy actually shrank in size when compared with that of pre-unification scale.⁵

Initially, the country's new government promised that within a decade every Vietnamese family would own its own radio, refrigerator, and television.⁶ By 1986, a majority of Vietnamese people found themselves engaged in a daily struggle to feed and clothe their families, and less concerned with whether or not the government was going to deliver them a luxury item. After ten years of unproductive VCP rule, Vietnam remained one of the poorest nations in the world.⁷ Throughout the entire country, economic hardships made it clear that the communist government was failing its people. Particularly in the South, where the standard of living dropped significantly under the VCP leadership, political leaders stepped forward and spoke of reform. Prior to unification, the average southern per capita income was approximately \$250 U.S. dollars. By 1984, the southern per capita income was equal to only about \$195 U.S. dollars.⁸ The previous southern success in capitalism and free markets made these conditions seem especially intolerable. The southern grassroots appeals for change, initiated in and around Ho Chi Minh City (hereafter referred to as Saigon), prompted the failing VCP government to at last examine Vietnam's severe economic questions and search for solutions.⁹

During the first ten years of VCP unified rule, Vietnam remained very much a peasant nation, dependent upon an agriculturally based rural economy. In 1986, the Vietnamese population of approximately sixty-four million people remained firmly attached to their country-side heritage. Over 80 percent of the population still lived in rural communities, despite

government attempts to industrialize and urbanize the country.¹⁰ Economic figures show that the agriculture industry accounted for 59.6 percent of the Vietnamese national income in 1983 alone.¹¹ The weak, unstable economy, in part, was a result of inefficient government planning, which led to food shortages, high rates of inflation, unreliable energy sources, and state-run factories which only produced to half of their potential.¹²

From June 1985 to December 1986, the VCP's new strategy for economic reform, *Doi Moi*, began to take shape. The Eighth Plenum of the Party's Central Committee met during June 1985 and produced a draft resolution, referred to as "Resolution Eight." This proposal called for elevated factory production levels, the development of new revenue sources, and an improvement in Vietnamese living standards.¹³ After the Eighth Plenum, initial reform attempts by the VCP produced mixed results. On September 14, 1985, the government launched a currency exchange program intended to bring large amounts of Vietnamese money back under the control of the VCP government. Overnight, one "new" dong was worth ten "old" dongs, and the Vietnamese people scrambled to withdraw whatever small savings they had deposited in the banks.¹⁴ This currency exchange failed badly, resulted in crisis, and demonstrated how out of touch the VCP leadership had become with the needs of the country.

Nine days later, on September 23, a new wage system was introduced for the state employees which eliminated the policy of state food subsidies to governmental workers.¹⁵ This was a just and necessary reform, because the subsidy system added to the inefficiency of the economy and gave rise to widespread governmental corruption. Wide gaps between official government prices on goods and free-market prices allowed officials to pad their own incomes by reselling the subsidized products for new competitive market prices.¹⁶ Prior to this change in policy, state subsidies traditionally served as a fundamental building bloc of socialist rule.¹⁷ Corruption was a huge problem for Vietnam under VCP rule. The party newspaper, *Nhan Dan*, reported in 1981 that 66 percent of the 626 units that had been investigated by the state were found to contain some form of corruption.¹⁸

The Eighth Plenum set reform in motion, but it was not until late the following year that sincere efforts were taken and the VCP committed itself to real economic change. The pivotal Sixth Party Congress gathered in December 1986 and further initiated both economic and Party reform. Six months before the Congress met, the elected General-Secretary, Le Duan, passed away. This left a void to be filled, and long-time Party member Truong Chinh served as the acting Party leader leading up to the convening of the Congress.¹⁹ As the Congress

assembled, however, a priority was given to the crucial election of a new General-Secretary.

It became increasingly clear to the VCP members that bold, new ideas must be generated if the Party had any hopes of improving the country's economic situation.²⁰ In an extraordinary turn of events, the man the Party turned to was not Chinh, but a seventy-one year old reformist named Nguyen Van Linh. Linh had been a Viet Cong guerrilla leader during the war and was originally from the North, but he spent much of his postwar life residing in Saigon.²¹ Linh's southern ties and his experience with the southern economics made him a strong candidate for change, one who could immediately take charge of the renovation program. This election marked an phenomenal turn of events because, until mid-1985, Linh's controversial economic views did not sit well with the hard-line Marxist members of the Party. He even lost his Political Bureau post in 1982 as a result of his favoritism towards free-market economics. At the Eighth Plenum, however, he was reinstated to his post within the Political Bureau.²² Linh's historic rise to power helped raise hopes, not just in the south, but also around the country for improved economic conditions.

