

# The Wittenberg History Journal

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**From the Editors:**

*The 2001 Wittenberg University History Journal* contains a wide variety of papers in many styles and covering very different subject matters. These papers were the cream of the crop from an exemplary group of papers and selecting these few was a strenuous decision for the editorial staff. The staff enjoyed reading the submitted papers; this Journal would not be possible without such quality student submissions.

Gratitude is extended to the members of the Department of History, with a special thanks to department secretary Margaret DeButy, for all of their support, advice, and guidance. We would especially like to thank our advisor, Dr. Jim Huffman, for all of his assistance over the last few months. Finally, a resounding thank you to our editorial staff, who worked tirelessly to make this Journal the fine piece of work we present to you. It is the dedication of all these individuals working together that allows the History Journal to become a reality every year. We hope you enjoy this year's Journal and appreciate the support we have received from the Wittenberg community.

Melinda Scott  
Josh Guerrieri  
Jeff Lewis

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**The Hartje Papers**

The Martha and Robert G. Hartje Award is presented annually to a Senior in the spring semester. The History Department determines the four finalists who write a 600 to 800 word narrative essay dealing with a historical event or figure. The finalists must have at least a 2.7 grade point average and have completed at least six history courses. The winner is awarded \$400 at a spring semester History Department colloquium and all four entries are included in the History Journal. This year's Hartje Paper award was presented to Jamie Choqe.

*On the Cover*

This year's cover features a photo of a member of the Iron Brigade in the Civil War. The Iron Brigade was a regiment of Union soldiers from Wisconsin who were noted for their bravery on the battlefield. To read more about the Iron Brigade, please turn to Adam Ruschau's paper "Those Damn Black Hats: The Iron Brigade in the Civil War."

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# The Philosopher-King: Vaclav Havel and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia

By Lucas Clarkson  
Wittenberg University Class of 2002

Above all, any existential revolution should provide hope of a moral reconstitution of society... A new experience of being, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped sense of 'higher responsibility,' a new-found inner relationship to other people and to the human community...<sup>1</sup>

As a playwright, author and political dissident, Vaclav Havel had the largest individual impact on Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution of 1989. Through his popular advocacy of human rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression, Havel set the stage for what would be one of history's most peaceful revolutions ever. Although Havel was continually at the forefront of the Czech dissident movement throughout the sixties and seventies, he was never considered its "leader" until he was thrust into that role late in 1989. It was then that the people of Czechoslovakia raised their voices in the remarkable, yet still unfamiliar spirit of democracy and freedom, and chose Havel to be their president. They remembered what he had done as a playwright, providing them with thought-provoking plays aimed at awakening their long-oppressed minds. Furthermore, they knew him as the author of countless dissident writings, including the infamous *Charter 77*, one of the first attempts by Czech citizens at having open discussion with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC).<sup>1</sup> Despite numerous attempts by government officials to stifle Havel's revolutionary inclinations, he eventually emerged as both the voice and the conscience of a new, free Czechoslovakia.

In the decades prior to Havel's rise to national prominence, Czechoslovakia had undergone a number of shifts in the balance of

political power. Beginning in 1918 and until the years preceding World War II, Czechoslovakia would remain a democratic state. However, in 1938 President Emil Hacha acquiesced to the demands of Adolf Hitler and Czechoslovakia became a German Protectorate. The Czechoslovak experience under German rule was that of widespread persecution and stifled speech, conditions eerily similar to what they would undergo under Communist rule. Ultimately, more than fifty thousand Czechoslovaks would die as a result of German occupation. Following Germany's defeat in 1945, Czechoslovakia was to fall into the hands of the U.S.S.R., ushering in a new era of political oppression. Stalinization, the term used to describe Czechoslovakia's forced movement from "bureaucratic centralism" to communism, would remain in effect for two more decades.

Years of economic stagnation and political oppression led to a reform of Stalinistic policies during the 1960s. The program, spearheaded by liberal members of the CPC and with the support of the people, had begun to gain momentum. Alexander Dubcek, a moderate reformist appointed to become the new chair of the CPC in 1968, would push the movement further along by proposing 'a new model of socialism,' profoundly 'democratic' and 'national.'<sup>2</sup> Eventually, Moscow took the side of the antireformists and in August 1968, Soviet forces entered Prague, effectively ending Dubcek's "Prague Spring."<sup>3</sup> Although the movement towards democracy was abruptly put to a halt, the events surrounding Prague in 1968 would be used as a rallying cry for student demonstrators in 1989.

Normalization, the process whereby all reformist elements of the CPC were purged, immediately followed Prague Spring. Dubcek,

along with many other reformist leaders of the CPC, was ousted from his position.<sup>4</sup> Students demonstrated in opposition to the Soviet presence, and one young man would perform a public suicide to condemn Soviet aggression.<sup>5</sup> One of the main foundations the new regime rested on was the "strict control over the spread of ideas, involving a purge of all institutions engaged in the dissemination of knowledge and culture."<sup>6</sup> This new policy would have a debilitating effect on many writers and artists, especially those from the theatre. Many would flee the country in the years following its inception in order to work in "free" countries. Among the more adversely affected was Vaclav Havel, a playwright and political dissident who, during the Prague Spring, had initiated efforts to bring democracy to the Czechoslovak government.<sup>7</sup> While many of his colleagues were leaving the country in hopes of acquiring their freedom elsewhere, Havel decided to remain in Czechoslovakia and fight on. It would ultimately be his contributions to the dissident movement that would help lay the foundations of the revolution in 1989.

Before he emerged at the forefront of the Czech dissident movement, and throughout his life, Havel was involved in a number of dissident groups. Early on, at the age of fifteen, Havel helped found the "Thirty-sixers," a group of young intellectuals, all born in 1936, that would meet regularly and engage in heated debates over political issues.<sup>8</sup> Years later, Havel would look back on those meetings and fear what could have happened, "If we'd been five years older, we'd have almost certainly ended up in Mirov [a Stalinistic concentration camp]; in those days, you could easily get twenty years for that kind of thing."<sup>9</sup> This reluctance to yield to authority would present itself time and again, as Havel would become an active member of the Czech dissident movement.

Havel took his largest step into the movement in 1965 when he became one of the editors of *Tvar*, a literary magazine intended for young people.<sup>10</sup> It was at this time that Havel first considered himself a member of the underground movement. "It was a step that turned out to be far more important in my life than it first appeared to be...it was the beginning of something deeper-my involvement

in cultural and civic politics-and it ultimately led to my becoming a 'dissident.'<sup>11</sup> As an editor of *Tvar*, Havel would continually encounter resistance from the government as to what could be published and what couldn't. He would remain a part of the controversial journal until 1969, when it was officially banned by the government.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to his forays into the dissident movement, Havel was also a prominent playwright whose work was considered integral in redefining the citizen's role in society. He began his career at the ABC Theatre in Prague, where he learned just how much power the theatre possessed. Biographer Michael Simmons described Havel's theatrical education this way: "Social and political points, he realised, could be made in an oblique way, even in a surrealist way, using faraway or even non-existent settings for a very apposite argument."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Havel realized that he could now give life to what had previously been inanimate thoughts and ideas. Actions on the stage would represent events from real life, thereby offering audience members the chance to view their everyday lives in a stark, new light. Through the theatre, Havel could "strip away illusions, and reveal an authentic, vital 'truth' which, without further meditation, holds equally within and outside the theatre."<sup>14</sup> The enormous production of works that followed would ultimately lay the foundation for an upheaval – the type the world had never seen.

In *The Garden Party*, Havel utilized the themes of repetition and predictability to create an atmosphere similar to what his audience experienced on an everyday basis. After a great deal of practice, the main character, Hugo, discovered a way to control others where they had once controlled him. After this achievement, however, Hugo's life became inundated with predictability and repetition. At the time that *The Garden Party* premiered in 1963, these same themes were prevalent in Czechoslovak society. Thus, audience members were forced to regard their society in terms of its inherently disordered nature. The CPC had repeatedly broken promises to end Stalinization, and the public had grown weary. Havel was merely imitating the government's own ineptitude, and at the same time, offering opposition to it.

Various other absurdist themes presented themselves in Havel's plays that, in turn, represent opposition to the CPC. *The Memorandum*, produced in 1965, was an Orwellian play that focused on the problems that a new, bureaucratic language called Ptydepe introduced to society. The play was meant to mock the government's often-incomprehensible language. In *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration*, produced in 1968, a man is imprisoned by a machine, although in a "quasi-homely setting." Here, Havel compared "the system" to a manipulative machine, and members of society are its victims.<sup>15</sup> Although Havel did not actually attempt to incite rebellion through themes in his plays, he did succeed in forcing audience members to see things as they truly are. Havel himself expressed this desire in *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*:

My ambition is not to soothe the viewer with a merciful lie or cheer him up with a false offer to sort things out for him. I wouldn't be helping him very much if I did. I'm trying to do something else: to propel him, in the most drastic possible way, into the depths of a question he should not, and cannot, avoid asking; to stick his nose into his own misery, into my misery, into our common misery, by way of reminding him that the time has come to do something about it.<sup>16</sup>

For years, Havel was able to take advantage of the freedom the theatre gave him. The Prague Spring, however, had frightened the leadership of the CPC enough that they began to crack down with their method of "normalization." In 1971, the government forbade publication and production of any of Havel's plays, and eventually, all his works were prohibited from being accessed.<sup>17</sup> Although the CPC was somewhat successful in stopping the production of his plays, Havel was able to find an alternate medium through which his dissident opinions could be expressed. Havel would go on to produce a number of essays, letters, and writings attacking the absurdity of the Communist system.

This method becomes clear in Havel's *The Power of the Powerless*, written in 1978.<sup>18</sup> The essay itself is a discussion on the merits of the current Communist system and on the concepts

of freedom and power. Havel begins the essay by justifying the then-current dissident movement growing within Czechoslovakia. He writes that, "It [the dissident movement] is a natural and inevitable consequence...of the system," and that the CPC "can no longer base itself on the unadulterated, brutal, and arbitrary application of power."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Havel provides an all-out attack on the failure of the government to provide truthful information to its citizens:

Because the regime is captive to its own lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past. It falsifies the present, and it falsifies the future. It falsifies statistics. It pretends not to impose an omnipotent and unprincipled police apparatus. It pretends to respect human rights. It pretends to persecute no one. It pretends to fear nothing. It pretends to pretend nothing.<sup>20</sup>

Further incidents of the CPC unjustly prohibiting the right of free speech and violating other basic human liberties compelled Havel and a small group of dissidents to create *Charter 77*, an attempt to establish open dialogue with the Czechoslovak government.<sup>21</sup> The incendiary event that caused the creation of the Charter was the trial for the Plastic People of the Universe (PPU), a Czechoslovak rock band. The band had allegedly created "a public disturbance" by offering "coarse indecencies" and was also indicted for "propagating nihilism and decadence."<sup>22</sup> Although everyone who was familiar with the band knew that the charges were unsubstantiated, the trial went on. Eventually, the members of the PPU were found guilty and subsequently sentenced to prison terms.

Havel, however, could not sit idly by as fellow artists were persecuted. He began to organize meetings with fellow dissidents immediately following the trial in order to form a consensus on what needed to be done. *Charter 77*, its founders maintained, was not a political organization, nor was it an attempt to overthrow the CPC. It was a "free, informal and open association" and "everyone who accepted its basic ideas, or took part in its work, was a member."<sup>23</sup> It outlined a number of grievances towards the CPC, including examples of human rights violations, as well as infringements upon

various other freedoms.<sup>24</sup> Fellow Chartists decided it appropriate to appoint three spokesmen that would help proliferate the document, two of which were Havel and a philosopher named Jan Patocka.<sup>25</sup> It was a bold move by both men to accept being spokesmen, considering that incidents of brutality were widespread throughout Czechoslovakia at the time.

*Charter 77* created a stir almost immediately upon its formal declaration in January 1977.<sup>26</sup> Some disagreed with it while others signed it without a second thought; the CPC, for obvious reasons, condemned it. Signatories were harassed by the police and some even received death threats as a result of their involvement. Havel would fare no better; his house was searched and he was subjected to police questioning on a daily basis. Despite being sixty-nine years old and in the middle of a severe bout of the flu, fellow spokesman Jan Patocka was also thoroughly interrogated. He, however, was not as physically resilient as his colleagues were; Patocka died of a stroke following one of these sessions.<sup>27</sup>

Although Patocka would be sorely missed, Havel felt that the Charter had ultimately prevailed and would serve a meaningful purpose for years to come. "The moment it emerged, the interplay of different relationships came alive again. A body that had been thought dead suddenly showed signs of life. The future was an open book once more."<sup>28</sup> The "body" that Havel describes here was the Czechoslovak civic body, and even more significant, the young people who had the power and the numbers to effect change. The revolution would take twelve years to surface, but its origins were further reinforced with the production of *Charter 77*.

For his involvement in the writing of *Charter 77*, along with other nonconformist activities, Havel was imprisoned on three different occasions from 1977-1983, the longest term lasting from October 1979 until February 1983.<sup>29</sup> Whereas the CPC had hoped to stifle thought through imprisonment, it instead allowed Havel to collect his thoughts and hone his writing skills. Between June 1979 and September 1982, Havel managed to send a large number of unedited letters to his wife Olga, which were in turn smuggled out of the country

and published under the name *Letters To Olga*.<sup>30</sup> The correspondence revealed a man, who, while under extreme personal duress, could still philosophize on subjects of importance to the world at large. Freedom, truth and democracy were reoccurring themes in these letters, and not once did he mention regret of any sort.

Upon his release from prison in 1983 until the beginning of the revolution in 1989, Havel continued to produce plays and essays meant at keeping discussion alive. *Temptation*, a play that utilized the Faustian theme but was set to the trappings of normalization, was completed in 1985.<sup>31</sup> In 1989, Havel wrote "Testing Ground," a short essay that comments on the CPC's failed attempts at implementing perestroika and democratization. In the essay, Havel also refers to a petition called "A Few Sentences" which he helped to initiate and which played a role in bringing dissidents and normal citizens together.<sup>32</sup> Soon thereafter, Havel's dream of a democratic Czechoslovakia would become reality as artists, students, and citizens united and changed the political system within their country once more.

The months prior to revolution in November 1989 were very tense; and there was a general consensus among many Czechoslovaks that something vast was looming on the horizon. In January of that year, Havel was once again imprisoned, this time for laying flowers at the spot where Jan Palach had performed self-immolation in protest to the Soviet invasion in 1968.<sup>33</sup> Mass demonstrations followed, and the atmosphere began to grow more anxious. After a petition was sent to Havel's captors demanding his release, his sentence was lessened by one month, and on 17 May he was freed.<sup>34</sup> "A Few Sentences" was released soon thereafter, and the floodgates were opened. The fall of the Berlin Wall in early November would only add fuel to the fire as Czechoslovakia's dissidents would look to East Germany as a testament to the weakening of Communism's hold in Eastern Europe. On 17 November 1989, close to twenty thousand students marched on Wenceslas Square waving banners and shouting slogans of a "general political nature."<sup>35</sup> Protestors met with scattered resistance, and the only bloodshed to come out of the revolution occurred as security

forces intervened with limited displays of violence.

Once the uprising had become official and the older dissidents knew they had the support of the people, steps were taken to ensure that none of it would be in vain. On 18 November, the Civic Forum, made up of varied political groups, was formed.<sup>36</sup> Its demands included, "The removal of the architects of the post-1968 normalization, likewise those responsible for ordering the breakup of peaceful demonstrations... and the release of all prisoners of conscience."<sup>37</sup> Havel was soon named the leader of the Civic Forum, having been actively involved in events to that point. He would later remark on that moment: "I was on stage for the first time...on the very stage where I used to work as a propman, assistant director, and as a playwright..."<sup>38</sup> I was for the first time on a real stage...and that was the beginning of the revolution.<sup>39</sup>

The Civic Forum inspired the multitudes of Czech citizens that had been static since the Prague Spring to shed their fears and demonstrate on a large scale. As citizens were marching through the streets of Prague, the impact dissidents such as Havel had on current events became quite clear. One slogan used for banners during the revolution demonstrates Havel's influence explicitly: "Havel didn't keep

quiet when we were frightened to speak out. Now it's our turn."<sup>40</sup> Throughout December, countless CPC officials quit their posts, realizing the imminence of their collapse. And on 10 December, Gustav Husak, the president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic resigned, paving the way for Havel's ascendancy. On 29 December, with the support of the people, Vaclav Havel became his country's first democratically elected president in decades.<sup>41</sup>

Vaclav Havel was able to masterfully link his roles as playwright, author, and political dissident, redefining the relationship between citizen and state. By providing his audiences with commentary on the oppressive world that surrounded them, he was able to keep free thought alive. At the same time, he was actively participating in measures meant to undermine those that would prefer to keep freedom suppressed. Truth was a prevailing force in both his art and his politics, and it was this virtue that contributed to the demise of the Communists in Czechoslovakia. Havel's rise to the presidency was indeed an example of the effect he had on events at the close of 1989. His wisdom lives on: "Let us teach both ourselves and others that politics does not have to be the art of the possible...But it can also be the art of the impossible, that is the art of making both ourselves and the world better."<sup>42</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rosalyn Unger, "Historical Setting" in *Czechoslovakia: A Country Study*, ed. Richard F. Nyrop, ch. 1, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 58.

<sup>2</sup> The events surrounding Czechoslovakia's occupation by German forces can be found in Unger, *Czechoslovakia*, 735-40. Any subsequent information concerning incidents prior to the Prague Spring can be found on pages 41-52 of the same work.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Wheaton and Zdenek Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991*, (New York: Freedom House, 1991), 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

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

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

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>8</sup> Eda Kriseova, *Vaclav Havel: The Authorized Biography*, trans. Caleb Crain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, trans. Paul Wilson (London: Faber, 1990), 24.

<sup>10</sup> Kriseova, *Vaclav Havel*, 57-58.

<sup>11</sup> Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, 77.

<sup>12</sup> Kriseova, *Vaclav Havel*, 66.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Simmons, *The Reluctant President: A Political Life of Vaclav Havel*, (London: Methuen, 1991), 60-61.

<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Adler, "The Role of the Theatre in Czechoslovakia's 'Velvet Revolution'" in *Violence in Drama*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 295.

<sup>15</sup> Descriptions of the three aforementioned plays appear in Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 65-68.

<sup>16</sup> Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, 199.

<sup>17</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 224.



- <sup>18</sup> Havel, *Open Letters*, 125.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.
- <sup>20</sup> Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 134.
- <sup>21</sup> Unger, *Czechoslovakia*, 58.
- <sup>22</sup> Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 116-17.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.
- <sup>24</sup> The manifesto of Charter 77 can be found in Unger, *Czechoslovakia*, 309-13.
- <sup>25</sup> Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 120.
- <sup>26</sup> Kriseova, *Vaclav Havel*, 114.
- <sup>27</sup> Details of abuses against Charter 77 signatories come from Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 123-126.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.
- <sup>29</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 224.
- <sup>30</sup> Simmons, *The Reluctant President*, 142.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.
- <sup>32</sup> Havel, *Open Letters*, 373.
- <sup>33</sup> Kriseova, *Vaclav Havel*, 234-36.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.
- <sup>35</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 42.
- <sup>36</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 56.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.
- <sup>38</sup> The Civic Forum was founded on the stage of the Realistic Theatre in Prague where Havel had worked as a young man.
- <sup>39</sup> Daniel Sargent Moore, *The Artists' Revolution: 40 Days in Prague* (Cinema Guild, 1995), videocassette.
- <sup>40</sup> Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 115.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, The final days of the CPC's domination can be traced throughout pages 108-115.
- <sup>42</sup> Peter C. Newman, "Saluting the Playwright Who Became President," *Maclean's* 111, no. 33 (1998): 52.

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## A Plight Forgotten: An Argument for viewing indentured servitude as white slavery; a comparison with the African-American experience of enslavement.