Another significant development at the Sixth Congress was the retirement of three top-ranking Politburo officials. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, influential party member Le Duc Tho, and defeated party General-Secretary Truong Chinh, all stepped down from their posts during the Sixth Congress.²³ Each official stated that "advanced age and bad health" led to the decisions to retire.²⁴ Reorganization within VCP leadership traditionally had been a slow process, with much respect and consideration shown to long-time party administrators.²⁵ The actions of the Sixth Congress, however, showed a new and reformed approach to party rule. The younger members of the party began to believe that old-line party members were not fit to lead the country any longer. A common line of thought held that the old-line leaders, who had effectively fought and lead years of war and revolution, were losing the fight against economic hardships and Vietnamese poverty.²⁶ One long time party official, who remained nameless, stated that, "Our old Generals were good at winning the war, but they are not so good at running the country."²⁷ During the first ten years of VCP rule, they had failed to fulfill Ho Chi Minh's historic wartime pledge to make postwar Vietnam "ten times more beautiful."²⁸

Unified Vietnam was still very much two separate countries in 1986, but the Sixth Congress served as a bridge between the two. The election of Nguyen Van Linh served as a foundation for that bridge, as the future of a fragile country was now placed in his hands. The task was not simple, but Linh understood the difficult battle ahead. "It is impossible to change such a bad

situation," he said, "into a good situation within such a short period of time."²⁹ The doors were now open toward the establishment of a free-market economy and hardships began to give rise to hope for the future. As the Sixth Congress disassembled, the clouds of reform

began to write a new chapter in Vietnam's unique past. No one knew which direction the winds would blow, but it was certain where the motivation originated, and that was clearly in the South.

Endnotes

- ¹ Philip Shenon, "Reaching for the Good Life in Vietnam," *New York Times Magazine*, January 5, 1992, 18.
- ² Nayan Chanda, "The New Revolution: the South Leads the Way Away from Subsidized Socialism," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 132 (10 April 1986):24.
- ³ William J. Duiker, "Vietnam in 1985: Searching for Solutions," *Asian Survey* 26 (January 1986): 107.
- ⁴ Gareth Porter, "The Politics of 'Renovation' in Vietnam," *Problems of Communism* 39 (May 1990): 87.
- ⁵ Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Vietnam: Ten Years of Economic Struggle," *Asian Survey* 26 (October 1986) 1043.
- ⁶ Gareth Porter, "Politics of Renovation," 72.
- ⁷ Barbara Crossette, "Hanoi Loosens Central Economic Reins," *New York Times*, December 29, 1987.
- ⁸ Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Economic Struggle," 1049; quoted in *Economist*, 13 October 1984.
- ⁹ Barbara Crossette, "Grass-Root Politics Forced Hanoi shake-Up," *New York Times*, 4 February 1987. See also: Lewis M. Simmons, "With New Energy, Vietnam Gets Down to Business," *Smithsonian* 18 (April 1987): 69. I will refer to Ho Chi Minh City as Saigon hereafter because the southerners themselves refer to it by the city's original name.
- ¹⁰ Cesar Castruita Avila, "Vietnam's War on Poverty," *World Press Review* 37 (December 1990): 56.
- ¹¹ Tetsusaburo Kimura, "Economic Struggle," 1044.
- ¹² Ronald J. Cima, "Peasants and Regime in Vietnam: Perspectives on Transition," *Problems of Communism* 39 (November 1990): 90.
- ¹³ Douglas Pike, "Reform in Vietnam," chap. in *Reform and Transformation in Communist Systems: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Ilpyong J. Kim and Jane Shapiro Zacek (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 311.
- ¹⁴ Paul Quinn-Judge, "Vietnam: Acceptable Face of Capitalism," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 180 (7 November 1985): 32.
- ¹⁵ Paul Quinn-Judge, "Acceptable Face," 32.
- ¹⁶ Gareth Porter, "Politics of Renovation," 73.
- ¹⁷ Nayan Chanda, "The New Revolution," 25.
- ¹⁸ Thanh Hai, "Prevent collective Corruption," *Nhan Dan* (Hanoi), 12 May 1981, tans. in FBIS-EAS, 28 May 1981, p. k/7; quoted in Gareth Porter, "Politics of Renovation," 73.
- ¹⁹ David Wurfel, "Doi Moi in Comparative Perspective," chap. in *Reinventing Vietnamese Socialism*, ed. William S. Turley and Mark Seldon (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1993), 27.
- ²⁰ Douglas Pike, "Reform in Vietnam," 309.
- ²¹ Philip shenon, "Good Life," 17. Linh's original name was Nguyen Van Cuc. See: *Hanoi domestic services*, 18 December 19886, trans. in FBIS-EAS, December 19, 1986, p. k/15. See also: Gareth Porter, "Politics of renovation," 76.
- ²² Gareth Porter, "Politics of Renovation," 76.
- ²³ Barbara Crossette, "Grassroot Politics,"
- ²⁴ "Perestroika, doi Moi, Shall We Call the Whole Thing Off?," *Economist*, 5 March 1988, 35.
- ²⁵ "Perestroika, Doi Moi," March 5, 1988, 35.
- ²⁶ Cesar Castruita Avila, "War on Poverty," 56.
- ²⁷ Lewis M. Simmons, "With New energy," 68.
- ²⁸ Ho Chi Minh's quotation is taken from Douglas :Pike's piece, "Reform in Vietnam," 309. It is interesting to note, that on 29 May 1995, Vietnam celebrated the anniversary of Ho Chi Minh's 105th birthday. See: "Vietnam: Will Success Spoil the Party," *Economist*, May 25, 1991, 43.
- ²⁹ Barbara Crossette, "Vietnam's Party Chief Says Capitalism Can be Guide," *New York Times*, January 22, 1988.

Bibliography

- Blacker, Coit D. "The USSR and Asia in 1989: Recasting Relationships." *Asian Survey* 30 (January 1990): 1-12.
- Cima, Ronald J. "Peasants and Regime in Vietnam: Perspectives on Transition." *Problems of Communism* 39 (November 1990): 90-95.
- Crossette, Barbara. "Currency Crisis is Ravaging Vietnam's Fragile Economy." *New York Times*, April 10, 1988, A1.
- _____. "For Vietnamese, Realism is in short Supply." *New York Times*, February 29, 1988, D2.
- _____. "Grass-Roots Politics Force Hanoi Shake-Up." *New York Times*, February 4, 1987, A8.
- _____. "Hanoi Loosens Central Economic Reins." *New York Times*, December 29, 1987, A4.
- _____. "Vietnam, Going Hungry, Seeks U.S. Aid." *New York Times*, April 7, 1988, A3.
- _____. "Vietnam's Party Chief Says Capitalism Can be Guide." *New York Times*, January 22, 1988, A2.
- Chanda, Nayan. "The New Revolution: The South Leads the way Away from Subsidized Socialism." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 132 (April 10, 1986):24-28.
- Cooper, Nancy. "The Choice: Reform or Perish." *Newsweek*, July 13, 1987, 32.
- Duiker, William J. "Vietnam in 1985: Searching for Solutions." *Asian Survey* 26 (January 1986):102-11.
- _____. *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981.
- Elliott, David W.P. "Dilemmas of Reform in Vietnam." Chap. in *Reinventing Vietnamese Socialism*, ed. William S. Turley and Mark Selden, 53-96 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993).
- Hue-Tam Ho Tai. *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- "Investing in Vietnam: On Ho's Trail." *Economist*, May 19, 1990, 79-80.
- Joiner, Charles A. "The Vietnam Communist Party Strives to Remain the Only Force." *Asian Survey* 30 (November 1990): 1053-65.
- Kimura, Tetsusaburo. "Vietnam: Ten Years of Economic Struggle." *Asian Survey* 26 (October 1986): 1039-55.
- Leinster, Colin. "Vietnam Revisited: Turn to the Right?" *Fortune*, August 1, 1988, 84-102.
- Long, Nguyen. *After Saigon Fell: Daily Life Under the Vietnamese Communists*. Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1981.
- Luong, Hy V. *Revolution in the Village*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.
- Nivolon, Francois. "Rescheduling, Rethinking." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 130 (December 19, 1985): 98-99.
- Perestroika, Doi Moi, Shall We Call the Whole Thing Off?" *Economist*, March 5, 1988, 35-36.
- Pike, Douglas. "Reform in Vietnam," chap. in *Reform and Transformation in Communist Systems: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Ilpuong J Kim and Jane Shapiro Zacek, 309-27 (New York: Paragon House, 1991).
- Porter, Gareth. "The Politics of 'Renovation' in Vietnam." *Problems of Communism* 39 (May 1990): 72-88.
- _____. *Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Quinn-Judge, Paul. Policies Weather Criticisms: Major Economic Problems Still Dog Vietnam." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 130 (December 19, 1985): 90-99.
- "Vietnam: Acceptable Face of Capitalism." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 130 (November 7, 1985): 32-33.
- Schirmer, Robert. "Eight Marxist Nations: Their Struggle for Prosperity." *Scholastic Update*, September 27, 1986, 14-20.
- Simons, Lewis M. "With New Energy, Vietnam Gets Down to Business." *Smithsonian* 18 (April 1987): 62-71.
- Shenon, Philip. "Reaching for the Good Life in Vietnam." *New York Times Magazine*, January 5, 1992, 17.
- Thuy, Le Duc. "Economic Doi Moi in Vietnam: content, Achievement, and Prospects," chap. in *Reinventing Vietnamese Socialism*, ed. William S Turley and Mark Seldon (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), 97-107.
- "Top Three Leaders Resign in Vietnam." *New York Times*, December 17, 1986, A1.
- Van Canh, Nguyen. *Vietnam Under Communism, 1975-1982*. Stanford, California: Hoover Press, 1983.
- "Vietnam: Catching Up With Neighbors." *Economist*, July 6, 1991, 36-38.
- "Vietnam: Poised Between Marx and Market." *Economist*, February 24, 1990, 36.
- "Vietnam: Will Success Spoil the Party?" *Economist*, May 25, 1991, 43-44.