By Stephen Scott Doucher  
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From Viking raids to the repulsive prostitution trade in Eastern Europe in recent years, the history of slavery in Western Civilization has many fascinating and tragic stories. The experiences of African-Americans, whose history is an epic of the heights a people can carry themselves from is the itself a mass of truly interesting, sometimes tragic and sometimes inspiring, stories. But these are not the only stories of forced labor in American history.

In the year 1962, a book called *Night Comes To The Cumberlands* was published. This particular work's author was Harry M. Caudill, a Kentucky raised lawyer and ex-legislator. Caudill wrote the work in order to expose to the general population of America the poverty and hopelessness that had been, and was in 1962, prevalent among the majority of the inhabitants of the Cumberland Plateau in Eastern Kentucky. Caudill had hoped that his book would, with its accounts of unemployed starving families and serf like conditions for those who possessed jobs in mining, lead the Federal Government to pass social legislation to help the struggling populace of the Cumberlands. Early in his work, Caudill notes of the people of Eastern Kentucky, of which he was a part, that "their past created the modern mountaineers and the communities in which they live, and resulted in a land of economic, social and political blight without parallel in the nation."<sup>1</sup>

*Night Comes To The Cumberlands* traces much of the tragedy of modern Southern Appalachia's poverty to that past; this he does by telling the tale of how many of the Scotch-Irish and English descended people of the Cumberlands, and other regions of Southern Appalachia, had ancestors who were held in a cruel and unjust

form of bondage. Caudill writes of impoverished and often dispossessed peoples in sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries Britain being imprisoned, abused, and worked mercilessly. He tells of people living in English urban slums of the aforementioned periods and supporting their families through crimes, such as thievery.<sup>2</sup>

Caudill informs the reader that men, women, and children of varying ages were taken, in numerous waves, to the British colonies in the New World. There, in the colonial lands of the 1600s and 1700s, they would be made to do often brutal labor for no pay, had no rights, and were, in many cases, subjected to numerous types of abuse and debasement. These men, women, and children were to become known in popular American history as *indentured servants*. He also recounts that many of these impoverished and deported people were coerced into signing "indentures," or contracts on their freedom, in order to pay debts they had no hope of ever repaying in order to avoid execution for varying types of criminal offences. Some of them were simply orphans with nowhere to go, and others were abducted and completely forced into unfree labor without ever signing an "indenture."<sup>3</sup>

This paper is about these people and about slavery. Perhaps it would be of assistance to define slavery and to further discuss the dimensions of this report. The third edition of *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines slavery as "one bound in servitude as the property of a person or household."<sup>4</sup> This is a rather general definition which can be more properly and profoundly illustrated through an examination of the enslavement experienced by imported African and African-descended people.

The system of "indentured servitude" is comparable to the system of black enslavement that existed in Colonial America. Although there are similar stories of abductions and loss of freedom in archives of numerous library institutions throughout the United States, it is uncommon for the layman to think of the two systems as being similar in their manifestations. Through a comparative study it can be shown that "indentured servitude" often differed little from the collective African-American experience of enslavement.

The analysis of white "indentured servitude" will cover the dates roughly between 1600 and the 1760s and focus on Britain and its North American colonial empire. Practices of imprisonment for debt, in and of itself, and other activities, such as the merciless factory labor of the nineteenth century, will not be discussed because they fall outside the specified realm of analysis and deserve more focus, than can be given here. However, debtor's prisons will be mentioned in their context as institutions that gave accessory to the continuation of the indentured servitude system, through depriving seventeenth century and eighteenth century Britain's destitute of options in the face of economic helplessness.

The issue of the meaning of words is mentioned in this debate for the simple fact that terminology plays a central role in the controversy over British indentured servitude. When one uses the term "slavery" a much different mental image is conjured than when the term "indentured servitude" is used. Yet such terms, especially in another age, could have been viewed as synonymous or near synonymous.

When one examines the greater collective institution of indentured servitude or the individual cases, from records still available, one may think of similar stories of abduction and loss of freedom that are associated with the African-American experience of enslavement. It appears that much of what is stated today in history classrooms across America on the system of indentured servitude has been to varying degrees simplified and even undiscussed. The purpose of this work is to tell some of the story of those men, women, and children who persevered under indentured servitude and to prove, through a comparison with the highly

brutal system of African based slavery, which indentured servitude was a form of white enslavement. Indentured servitude thus can be seen in the context of a British upper class that held no value on the British poor and did not hesitate to strip them of their freedom.

In the records of seventeenth century slave ships that delivered captured Africans, the enslaved were referred to as "servants," and not slaves.<sup>5</sup> It is also worth noting that some modern scholars have argued that the first imported Africans in bondage in British North America were thought of as "indentured servants."<sup>6</sup> Given the unlikelihood that imported Africans were allowed to sign indentures it can be reasonably be argued that the two terms were not seen by seventeenth century people as having incredibly different meanings.

Furthermore, it must also be stated that in 1659, the English parliament debated the merits of the then long existent system of deporting the British Isles' impoverished inhabitants (as well as political prisoners) to the colonial New World. This discussion focused largely on marginalized Scots, Irish, and English. However, the term "indentured servants" was never used in this debate. Rather, the members of parliament simply referred to these expunged people as slaves.<sup>7</sup> In language that is reminiscent of the enslavement of Africans and African-descended peoples, the South Carolina Assembly in 1717 considered ownership of a white man as being a possible requirement for eligibility to vote.<sup>8</sup> As with the English parliament in 1659, the topic of conversation was indentured servitude.

Starting in the early sixteenth century (if not earlier), Sub-Saharan Africans captured by enemy tribes or nations of the coastal regions were routinely placed into a status of slavery and then often subsequently sold to European and Euro-Colonial slavers, who transported them in ships of bondage to New World colonies.<sup>9</sup> Entire "trading" companies were established for the purpose of procuring and transporting enslaved Africans, as well as "free agent" private traders.<sup>10</sup> The Africans that were forced onto slave ships met with Spartan conditions, since they were viewed by their importers as cargo. The death rate during these

voyages of African enslavement appears to have been as high as 20% during the entire eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

British "indentured servants" were also often brought to the New World colonies against their will. Seventeenth century English governments made ordinary the practice of selling political prisoners, such as Scottish rebels and English Royalists (during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell), into slavery in the British overseas empire.<sup>12</sup> For example, those who had taken part in the Monmouth Rebellion and schemes to end English rule in Scotland and Ireland had become acceptable, in the eyes of English law, for forced "indentured servitude" in the colonial New World.<sup>13</sup> Oliver Cromwell's victory over the Irish in the 1650s allowed the English dictator to deport over one hundred thousand of Ireland's inhabitants to the New World as unfree labor.<sup>14</sup> This deportation included men, women, and children. Those sold in the New World as a result of this expulsion from Ireland even included eighty-year-old Irish women.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the depressed and landless classes of Britain, in the Seventeenth Century, were often not people who had signed a voluntary contract on their freedom, but were "captured by press-gangs... and shipped into slavery in colonial America... It was an organized system of kidnapping English, Welsh and Scottish workers, young and old, and transporting them to the American colonies to be sold, with profits being split between the press-gangs and the shipmaster."<sup>16</sup> The terms "kidnapped" and "kidnapper" emerged in the English language as descriptions of press-gangs that abducted children, whose families never heard from them again. Likewise, "spirited" came to be used to describe the press-gangs who "spirited" away the impoverished.<sup>17</sup> Caudill mentions how the Cumberland Appalachians of the 1960s, still retained an archaic song on the practice of being abducted and "spirited" off to the New World:

The night I was a-married,  
And on my marriage bed,  
There come a fierce sea captain  
And stood by my bed stead.

His men, they bound me tightly  
With a rope so cruel and strong,

And carried me over the waters  
To labor for seven years long.<sup>18</sup>

James Annesley, a disinherited member of the Anglo-Irish nobility, was kidnapped in 1727 by the captain of an impressment ship for indentured servants, who was in league with his would-be usurper uncle.<sup>19</sup> After having been tricked by the captain into believing that the plantation work he was being sentenced to in the New World was the fair apprentice-type labor that the term "indentured servitude" implies, Annesley was handed over to his New World master. Annesley was then to experience thirteen years of brutality and hard labor under his master.<sup>20</sup> Annesley survived this term, something his uncle believed would not occur, and later wrote a book about his ordeal, titled *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman, Returned from Thirteen Years' Slavery in America*.<sup>21</sup>

As a boy, Peter Williamson was kidnapped from his native Aberdeen and sold to a dealer in unfree white child laborers in 1743. In America, however, Williamson was sold to a former "indentured servant," who had been likewise abducted as a child, and finally freed. Williamson's new master quickly freed the boy, who would come to write an account of his abduction and enslavement, noting that he never again saw the other children who were kidnapped with him from Aberdeen and that he feared they probably did not fare as well as he.<sup>22</sup>

Some economists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries called for and supported the massive deportation and forced servitude in the British colonies of the impoverished and landless poor of Britain. Such theoreticians held that a policy of this sort was developing the North American colonies and controlling the despised poor of the British Isles. By 1652, a law had been enacted allowing the deportation to the New World and forced servitude as plantation workers and colonial laborers, of anyone deemed vagrant or caught begging.<sup>23</sup>

Stories like these represent the brutal amount of abduction that was involved in seventeenth century and eighteenth century "indentured servitude." One source even notes that would-be immigrants, of Scotch-Irish and even German ancestry, to the English colonies of North America in the eighteenth century, who had no

intention of selling freedom, were sometimes tricked aboard ships for "indentured servants" that took them to New World bondage.<sup>24</sup> Such people would be cheated of their belongings and provided little of the opportunity that they believed immigration would provide.