Bar Belles: Springfield, Ohio's Great Crusade

by David Thomas

For Monday afternoon's campaign four battalions of missionaries reported for duty and divided their attention among eight saloons. The plan of battle was so arranged that each place was visited by each committee, one following the other closely, so that the saloons were, virtually, in a state of siege, and the proprietors had little to do but stand guard and turn a key or shoot a bolt as soon as a ribbon or dress was seen fluttering around the corner At each a halt was ordered upon the pavement and "Crown Him Lord of All" rang out upon the chill air, followed by prayer.¹

This passage, from the February 17th issue of Ohio's *Springfield Daily Republic*, is typical of accounts of the Women's Crusade of 1873 and 1874. Women around the nation, from New York to California, rose up and attacked "the Demon Rum." For the first time, women saw themselves as a force that could and would change society. A number of historians discuss the significance of this event. The consensus among them is that the importance of the Women's Crusade lies not in its short-term economic, legal, or legislative impact, but rather in its social significance. For example, Joseph R. Gusfield argues that:

Such conduct [by women during the Crusade] was shocking by the rules of middle-class female conduct of the time. The direct action by women, and the subsequent formation of the WCTU [Woman's Christian Temperance Union] as a result of it, was a unique activity for the women of the 1870s.²

Barbara Epstein suggests, in *The Politics of Domesticity*, that "The Woman's Crusade was part of a long-term process by which middle-class women gained the strength to act on behalf of what they perceived as their interests."³ Finally, Ruth Bordin contends, "Because the Crusade story is the moving tale of women suddenly finding new strengths, strengths that propelled them from their homes into public life and political positions, it illustrates the spontaneous appeal and unconscious

feminism of the movement."⁴ The history of temperance in Springfield, Ohio provides a useful window into these contentions about the Women's Crusade. A close examination shows that, indeed, the Women's Crusade was the first chance middle-class women had to make themselves heard in society.

Certainly, temperance was not a new idea in Springfield or anywhere else in the 1870s. Since colonial times men and women, mostly men, attempted to curb the drinking of other people, and Springfield was no exception. In March 1801 John Demint built a cabin on what would become Springfield, Ohio. Three short months later Griffith Foos erected the first tavern. Histories of Springfield tell us that things went downhill from there. In 1818, the Reverend Saul Henkle created a temperance organization "to stem the tide of evil which seemed to gather such strength in the community . . . and to abandon the use of intoxicating liquors."⁵ Beers' *History of Clark County, Ohio* tells us that, Drunkenness and lawlessness prevailed⁶ and that "the customs of the day were such as tended to corrupt instead of improve the morals of the people."⁷ Beers goes on to say that, "the bottle of whiskey was a necessary adjunct to the water pitcher upon the counters of the stores for the free use of all the customers" and that the practice among farmers was to serve whiskey to their field hands.⁸ Without doubt, Springfield was a very wet city before the 1870s.

Springfield reflects patterns nationwide. Certainly, Americans have always consumed alcohol. Norman H. Clark estimates that in 1810 per capita alcohol consumption was around 7 gallons of absolute alcohol per year. Naturally, this fluctuated widely. In Albany, NY, for example, the figures for the 1830s are between 10 and 13 gallons per capita.⁹ In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests much the same thing. We can be sure that people in the first-half of the nineteenth century could see a nation consuming large amounts alcohol.

Many did try to bring drinking under control. Reverend Henkle of Springfield formed his own temperance society, as did several others. However, their attempts were usually short-lived and lacked any cohesion. National efforts were only slightly more

successful. Movements around the country in the decades preceding the 1870s included the Washingtonians, the Sons of Temperance, and the Independent Order of Good Templars, all male dominated societies, devoted to pledging their members to temperance or abstinence. Although some did have female auxiliaries, it was a male movement. In addition, the leaders were all men, including such charismatic figures as Benjamin Rush, Neal Dow, and Dr. Dio Lewis, the man whose speech in Hillsboro, Ohio sparked the first Women's Crusade.

In Springfield, the decade preceding the Crusade seems to foreshadow the events of 1873-74. A local unit serving in the Civil War, Company I, 110th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, under General Warren Keifer, signed this pledge:

We, the undersigned members of Co. I, 110th O.V.I., having recently been witnesses of the intoxication, the most revolting to the human heart [sic], and repugnant to the feelings of all who cherish sobriety as a virtue, do hereby declare our uncompromising hostility to the use of ardent spirits Believing the use of intoxicating liquors to be an unmitigated curse to the soldier as well as to the citizen . . . we hereby pledge each other upon our honor as gentlemen that, during our unexpired term of service, we will "Touch not, taste not, handle not" the accursed thing . . .¹⁰

In addition, state laws prohibited the sale of alcohol on Sunday and in amounts of less than one quart (an attempt to prevent the sale of individual drinks). In 1870 the Ohio state legislature passed the Adair Law. This law permitted a woman to sue the person who sold liquor to her son or husband, opening the door for legal challenges to saloon keepers and liquor sellers.

It was the Adair Law that saw the first incidence in Springfield of a female speaking out against liquor. On January 23, 1873, a woman brought the first action under this law into a Springfield court. Eliza Daniel Stewart (who would become known as "Mother" Stewart around the world) at the behest of the prosecution, delivered a portion of the closing argument. This case is significant for several reasons. First, it seems to be the earliest incidence of any woman playing an active role in Springfield's legal system. At the very least, it was the first highly publicized one. Second, and more important, we can see the desire of women to stand up and be heard. "Mother" Stewart says:

I made this attempt to plead the case of my sister because I knew I could speak for her as no man could I was glad that now our women might come into the courts and prosecute the rum-seller for the destruction of their husbands and homes I had not spoken five minutes till I saw that I held the jury in my hand.¹¹

After deliberation the jury returned a verdict in favor of the prosecution. "Mother" Stewart received accolades from many people, including the local press. What we learn from this case is that in the 1870s, for the first time, women could enter and perform well in traditionally male arenas. They began to feel that, when liquor (and later, anything else) threatened home and hearth, they could stand up and protect them.

Still, it is the Women's Crusade that is most interesting. On December 23, 1873, Dr. Diocletian Lewis, a popular temperance speaker, delivered a lecture to the people of Hillsboro, Ohio. He urged the local citizens to wage a campaign against the saloons, following his own mother's example. After forming a committee, the women of the town set upon local proprietors with hymns and prayers. A similar course of events took place in nearby Washington Court House the next day, with male supporters praying in a church and ringing its bell for support. When reports of the successful closures of several saloons traveled around the state, the movement quickly spread.