Besides political prisoners, expelled ethnic groups, tricked immigrants, and the abducted from Britain's poor and powerless classes, people convicted of felonies under Royal law were also subject to being shipped to the New World as unfree laborers. However, a felon could be a hardened criminal, an orphaned pickpocket, or a man with a starving family who stole food, as in the case of one Thomas Atwood.<sup>25</sup> A pregnant seamstress named Catherine Davis became a felon and was sold into labor in the New World for allegedly stealing seven yards of lace. Davis gave birth to her child in transit to the New World for auction and her newborn succumbed aboard the ship, two weeks later.<sup>26</sup> Caudill contended that colonial American plantation owners of the seventeenth century deliberately had ships full of people sentenced to British debtors' prisons brought to the New World, in order to do body breaking labor.<sup>27</sup>

As the mention of Catherine Davis' journey across the Atlantic implies, white "indentured servants" appear to have often faced nightmarish conditions aboard the ships that transported them to the New World. Sometimes deaths in transit to the New World even ran higher than those of African importation slaver ships.<sup>28</sup> Ships designed to carry three hundred were sometimes filled to the point where they were overcrowded with twice as many people as they were supposed to carry.<sup>29</sup> In 1743, nearly a third of the convicts headed for America, to be sold as "indentured servants," aboard the ship *Justitia* died, and others were so undernourished that some began drinking their urine.<sup>30</sup> One impressment ship carrying Scotch-Irish passengers, who had been tricked into transit, had its transportees resort to cannibalism.<sup>31</sup>

It is further interesting to compare the demographic portions of both African and African-descended slaves and white "indentured servants" in pre-revolutionary Colonial America. Perhaps because of the existence of white

"indentured servants," there were demographically few African and African descended slaves in New England and the northern colonies.<sup>32</sup> However, in the southern colonies, by the late eighteenth century, the African and African descended slave population was so large that it made up half of the populace of Virginia and more than two-thirds of that of South Carolina.<sup>33</sup> Yet, it has been estimated that between one half and two-thirds of those who came from Europe to pre-revolutionary America, were involuntary and unpaid laborers.<sup>34</sup> Both these large dispossessed groups of unfree labor were to surprisingly encounter similar treatment in the New World.

Black Africans were the victims of gradually developing Western ideologies. Such ideologies justified the enslavement of Sub-Saharan Africans through theological claims of their God instilled lowly position and their supposed biological inferiority.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, much was made of their original non-Christian cultures and their "heathen" religious practices, to justify their bondage.<sup>36</sup>

Likewise sixteenth-century English theologian and geographer Richard Hakluyt labeled the dispossessed and abundant English poor as criminals and supported the concept that they be deported to the New World as condemned laborers.<sup>37</sup> Numerous Scotsmen of Edinburgh, who were sentenced to forced servitude from 1662 to 1665, were chastised as "rouges" and "others who made life unpleasant for the British upper classes."<sup>38</sup> A popular stereotype soon developed in the Britain of seventeen and eighteenth centuries that impoverished men who were made to serve in the New World were morally inferior dangerous criminals.<sup>39</sup> Stereotypes of female "indentured servants" as whores and women of the lowest moral character also became common among British New World planter elites.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in some sense, an "ideology" of the lowness of the British poor was being embraced, by the wealthy and powerful in Britain and the colonies, to justify acts of expulsion and forced servitude.

Upon surviving their journey and arriving in colonial North America, imported Africans were brought to marketplaces. There prospective buyers examined them in usually humiliating

and degrading ways. One of the most tragic and disturbing activities of the system of African enslavement would often occur with the purchase of various Africans by different buyers, namely the separation and breaking up of families.<sup>41</sup>

As stated earlier, would-be German immigrants to North America were often tricked aboard ships reserved for indentured servants, deprived of their possessions, made to owe the ship's captain for some sort of necessity, and then forced to sell themselves and their families. This situation, and the abuses inherent in it, were so common that in 1765, the Pennsylvania German Society placed pressure upon the state legislature to help prevent such activities.<sup>42</sup> Prior to this date, tricked and indebted German immigrants, if they survived the journey to the New World, were taken to market areas, displayed, and manhandled like cattle by potential buyers, in a manner similar to that experienced by imported Africans and African slaves put up for sale.<sup>43</sup> Women being sold in such a situation were allegedly harder to sell because the main interest of buyers was hard manual labor.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Germans, as well as Irish and Scotch, trapped in this situation often had entire families broken up and sold separately, never to meet each other again.<sup>45</sup>

Convicts who were deported to the New World as involuntary laborers were often sold inside the ships that had carried them across the Atlantic.<sup>46</sup> A convict named William Green stated in his 1758 memoir, that when potential buyers boarded the ported ship, "They search us there as the dealers in horses do those animals in this country, by looking at our teeth, viewing our limbs, to see if they are sound and fit for their labour."<sup>47</sup> Under such circumstances, a woman named Eleanor Bradbury was sold with her three sons to a buyer in Maryland, while a man who lived in Pennsylvania purchased her husband.<sup>48</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that many forced "indentured servants" faced the prospect of being degraded to the level of auctioned property and a likelihood of being separated from their families, perhaps permanently.

Imported African slaves and their enslaved descendants were to face varying degrees of treatment, depending on the personality of their master(s) and on their jobs. Much of this labor,

particularly in the southern British colonies of Continental North America, was pitiless field labor.<sup>49</sup> Brutal and torturous maltreatment certainly occurred, as with any system that functioned on the moral level of African enslavement; where one man (or woman) is given ownership over the life of another. Enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants were also subject to unbelievably harsh punishments for running away from their master(s) or attempting to organize or take part in a slave rebellion. Some colonies went as far as to punish African and African descended slaves with being burned alive for involvement in rebellion.<sup>50</sup>

White "indentured servants" likewise were used for brutal manual labor on plantations and without pay. William Eddis, writing from British North America in 1774, went as far as to declare that white indentured servants were worked harder on plantations than enslaved Africans/African descendants, because the latter were property for life and were too valuable to a master to be lost.<sup>51</sup> A personalized example of the hardships experienced by the unfree white laborers of the Colonial America, can be found in the case of David Evans, who spent his servitude doing the task of removing trees and clearing virgin land.<sup>52</sup>

Convict "indentured servants" were often the victims of brutal whippings and were commonly chained and placed in iron collars, as were enslaved Africans.<sup>53</sup> Like the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, there were cases of masters and their handymen flogging, raping, and murdering their indentured servants.<sup>54</sup> Advertisements for runaway convict indentured servants often mentioned scars, bent backs, and ugly burns which could testify to a hardened life of impoverishment in Britain and the physical stresses of labor for their master(s), perhaps some type of abuse while serving as involuntary laborers.<sup>55</sup>

The fact that there were indentured servants who ran away from their masters and became fugitives is a further contrast to consider. Stiff laws existed in several colonies for runaway indentured servants who were captured to be flogged and have their servitude extended. In at least two cases in Maryland, one in 1743 and the other in 1754, white "indentured servants" and

black slaves actually ran away from their masters together.<sup>56</sup>

White "indentured servants" in the late seventeenth century were so impoverished and abundant in the colony of Virginia that they "kept the province on the brink of civil war."<sup>57</sup> Two armed rebellions of "indentured servants" actually broke out in Virginia, in 1661 and 1663.<sup>58</sup> This was one reason why Virginia plantation owners began to turn more toward African and African descended slavery in the next century.<sup>59</sup>

One argument that could be proposed against the assertion that the existence of indentured servitude in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was white slavery, similar to that of African enslavement, is that some, perhaps many, white indentured servants had sold themselves freely and did not necessarily receive poor treatment at the hands of their buyers. This is partially true, in that some indentured servants almost certainly did willingly sell themselves into servitude and some, such as Peter Williamson, were fortunate enough to be bought by masters who treated them well, abided by the indentured contract, and perhaps allowed them to receive a sincere apprentice education.<sup>60</sup> However, as has already been shown, there were numerous cases where people were abused, tricked into involuntary labor contracts, and shanghaied without ever signing a contract. Furthermore, to discount the massive amount of forced indentured servitude and abuses because some indentured servants received decent treatment would be like arguing that enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendents were not really slaves at all, because some black slaves received decent treatment and may have even been given their freedom from a master.

A far more compelling argument for the profound differences in the two systems is made when the issue of indentures, and the specified terms of service inherent in them, is contrasted with the life-long bondage that was the normal experience of most African and African-descended slaves. Such an argument would note that indentured servants were only bondspersons for a particular period and were subsequently freed from labor at the end of their terms. Thus a matter of lifelong bondage or

temporary bondage would become the highest determination for what constituted slavery.

To confront this argument, it should first be restated that there are colonial records which tell of white "indentured servants" being murdered by their masters and thus never surviving their term of service. Secondly, again one must take account of the countless number of people who were forced into "indentured servitude" yet never signed any indenture. Added to this, one must study the reality of the indenture system as opposed to its theoretical working.

Many indentures promised "freedom dues" of land, usually fifty acres, to those who signed them. However, the overwhelming majority of "indentured servants" who entered Maryland from 1670 and 1680 either died in service or were simply denied the land they had worked for.<sup>61</sup> Some servants were maltreated near the end of their terms in order to make them runaway and thus have their terms lengthened.<sup>62</sup> Such actions clearly show that the indentured system may have been in no way what it theoretically appeared to be.

Methods of the owners of the indentures of female indentured servants for keeping their laborers past their contractual terms could be very nefarious. The colony of Virginia recognized that there were men who were impregnating their female indentured servants, with the intention of having these servants sentences expanded for having illegitimate children. Even more shocking is the fact that "The 'bastard' or 'obscene' children, as they were called... were bound over... for a period of thirty-one years! This heinous child-slavery from birth was not modified until 1765 when the Assembly of Virginia declared it to be 'an unreasonable severity to such children' and limited the term of bondage for such White children to a 'mere' 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls."<sup>63</sup>

In what manner can human suffering be measured, even at the individual level, to say nothing of the collective? Earlier in this study, William Eddis was mentioned for his statement that he felt that the "indentured servants" he saw laboring were made to suffer worse than the African and African descended slaves that worked the same plantations. This account is

noted because it is testimony to the hard labor assigned "indentured servants," not to suggest that one type of collective heartache can be judged better or worse than another.

Some who would be perhaps critical of the study presented might claim that it is insensitive to the experience of enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendents by simply comparing and contrasting their plight with that of white "indentured servants." This is in no way the desired outcome of this work. Rather, this work has been written to argue that those who suffered in the system of indentured servitude were often no better than slaves themselves. A piece that discusses the Armenian genocide by Ottoman Turks in 1915 is not an attack on the collective suffering of the Jewish community in the twentieth century, as this paper is no way a refutation of the black slavery experience.

Most modern Americans are aware of the enslavement of Africans and their descendents that occurred in Western Civilization right up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Some

Americans are also aware that Africans had enslaved other Africans long before European and Euro-Colonial slave ships appeared. However many Americans do not know of the striking similarities between European enslavement of Africans and European forced labor of other Europeans.

Given the evidence presented, it is suggested here that the term "indentured servitude" was a euphemism used by a "civilized" Western elite that in fact enslaved impoverished whites (mostly British). In the twentieth century, some have talked of how they believe black slavery to have left a long enduring and negative legacy. Given the way in which the wounds of man's misdeeds often produce more suffering, they are probably right. However, when one reads of Caudill's impoverished and backward Appalachians of the 1960s, one can not help but wonder if "indentured servitude" also left its scars.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Harry M. Caudill, *Night Comes To The Cumberland*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), ix-x.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 3 ed., (New York: Laurel: 1990), 768.

<sup>5</sup> Oscar and Mary F. Handlin, "Origins of the Southern Labor System," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7:2 (April, 1950): 205.

<sup>6</sup> Alden T. Vaughan, "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," in Colin A. Palmer, ed., *The Worlds of Unfree Labour*, (Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998), 54-55.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Burton, *Parliamentary Diary: 1656-59*, vol. 1, (London: Henry Colburn, 1838), 253-274.

<sup>8</sup> *Journals of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina: 1692-1775*, vol. 5, 294-295.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," in Colin A. Palmer, ed., *The Worlds of Unfree Labour*, (Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998), 243-245.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

<sup>11</sup> Sharon V. Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 92.

<sup>12</sup> Michael A. Hoffman II, *They Were White and They Were Slaves*, (Coeur d'Alene, Idaho: The Independent History & Research Company, 1991), 68.

<sup>13</sup> Oliver P. Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931), 414.

<sup>14</sup> George Novack, "Slavery in Colonial America," in *America's Revolutionary Heritage: Marxist essays*, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976), 142.

<sup>15</sup> D. M. B. Eason, *The Curse of Cromwell: A History of the Ironside Conquest of Ireland, 1649-53*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), 176.

<sup>16</sup> Hoffman 69.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Caudill 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> John van der Zee, *Bound Over: Indentured Servitude & American Conscience*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), 195-196.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 197-198.



<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 196.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Williamson, *Sufferings of Peter Williamson*, (Stockbridge, MA: n.p., 1796) microfiche EB48027 at the Ohio State University Main Library, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Hoffman 70.

<sup>24</sup> James Truslow Adams, *A History of American Life, Volume III: Provincial Society, 1690-1763*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 175-176.

<sup>25</sup> A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts into the Colonies, 1718-1775*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 66-67.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Caudill 5-6.

<sup>28</sup> Salinger 91.

<sup>29</sup> Marcus W. Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in America, 1607-1783: studies of the economic, educational, and social significance of slaves, servants, apprentices, and poor folk*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Ekirch 102.

<sup>31</sup> Adams 176.

<sup>32</sup> Chitwood 422.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Elaine Kendall, "Review of *Bound Over* by John van der Zee," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 September 1985, sec. BKS, p. 1, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Vaughan 64-65.

<sup>36</sup> George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American & South African History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 72.

<sup>37</sup> Hoffman 63-64.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>40</sup> Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 56-57.

<sup>41</sup> Leslie Howard Owens, *The Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 189.

<sup>42</sup> Salinger 95.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Adams 177-178.

<sup>46</sup> Ekirch 122.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>48</sup> Van der Zee 165.

<sup>49</sup> Chitwood 425.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 422-423.

<sup>51</sup> Van der Zee 134.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 137-138.

<sup>53</sup> Ekirch 150.

<sup>54</sup> Hoffman 107.

<sup>55</sup> Ekirch 157-158.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 196-198.

<sup>57</sup> Ekirch 133.

<sup>58</sup> Hoffman 102.

<sup>59</sup> Ekirch 133.

<sup>60</sup> Hoffman 54.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 85-86.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 89.

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## Munster as the New Jerusalem: Charisma, Fear, Location, and Circumstance

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For close to five centuries, rusty iron cages have been hanging on top of St. Lambert's Cathedral in Munster, Germany. They have not been touched or moved since their arrival on top of the church tower in 1535. Instead, the cages serve as a daily reminder to all that blatant disrespect for the state will not be tolerated by the government or the just God who watches over them.<sup>1</sup> The cages were the final home of leaders of the radical apocalyptic Anabaptist movement who established absolute control of Munster, Germany from 1533 to 1535. After confessing to crimes against the state and God, they were put inside the cages and burned to death. The cages were then hoisted high into the air, and placed atop the church overlooking the land of religious upheaval that changed the western world.

The whole of Western Europe became the political and religious hotbed of the sixteenth century, sparked by Martin Luther's posting of his ninety-five theses in 1517. The Reformation spread throughout Europe and beyond as each new follower added his or her own unique element of faith to Luther's attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church. As religion was closely intertwined with politics, religious upheaval went hand in hand with political turmoil as well. The struggle no longer just involved the dominant Protestant versus Catholic fight, but as new Protestant sects developed, feuds for power and authority pitted Protestant sect against Protestant sect. As political lines became drawn on many different religious grounds, the fighting and new radical doctrines that were produced escalated fear in many of the people that the Biblical prediction of the end of the world was at hand. The upheaval of the sacred doctrine of the infallible

Catholic Church, thought to be the only Christian belief, frightened many who feared the wrath of God.

As more bloodshed occurred with new religious ideas abounding, the judgement of the Almighty seemed closer than ever. The city of Munster, located in the northwestern corner of the Holy Roman Empire next to the Netherlands, exemplified the political strife sweeping Western Europe. The bishop prince who was supposed to serve as the authority over the town resided outside its limits, leaving the town to struggle with issues of power and justification internally. The townspeople created divisions among themselves based on religious views, deeming those with the correct divine assessment of the present moment were the guardians and authors of law within the city. As religious and political strife intermixed with radical apocalyptic views from the Netherlands and surrounding areas of Wittenberg and Strassborg, a disunited town council opened the door for radical change. By the 1530s, Munster was ripe for the upheaval of all its traditional values concerning faith and government on a huge scale. As the council's newly appointed radical preacher divided the town, an outside millennialistic Anabaptist sect began sending disciples into Munster, preparing it for takeover as the New Jerusalem. Eventually besieged by the apocalyptic Melchiorite Anabaptists in 1533, the radical upheaval in Munster was the result of a culmination of social, political and geographical circumstance, and the charismatic leadership that brought about a society fueled by apocalyptic fervor and fear.

Munster was the head-city of a princely bishopric. The bishop prince, Franz von Waldeck, exerted little control in the city, living

well outside city bounds.<sup>2</sup> He did not receive much support from the town, as his perpetuation of restrictive trade policies alienated the influential town merchants.<sup>3</sup> Without the bishop prince's interfering, Munster basically was free to run itself. It did so by means of a twenty-four-man council. "...Each year ten electors, directly elected by the full citizens, chose the twenty-four man council...in times of public discontent they could replace them."<sup>4</sup> While the town's guildsmen were not council members, the United Guild exerted much influence on the council and in the town. Generally of the burgher class, the guildsmen used their power to rally the more aristocratic town council against the bishop prince.<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1520s, Bernard Rothmann, a Munster native, was financially supported by the town's guildsmen to attend theology school in Wittenberg, west of the town of Munster and the birthplace of the Reformation, and to travel to other Reformation cities. Rothmann was initially influenced by Luther's ideas which "greatly diminished the role of the priest as mediator between layman and God, thereby increasing the importance of the Bible and personal conscience in directing the layman's spiritual journey."<sup>6</sup> Returning with other Reformation radical ideas, Rothmann preached his first Protestant sermon outside of St. Lambert's Cathedral in 1532.

The bishop prince, pressured by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, had Rothmann removed, but the town guildsmen protected Rothmann.<sup>7</sup> The guildsmen, of the upper-middle class, were attracted to the Protestant message. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant belief in salvation through faith instead of through works or a monetary donation was appealing to those trying to make a living. Protestant faith did not judge the guildsmen by class, which determined their ability to donate money or goods. Instead, they were able to keep their money and be assured of salvation through grace. Rothmann represented the guildsmen's defiance toward the Holy Roman Empire and its puppet, the Roman Catholic Church, while also proving to the bishop prince that his authority was no longer real in the town.

Receiving the support of the Uberwasser nuns, who controlled St. Lambert's Cathedral, and the town council which was powerless against the burgher class's adamant approval of Rothmann, Rothmann successfully drove out all the Catholic pastors and supporters, replacing church officials with new pastors who held similar evangelical views.<sup>8</sup> Rothmann began preaching radical theological sermons, claiming infant baptism and the belief of transubstantiation in communion were abominations to God.<sup>9</sup> Appealing to the people, Rothmann "began to emphasize Christian stewardship and the duty of the Christian to use his possessions for the common good. This message had fallen on responsive ears in the adjoining territories, for crops had been poor and food was dear."<sup>10</sup>

The aristocratic town council preferred a more Conservative Lutheran view on baptism.<sup>11</sup>

Given their social position, the idea of communal living threatened their power in the town. Trying to rein in authority, and adhere to the wishes of the bishop prince, the council held a public colloquy in August of 1533 with Herman Busche, a well-known student of Luther, plus local Catholic and Lutheran clergy. The council formally charged Rothmann with breaking the established order of the Holy Roman Empire, concerning infant baptism and the teachings on the body and blood of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

Rothmann, however, was undaunted by the colloquy, which forced the clergy of the Catholic and Lutheran churches to form a quasi-alliance based on the tradition of infant baptism and transubstantiation in order to be a significant opposition to Rothmann and his growing supporters.<sup>13</sup> The townspeople divided themselves, some clinging to the traditional beliefs of the Catholic and Lutheran faith and some embracing the new radical protestant doctrine preached by Rothmann. These divisions usually fell on class-lines as the burgher class saw Rothmann as their hero and the upper class saw him as the Anti-Christ. As divisions and debates mounted around him, Rothmann continued preaching in St. Lambert's Cathedral.