Crusades took place in towns throughout the Midwest and around the country. It "spread to 130 towns, villages, and cities in Ohio, 36 in Michigan, 34 in Indiana, and smaller numbers of towns in seventeen other states" over the next few months.¹² Eventually, "at least 912 communities in 31 states and territories had experienced Crusades."¹³ The effects on the liquor industry nationwide are somewhat notable. Seven-hundred fifty breweries closed, while the production of malt liquor fell by more than five and one-half million gallons. In addition, federal excise tax receipts fell off sharply. Beer production in Ohio may have fallen by as much as one-third.¹⁴ However, much of this damage to the brewing and distilling industries may have stemmed from the concurrent economic depression. It is impossible to estimate exactly how great the economic impact of the Crusade was. Common sense tells us that it must have played a role, but any sort of quantitative analysis is prohibitive. Regardless, the industries recovered within a short time.

The women of Springfield held their first "mass meeting" to promote the cause of temperance on December 9, 1873, in the basement of a local Lutheran church. Interestingly, this was a full two weeks before the beginning of the Crusade in Hillsboro. Even prior to that, in October of 1873, 700 people petitioned the city council to pass an ordinance that would have created de facto prohibition within the city limits. However, they would wait until January before marching on the first saloon, apparently trying to muster the courage to confront their "enemies" in the open. On January seventh or eighth, the women of Springfield set upon the Lagonda House saloon. "Mother" Stewart relates the story in her book *Memories of the Crusade: A Thrilling*

Account of the Great Uprising of the Women of Ohio in 1873, Against the Liquor Crime:

On this first morning of our moving out, the whole city was in a state of great excitement and the streets were lined thronged with people . . . I led the band up Main to Limestone, then south on Limestone to the front entrance . . . [It was in front of a locked] door that we held our first Crusade service, and Sister Kinney offered the first prayer.

After delivering a speech, Mother Stewart led the band to two more saloons, finding locked doors at each. The women then held a meeting in the Central Methodist Episcopal Church to discuss the great "successes" of the day.¹⁵

And thus began the Women's Crusade in Springfield, Ohio. The pattern established in those first weeks continued for several months. They met in "mass meetings," often with several hundred people in attendance. At these meetings, men and women delivered long speeches decrying the evils of drink, often relating their own personal experiences. Afterwards, women would leave in groups ranging in size from ten to seventy-five to wage war upon the saloons. Accounts usually employ militaristic language, words like: battle, enemy, offensive, counter-offensive, and front-lines. In fact, every front page of the Springfield Daily Republic from January 15 until April 9 contains a headline entitled "The Revolution."

The reformers appear to have had mixed results. They certainly pointed to a number of "conversions," when either individual drinkers or proprietors of saloons gave alcohol up forever. In addition, they had a great deal of support from the city's industrial leaders, including Elias Driscoll, P.P. Mast, and John Foos. However, other evidence suggests the limited success of the movement in terms of reforming people's views. A Cincinnati journalist observed on January 29 that:

It was not a temperance meeting at all, for organization and hard work; but a debating school and literary club; an opportunity for the display of oratorical talent and youthful ambition. Gentlemen and ladies, that sort of staging won't drive the devil out of Springfield.¹⁶

He made some useful observations. In spite of their great eloquence and concerted effort, the Crusaders did not deal drinking a serious blow that winter. The number of saloons in Springfield continued its upward trend, and the two breweries and one distillery in town remained open. In the April city council elections, the voters elected four "dry" council members, but they also elected two decidedly "wet" ones, including William Blee, the half-owner of Springfield's distillery. In all, the

quantitative effects of the local Women's Crusade are negligible. The number of saloons continued to grow, and a new brewery even opened its doors within a few years.

By the end of April, reports of the Crusade in the Republic were much more sporadic. Temperance leaders held their meetings much less frequently, and the liquor trade would not feel the bite of serious regulation until the 1890s.

Nonetheless, much can be learned from the Women's Crusade. Certainly, the women involved in the movement show us exactly who agitated for temperance reform. For example, the occupations of the women's husbands provide a good indicator of their social status. We can compare this to the national movement. Ruth Bordin compiled an index of thirty-seven national leaders in 1874, including their husbands' occupations. A majority can easily be classified as upper-class or middle-class, being, attorneys (5-13%), clergy (4-11%), businessmen, industrialists, financiers (3-8%), educators (4-11%), and physicians (4-11%). Much the same is true of Springfield, although there the leaders were much more middle-class, including several bookkeepers and clerks, as well as a miller and saddler. However, the wives of several prominent industrialists were also active participants. The Women's Crusade was certainly a popular movement, but it did not come from the proletariat.