Following the colloquy, the entire twenty-four man council was replaced by fewer noblemen, and more heads of the United

Guild.<sup>14</sup> With their support, Rothmann began preaching more fervently, stressing communal views along with his adamant adult baptism belief. Soon his reputation spread to the south, attracting the attention of the Melchiorite Anabaptists. Disciples of Melchior Hofmann and Jan Matthys visited Munster and began conversing with Rothmann. Upon seeing the political and religious strife around them in the town, the disciples were sure they were in God's chosen New Jerusalem, which had been promised to them almost a decade before by the father of their faith, Melchior Hofmann.

Melchior Hofmann became attracted to Lutheranism shortly after Luther posted his ninety-five theses. Believing it was his duty to spread Christ's message, Hofmann evangelized in the northern lands of the Holy Roman Empire and among the western borders of the Netherlands as a missionary. His sermons, however, began to question the church's view on infant baptism and the apocalypse. He started prophesizing about Christ's return and the elect, characteristically touchy subjects for Protestant and Catholic churches alike. In one of his recorded sermons, Hofmann states that God's elect shall "enter into the Holy [of Holies] and come to the Sabbath and the true rest completely naked and resigned to enter the bed of the Bridegroom where the righteous [re-] birth takes place and where one is instructed by God and the Word."<sup>15</sup> Claiming to be a divine authority, his sermons gave the poor hope, as they took comfort in knowing they would have eternal rest in the afterlife. Obedience to Christ, therefore, was equated with obedience to Hofmann. The peasant class that clung to Hofman became more visible as Hofmann impressed upon his followers the importance of evangelizing. Their belief in being God's chosen elect gave them confidence to be loud in their beliefs. Obeying Hofmann and essentially Christ, the followers proclaimed their salvation message, regardless of their audience's social status or the place where they were evangelizing.

The radical ideas Hofmann proclaimed alarmed the Lutheran Church as well as local officials. Hofmann left the Lutheran faith and headed south, as the northern cities'

governments feared the nature of his "radical tendencies and chiliastic speculations."<sup>16</sup> Heading south of Munster, in the town of Strasbourg, the Hofmann's radical adult baptism beliefs and millennialistic prophecies began attracting new attention. He acquired a group of followers, most notably women who claimed abilities as prophetesses. As one man's confession recorded of Hofmann's followers: "One of the prophetesses also prophesied – and that through a vision – that Melchior was Elijah," God's chosen apocalyptic prophet.<sup>17</sup> Along with his re-baptism, or Anabaptist beliefs, Hofmann asserted his Divine power as the prophet Elijah and predicted the end of the world was at hand. As Hofmann quoted scripture showing the government persecution of Christians in the end times, his personal persecution by the town authorities for social disruption only confirmed the belief in his followers minds that they were living in the end times and that Hofmann was indeed God's chosen prophet.<sup>18</sup> Fulfilling his prophecy, Strasbourg officials jailed Hofmann in 1533, where he remained until his death in 1543.

Hofmann's followers were assured more than ever that their beloved prophet was indeed God's chosen and the end times were upon them. As Hofmann languished in jail, however, the group began to wonder who would take new leadership. A baker influenced by Hofmann in the Netherlands, Jan Matthys claimed God revealed to him that he was the biblical prophet Enoch, the prophet the Bible claims to follow Elijah. A tall man with a great black beard, Matthys's appearance was very intimidating.<sup>19</sup> As rumors that challenged Matthys's claim became known, one former follower recorded: "When John Matthys learned of this, he carried on with much emotion and terrifying alarm, and with great and desperate curses cast all into hell and to the devils to eternity who would not hear his voice and would not recognize him and accept him as the true Enoch."<sup>20</sup> Fearful of God's wrath and Matthys's violent temper, his followers rose in number in an effort to honor God. With Hofmann in jail, Matthys was left to carry out the work of establishing the New Jerusalem. Figuring Strasbourg was not the chosen site, Matthys looked north to Munster where a radical pastor's reputation and the

town's lack of central authority had been rumored.

Matthys sent scouts throughout Germany to report on places ripe for evangelical conversion.<sup>21</sup> Munster, with its lack of princely authority, newly appointed town council, and approval of the radical teachings of Bernard Rothmann, became the obvious chosen for a communal society based on Old Testament law to be set up. Matthys entered into a relationship with Rothmann, indoctrinating him with even more radical beliefs and encouraging him to be a part of God's divine plan by setting up Munster as the site of the New Jerusalem. The Melchiorite Anabaptists started moving into Munster, eventually taking the town over in early 1534. So-called prophets or preachers left Munster in an effort to find more followers who would hear prophesy and see signs in Munster, preparing the way for Christ to establish his new kingdom on earth.<sup>22</sup>

The preachers that were sent out gained much attention in the surrounding areas, causing concern to officials who feared revolt. As officials caught one preacher, he confessed: "Also Knipperdollinck who is of the right spirit, had heard wonderful things from heaven and he called out: better yourselves, better yourselves than the King of Zion will come and rebuild Jerusalem; and many more who also had the spirit have called out the same and called for penitence."<sup>23</sup> The Anabaptists also sent out a letter to friends whom they thought would be willing to join them. Using fear, they claimed they were the chosen city of the New Jerusalem and that no one should "neglect to come unless he wishes to tempt God."<sup>24</sup> Few came to Munster to join the Anabaptists, but many left, fearful of what was to come.

Matthys established authority by using Old Testament Law. Communal-style living was installed, as everyone surrendered their goods to be evenly distributed amongst the followers. Daily Matthys prophesized, giving credence to his claim as Enoch as he "sat quietly, clapped his hands, nodded with his head, and groaned greatly as if he were about to die."<sup>25</sup> In military fashion, Matthys sent out men to patrol the city gates, to ward off Lutheran and Catholic fighters attempting to re-capture the town. Making a

show of himself, Matthys would daily ride to the city walls, complete with armor and musket in hand, "like a wild man out of his senses."<sup>26</sup> Matthys's luck eventually wore off, as the combined Lutheran and Catholic fighters led by Munster's bishop prince eventually captured him and brutally killed him.

...And he was so violent that even his enemies for their part were terrified of him...they were so incensed that they did not just kill him like other people but hacked and chopped him into little pieces, so that his brethren had to carry him in a basket when the tumult was over.<sup>27</sup>

His head was put on top of a long pike, which was thrust into the ground outside the city as a warning of what was to come if the gates were not let open.

After Matthys's somewhat heroic death, one of Hofmann's original followers, Jan Van Leyden, emerged as God's new chosen figure. Leyden established a new dictatorship style government, proclaiming himself the King of Munster. He wore a gold crown and purple robe and set up a throne in the town's center where he was attended by fashionably dressed courtiers and his fifteen wives. From there he passed out judgment, establishing martial law as the divine voice of God. As one follower later confessed, God instructed Leyden that everyone should be baptized to cleanse the town and those who would not convert would be punished.<sup>28</sup> During Leyden's rule, many executions took place, most of which were done purely for example's sake. "He showed little confidence toward his subjects and through his secret and public informers he kept them from entering into secret arrangements."<sup>29</sup> Leyden's elaborate lifestyle overwhelmed the people who were tired, hungry and living in fear. Christ's return seemed far away, as keeping themselves alive became the more prominent goal.

Life inside Munster under Leyden's rule was a lot less glorious than what had been imagined by the chosen inhabitants of God's New Jerusalem. Under supposed communal living, much inequality existed when Leyden and his elite dressed as royal monarchs and maintained elaborate lifestyles. Baptisms still took place daily, as the Anabaptists became intolerant of all

others within their city walls. Polygamy became widespread, with Leyden himself taking some fifteen wives, including Matthys's former wife. Fear still drove the people despite their military losses and shortage of food.<sup>30</sup> The scarcity of food became a real problem for the thirteen hundred men and six thousand women, plus the numerous children.<sup>31</sup> As one captured prisoner noted in a letter, the white was being scraped off the wall and mixed with water so children thought they would be drinking milk.<sup>32</sup> One Munster inhabitant also stated that the lack of meat caused almost all the cats and dogs to be eaten plus several horses.<sup>33</sup> Some people left the city, gladly sent out by those remaining, so as to save food for themselves. Those remaining grew sickly pale with bloated stomachs. Their strength to keep out the besieging forces dwindled daily as not even fear could motivate them to fight for their New Jerusalem.

Jan van Leyden did not inspire his new "subjects" to fight for the New Jerusalem as he appeared less concerned with establishing God's kingdom and more enamored with enhancing his own personal authority as Munster's king. Leyden left the protection of the town up to his carefully monitored forces. By Leyden's command, the men were not allowed to communicate with each other. The men's weakness and lack of back-up forces made it difficult to keep the attacking forces out. The men guarding the gates eventually gave out to the combined Lutheran and Catholic forces, led by the bishop prince, pressing to relieve the town of the Anabaptist dominion. After a year of control, the besieging forces overcame the chiliastic group in late 1535. A short fight took place within city limits after the besieging forces finally got through the city gate. Most men were killed in the fighting or taken as prisoners. Women and children were generally released, eventually receiving pardons from the church for their involvement. Leyden and the other leaders were hunted down and captured, where they were then subject to much questioning and torture. On 22 January 1536, Leyden faced execution.<sup>34</sup> Before his death, Leyden confessed his crimes and asked God to have mercy on his soul for the atrocities he had committed. Leyden, along with other town leaders, were

placed in large cages immediately following the removal of their tongues by means of hot metal prongs. The cages were then set on fire as Leyden and the others were burned to death, perhaps as a foretaste of what was awaiting them after death. The cages, with the dead remains, were hoisted high on top the tower of St. Lambert's Cathedral, a reminder to all of the obedience and respect expected by the state and God. What once served as Munster's introduction to the radical chiliastic Anabaptist theology would be forever remembered as the final resting-place for a man whose devoted followers gave everything they had for the build-up of what they thought was the New Jerusalem.

While it is easy for an observer to call the followers of the apocalyptic claims in Munster crazy, the reappearing of the New Jerusalem scenario throughout history proves the actions are not so deviant after all. It is more logical to conclude that the abnormal circumstances heralding an end-time fear is a not such an abnormal part of human nature. Humans striving to fill a spiritual void in their lives, in this case Christians, wish to enjoy the benefits of paradise in the afterlife. The leaders of these cults claim authority from God and are "often able to assure the potential converts that they can all be saved – which means a promise of everlasting salvation and tranquility to the potential devotee."<sup>35</sup> As Hofmann, Matthys and Leyden proclaimed, re-baptism and obedience were necessary to ensure salvation. Believers' adherence to only these demands ensured their place in the afterlife by demonstrating commitment and perseverance in the faith.

Max Weber, a well-noted sociologist and scholar on the Reformation, explains the heated follower-to-leader relationship as extreme devotion.<sup>36</sup> Because charismatic leaders emerge out of emotionally charged situations, followers do not hold the leaders to the same standards they would normally hold for each other. Followers assume special authority is granted to their charismatic leader due to the circumstances. Charismatic leaders are confirming a belief already in the minds of their followers. For example, Matthys's emergence as a leader fit into a divine plan in the minds of his

followers. Already convinced they were living in the end times thanks to Hofmann, Matthys seemed like the natural and prophesied new leader to follow.

Van Leyden, like Matthys before him, once again fit into the natural and divine plan established by Matthys and Hofmann in their followers' minds. His authority was more extreme, but accepted as followers wished to show obedience to God, represented by Leyden on earth. Hofmann's stricter communal and polygamous society was viewed as necessary to prepare the town for Christ's return. It was also seen, originally, as a better way of life.

Following the horrors of the Black Plague in 1529 along with the deficiency of crops and widespread famine thereafter, the middle class and poor were willing to leave the hierarchical rule of the state and church who were not helping them get back on their feet. Unable to find association and morality in the mainstream, the people of Munster turned to the radical leaders who accepted them.<sup>37</sup>

The people of Munster believed they were living in the New Jerusalem because everything predicted to them came true. When Hofmann predicted the government persecution of Christians, as when Strasbourg authorities jailed him for public disruption, it only validated in his followers' minds that the end times had begun. Even outrageous claims helped confirm the authority of the leaders involved, as the idea that a merciful God had saved them as promised overshadowed doubt that the original prediction was false. Rothmann predicted the world's end on Easter of 1533. "When nothing happened, Rothmann took solace in the example of Jonah, whose prophecy of Nineveh's destruction was prevented by a merciful God."<sup>38</sup> As is Rothmann's case, even when charismatic leaders' claims turn out to be false, they are able to use the untruth to further their authority.

Fear was also a tool used by the leaders to exert authority and control. Of most concern to the people was the idea of what could happen to them if the New Jerusalem claims were genuine and they turned their back on it. Hofmann in his sermons wrote that Christ will divorce his bridegroom if she is disobedient to him, ending all fellowship and communion with her.<sup>39</sup> Once

again, the fear of eternal damnation in hell outweighed the idea that the New Jerusalem claims were a mere hoax. Matthys's violent manner, which scared his enemies into chopping him into little pieces to make sure of his death, evoked fear in his followers. Also his tall, dark appearance added legitimacy to his claim as God's prophet. Leyden used the same violent manner, shouting judgment down from a gilded throne. His royal appearance also added weight to his claim as the King of Munster.

Although many of the tactics are planned by the leader, most of the circumstances surrounding them, which help give validity to their claims, just happen to occur at the right place and time. The political and religious upheaval in Munster in the early 1530s had no relation to the sermons of Melchior Hofmann. The enthusiasm inspiring the upheavals had its roots in something that happened over a century before. Through a twisted chain of events, however, they became related as charismatic leaders inspired disgruntled peasants to mobilize.

Much of the psychological reasoning, which allowed for the siege of Munster to take place, occurred long before the Melchiorite Anabaptists started gaining the public's attention. The Black Death that swept Europe in the mid-fourteenth century was still vivid in the memories of most of the population, who never truly settled their fears with death. Crop failures in the early part of the sixteenth century heightened the sense of insecurity among the lower classes. Also, religious tensions were spawned by the questioning of the Catholic Church, perhaps the one stable element in the population's life, by Martin Luther in 1517. The peasants revolted in 1524 against their monastic landowners without the support of the Lutherans. Believing social freedom was a part of their newfound freedom from the Catholic Church, many were ready to engage in a new way of life. The charismatic leadership allowed for the dissatisfied people to unite, unfortunately with the high price of mass death. Peasants seeking social justice and eternal salvation ultimately were forced to live under the arbitrary rule of Jan van Leyden with a low chance of survival. Many wishing to do the will



of God within the city walls were killed by Leyden's troops for example's sake. Eventually everyone was forced to alter their communal ways of living as Lutheran and Catholic forces hung the Munsterites' celebrated king and other leaders' charred remains in cages from a church.

When tourists visit Munster, they are sure to see the cages high above St. Lambert's Cathedral and hear the story of how they reached their final destination. Stories of Munster, the Branch Davidians, Solar Temple members, or any other millennialistic group in our society are hastily judged and dismissed as some sort of psychotic phenomena. The frequent re-occurrences of these groups, however, present a problem for the hurried write-off most of these groups receive. Judgement is quickly passed on groups

like those in Munster because of their unconventional ways. It is quite obvious, measures were taken too far during Munster's siege by the leaders and followers of the group. Tolerance by the state of the apocalyptic Anabaptists could have proved less destructive.<sup>40</sup> A better method for dealing with groups such as the Anabaptists in Munster is needed to ensure the burned cages or the more recently burned compounds, do not reoccur. Until then, the cages high on St. Lambert's Cathedral should remind the everyday gazer of the respect demanded by the State and God, but also that a more tolerant way of dealing with the unconventional groups in our society might prevent the kind of destruction the cages represent.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Johnathon D. Grieser, "A Tale of Two Convents: Nuns and Anabaptists in Munster, 1533-1535," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26 (spring 1995): 45.

<sup>2</sup> George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 364.

<sup>3</sup> Irvin Buckwalter Horst, *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558* (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: N.V. Drukkerij Trio, 1972), 67.

<sup>4</sup> James M. Strayer, *The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 125.

<sup>5</sup> Grieser, "A Tale of Two Convents," 46.

<sup>6</sup> Tal Howard, "Charisma and History: The Case of Munster, Westphalia 1534-1535," *Essays in History*, vol. 35, 1993 [journal online] (University of Virginia: Corcoran Department of History); available from <http://etext.virginia.edu/journals/EH/EH35/howard1.html>; accessed 9 February 2000, 49.

<sup>7</sup> George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 364.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>9</sup> Donald J. Ziegler, ed., "Introduction to the 'Munster Colloquy, 1535,'" in *Great Debates of the Reformation*, (New York: Random House, 1969), 110.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 367-368.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>12</sup> "Abschrift eines grundlichengesprechs, so tho Munster twyschen etlinchen gelerten und den predicanten dasulvest gehalten etlicher twyspenziger ler halven, anno domini M.C. XXXIII in Augusto," in Ziegler, 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>14</sup> Strayer, *The German Peasants' War*, 125.

<sup>15</sup> Melchior Hoffman, "The Ordinance of God," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, eds. George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), 191.

<sup>16</sup> Chiliastic is another word for millennialistic; derived from the Greek word for kilo, which means one-thousand. The Bible often speaks of Christ's thousand-year reign on Earth where He will establish the New Jerusalem. Abraham Friesen, "Present at the Inception: Menno Simons and the Beginnings of Dutch Anabaptism," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, (April 1996): 8.

<sup>17</sup> Obbe Philips, "A Confession," *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Williams and Mergal, 212.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-10.

<sup>19</sup> "Meister Heinrich Gresbeck's Bericht," *The Reformation in Its Own Words*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), 235.

<sup>20</sup> Philips, "A Confession," 214.

<sup>21</sup> Howard, "Charisma and History," [journal online], 51.

<sup>22</sup> "A Letter to the Duke of Cleves, March 1534," in *The German Reformation*, Katherine Leach, ed. John Wroughton (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991), 69.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob von Osnabruck, "From the Confession of Jacob von Osnabruck," in Leach, 70.

<sup>24</sup> O. Harting, "De Munsterische Furie," in Hillerbrand, 253.

<sup>25</sup> "Meister Heinrich Gresbeck's Berichte," in Hillerbrand, 255.

<sup>26</sup> Philips, "A Confession," 221.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>28</sup> Dyonisius of Diest, "From the Confession of Dyonisius of Diest," In *The German Reformation*, Katherine Leach, ed. John Wroughton (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991), 71.

<sup>29</sup> "Neue Zeitung," In Hillerbrand, 261.

<sup>30</sup> Horst, *The Radical Brethren*, 70.

<sup>31</sup> The population count is not certain. This number was sent out of Munster in a letter from one of the Anabaptist inhabitants. H. Graes, "Statement," In Hillerbrand, 263.

<sup>32</sup> Justinian von Holtzhausen, "Letter," In Hillerbrand, 263.

<sup>33</sup> This information was printed in a newspaper article following the capture of Munster by the besieging forces. The story tells the first hand account of a soldier that entered the city as a disciple, but was in reality an informer for the besieging

forces. The Munster story was popular news in the sixteenth century, appearing in many broadsides. "Neue Zeitung," In Hillerbrand, 262.

<sup>34</sup> Horst, *The Radical Brethren*, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew J. Pavlos, *The Cult Experience* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 120-121.

<sup>36</sup> Howard, *Charisma and History*, [journal online], 52.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald Pankhurst, "The End is Near," Lecture Notes, Wittenberg University, 2 December 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Grieser, "A Tale of Two Convents," 41.