Finally, the movement's leaders left us several clues that they were indeed "taking control," as Ruth Bordin argues. On October 14th, 1873, the Republic published a letter entitled "An Appeal to the Women of Springfield," relating the dire straits of a woman married to an alcoholic. Mother Stewart says that this letter had a major impact on the people of Springfield. She observes that, "They had not seen, had not thought, and could with difficulty be made to believe [the dangers of drinking], so indifferent were the good people, at this time, to the drink question in our midst." Women in the 1870s certainly did become more aware of the dangers of alcohol, partly as a result of the Crusade. This awareness eventually grew into the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, bringing together a national movement that truly did change the country.

The Women's Crusade is significant not in its short-term impact on drinking, because it had little. However, it helped sow the seeds of dissent that grew into a national temperance movement and climaxed in the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, Prohibition, in April 1913. In addition, it highlights the women reformers of the nineteenth century, for the typical activist in temperance reform was often also active in suffrage and other movements. For example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published a newspaper entitled *The Lily* that was primarily concerned with

temperance. On a local level, Minnie Willis Baines was a writer and suffragist, as well as a leader of the Crusaders. Time does not permit an analysis of this link, suffice it to say that it did exist.

Much work remains to be done on this subject, both in Springfield and elsewhere. For example, the local industrialists may have supported the movement not so much out of moral concern as out of an attempt to improve the efficiency of their workers, who would often stumble in late to work after a night of hard drinking. In addition, we need to examine more of the social nature of

the Women's Crusade. Was it a crusade against liquor, or was it a crusade against the saloons, establishments frequented by the skyrocketing number of new immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and Italy. A full understanding of the Women's Crusade in Springfield and elsewhere requires that we address these areas. In short, we have many more questions than answers.

Nonetheless, from this examination we can expand our understanding of the women who, for the first time in their lives, stood up and demanded to be heard.

Endnotes

¹ "The Revolution: One Day Later From the Front," *Springfield Daily Republic*, 17 February 1874, 1.

² Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 89.

³ Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 114.

⁴ Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1981), 15.

⁵ *The History of Clark County, Ohio: Illustrated* (Chicago, IL: W. H. Beers and Co., 1881), 457.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 449.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 457.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Clark, 20.

¹⁰ *Springfield Daily Republic*, July 16, 1864, 1.

¹¹ Eiza Daniel Stewart, *Memories of the Crusade: A Thrilling Account of the Great Uprising of the Women of Ohio in 1873, Against the Liquor Crime* (Columbus, OH: William G. Hubbard and Co., 1888), 35-36.

¹² Epstein, 100.

¹³ Bordin, 22.

¹⁴ Epstein, 100.

¹⁵ Stewart, 167-71.

¹⁶ *Springfield Daily Republic*, 29 January 1874, 1.

¹⁷ Bordin, 162.

¹⁸ Stewart, 52.

Bibliography

- Bing, Louise S. *The Uncrowned Queen of the Temperance World*. Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing, 1967.
- A Biographical Record of Clark County, Ohio: Illustrated*. New York: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1902.
- Blocker, Jack S. *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989.
- Bordin, Ruth. *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981.
- Carpenter, Charles K. *The Origin of the Woman's Crusade and W.C.T.U.* Mines Press, 1949.
- Clark, Norman H. *Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976.
- Epstein, Barbara Leslie. *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963.
- The History of Clark County, Ohio: Illustrated*. Chicago: W.H. Beers and Co., 1881.
- Jimerson, Randall C., Francis X. Blouin, and Charles A. Issetts, eds. *Guide to the Microfilm Edition of Temperance and Prohibition Papers*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1977.
- Kinnison, William F. *Springfield and Clark County: An Illustrated History*. Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1985.
- Prince, Benjamin F. *A Standard History of Springfield and Clark County, Ohio*. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1922.
- Springfield Daily Republic*. Springfield, OH.
- Stewart, Eliza Daniel. *Memories of the Crusade: A Thrilling Account of the Great Uprising of the Women of Ohio in 1873 Against the Liquor Crime*. Columbus, OH: William G. Hubbard and Co., 1888.