<sup>39</sup> Hoffman, "The Ordinance of God," 196.

<sup>40</sup> Pankhurst, "The End is Near."

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## Anastasia and Anna Anderson: The Truth Revealed

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America's eighty-year fascination with Anastasia Nicholaievna Romanov, one of the last Grand Duchesses of Russia, has produced a myriad of myths and legends. What has made this woman survive in our memories for so long? One answer lies in her heritage. Anastasia was the daughter of Nicholas II, Tsar of all Russia. Having been born into the imperial family, she was royalty. Yet, it is more than royalty which draws us in; it is mystery. The details of her family's execution in 1918 were murky, hidden with many other secrets by the Communist regime in Soviet Russia. Did this woman escape? Was she alive and living in the United States? Was a former princess leading the life of a normal citizen? Americans tend to embrace these fantasies. Our democratic heritage does not provide us with a sovereign, leading us into an enchantment with royalty. Witness Princess Diana's death in 1997. Her funeral became one of the largest television events worldwide. In America, we could watch the coverage on any one of the major network stations. Diana connected with the common people; therefore, we embraced her. We have even sought to create our own form of royalty through the Kennedy family. The legend of Anastasia is rooted in this type of royal intrigue. Unfortunately, she did not survive the Romanov executions and Anna Anderson, the most prominent Anastasia claimant, was simply a pretender.

Anastasia Nicholaievna Romanov, Grand Duchess of Russia, was born on 5 June 1901.<sup>1</sup> She was the fourth daughter of Tsar Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra. In addition to her sisters, Olga, Tatiana, and Maria, Anastasia had a younger brother, Alexei, who was the heir to the Russian throne. In 1913, the Romanovs celebrated the three-hundredth anniversary of their dynasty in Russia, but their prosperous rule was to last for only a few more years. Russia

would soon be engaged in World War I, which marked the beginning of the end for Nicholas and tsarism.

After many devastating setbacks in the war, the Provisional Government assumed responsibility for government operations in February 1917. Nicholas had no choice but to abdicate both his and his son's right to the throne. Concerned over the safety of the imperial family, the Provisional Government confined the Romanovs to Tsarskoe Selo, the retreat of the tsars located outside St. Petersburg. Due to the social unrest in western Russia, the Provisional Government moved the family to the Siberian town of Tobolsk in August 1917 for their own safety.<sup>2</sup> The Provisional Government, however, could not escape the social forces gaining momentum in Russia, and in October 1917, the Bolsheviks seized power. Bolshevik control spelled trouble for the tsar and his family. Within half a year, the Romanovs were moved again. This time, they were sent deep into the Ural Mountains to the city of Ekaterinburg. The family was held captive in the Ipatiev House, under the command of Yakov Yurovsky.<sup>3</sup> This house came to be known as the House of Special Purpose among the troops assigned to guard the family. Unbeknownst to the Romanovs, Yurovsky was planning their execution "on the orders of Lenin,"<sup>4</sup> leader of the Bolshevik Revolution. The firing squad for the seven Romanovs and four of their servants would consist of ten guards plus Yurovsky. The men were ordered to shoot for the heart, making the deaths as quick and bloodless as possible.<sup>5</sup>

At 1:15 AM on 17 July 1918, Yurovsky instructed the tsar's personal physician to awaken the family and servants. They were told that the military situation around Ekaterinburg was becoming dangerous and that they would need to be moved to a new location. Dressed in their traveling clothes, they were

guided into a basement room. At this point, the family did not suspect the fate which awaited them, but it must have seemed odd that Yurovsky was instructing them on the places in which they should stand. He aligned the Romanovs in the front row, with their servants behind them. Suddenly the ten guards entered the room, and Yurovsky began reading from a piece of paper, "Nikolai Aleksandrovich, . . . your relatives wanted to save you, but they did not succeed, and so we have to shoot you." The family had no time to react before the shooting began. While some members of the imperial party fell over dead, others lay writhing on the floor, still alive. The Grand Duchesses, having sewn the family jewels into their undergarments, survived the first attack by the gunmen. Yurovsky then ordered the men to use their bayonets and rifle butts to finish the girls. When Yurovsky was satisfied that everyone was dead, the bodies were loaded onto a waiting truck.

From the House of Special Purpose, the mangled remains of Russia's last imperial family were driven into the Koptiaki Woods to be buried. Their bodies were stripped naked and thrown into an old mine shaft. Their clothes were then burned in a bonfire to eliminate any possibility of recognizing them as the Romanovs. With their mission accomplished, the Ural Soviets sent a telegram to Moscow saying, "On the night of 16 July Nicholas Romanov was shot. His family has been evacuated to a safe place." This telegram was then used as a press release by the Soviets in Moscow. To the world, only Tsar Nicholas II was dead; his family remained alive. This misleading information would contribute to several rumors surrounding the whereabouts of the empress and her children, and certain stories began to focus on the escape of one daughter in particular: Grand Duchess Anastasia. Was Yurovsky mistaken; did Anastasia escape the brutal murders of her family?<sup>6</sup>

On 17 February 1920, a woman was dragged from the Landwehr Canal in Berlin after attempting to commit suicide by jumping into the frigid waters.<sup>7</sup> At the time, this woman did not have a known name or identity. Eventually, she would use the formal name Anna Anderson, but to many people, she came to be known as

Anastasia, daughter of Tsar Nicholas II.<sup>8</sup>

Anna Anderson came to believe that she was Anastasia, and as a result, she filed two petitions and two lawsuits in Germany, seeking legal recognition as the Tsar's heir. Her two petitions sought the revocation of a document issued in 1933, which named the family of Hesse as the tsar's heirs.<sup>9</sup> Her first petition, filed in 1938, was rejected in 1941. Anderson then appealed this ruling in 1942, but the case was suspended due to World War II.<sup>10</sup> The case resumed in 1956, and a year later, the judges again handed down a verdict which declared Anderson was not Anastasia.<sup>11</sup> In ruling on this second petition, the judges considered the key testimony of Hans Joachim Mayer. Mayer was an Austrian prisoner of war in Russia following World War I and had joined the Bolsheviki in 1918. He testified that "he had witnessed the Ekaterinburg executions, and saw Anastasia's dead body after the massacre."<sup>12</sup>

Anderson, however, was not finished; she again returned to court in 1958, asking for recognition as Anastasia. She filed her suit "on the ground that new evidence had been discovered."<sup>13</sup> While Anderson's lawyers demonstrated "that she was able to name correctly faces in photographs, describe specific events, [and] identify uniforms, buildings and locations" these things could not overshadow one crucial point: Anderson "spoke no Russian."<sup>14</sup> This fact was extremely important in attempting to establish her identity. Her detractors demanded to know how a woman claiming to be a Russian princess was not able to speak her native language. Anderson's lawyers provided no real explanation. The defense also questioned Anderson's actions when confronted by witnesses who challenged her alleged memories because she "has tended to be painfully shy, truculent or agitated to near-hysteria."<sup>15</sup> Anderson's responses seem to have been a ploy to evade the rejection of her legitimacy.

The most damaging testimony against Anderson came from this third trial when Doris Wingender took the witness stand. On 12 August 1922, Anderson, who had been staying with the Kleist family, disappeared from their residence. She reappeared three days later, but no one was able to account for her whereabouts

during this time<sup>16</sup> until Wingender took the stand.

Wingender was the daughter of a landlady, who had a tenant by the name of Franziska Schanzkowski. Schanzkowski, a Polish factory worker, had disappeared on 15 February 1920.<sup>17</sup> Her family and friends had not seen her since that day, but in the summer of 1922, Wingender saw Schanzkowski once again.<sup>18</sup> As Wingender testified in court on 21 May 1958, she identified Anderson as none other than the missing Franziski Schanzkowski.<sup>19</sup> As further evidence, when Anderson disappeared from the Kleist's house, she was "attired in a camel's-hair-colored coat, lilac dress and green felt hat, [yet reappearing] three days later [she was] in a dark blue dress and light blue hat." Wingender testified to giving Anderson the blue dress and hat and to turning over the coat, hat, and dress, which Anderson had previously worn, to a detective.<sup>20</sup> To illustrate her point, Wingender produced two photographs, one of herself in 1920, wearing a blue dress and one of Anderson taken in 1922, sporting the same blue dress.<sup>21</sup>

These revelations dealt a serious blow to Anderson's claims. The dates corresponded correctly to Schanzkowski's and Anderson's appearances and disappearances. Two days after Schanzkowski disappeared, Anderson was pulled from the canal; the three days, for which Anderson was missing and her lawyers could not account, were the same three days on which Wingender saw Schanzkowski. The judges weighed the evidence and returned with a ruling on 15 May 1961: Anna Anderson was not Anastasia, not was she Franziska Schanzkowski. In their verdict, the judges ruled that Anderson's claim to be Anastasia was "unfounded," and they deemed that the defense's counterclaim asserting that Anderson was Schanzkowski was "irrelevant." In their opinion, however, it was "eminently likely"<sup>22</sup> that Anderson was Schanzkowski.

Anderson was still not finished in her attempt to be recognized as Anastasia. Three defeats were not enough, and she brought her case before the courts for the fourth time in 1962.<sup>24</sup> Three important witnesses testified against Anderson. The first witness was Professor Karl Clauberg, who presented his testimony, "submitting that Anastasia's

[Anderson's] ear bore a certain curve and indentation that he had been unable to locate on any photograph of the Tsar's daughter."<sup>25</sup> Anderson had placed a strong emphasis on the physical similarities which she believed existed between herself and Anastasia. Clauberg's testimony struck at the center of one of Anderson's best arguments, further weakening her case.

The second witness, Erich Wollenberg, was a German Communist who, while in Siberia in 1929, was "assured . . . that all of the Russian imperial family was dead and that the 'Frau Tschaikovsky'<sup>26</sup> . . . was really the Polish factory worker, Franziska Schanzkowska."<sup>27</sup> Wollenberg's testimony reaffirms Mayer's report that the whole family had perished and Wingender's account that Anderson was actually Schanzkowski. The third witness, Rudolf Lacher, would corroborate both Mayer's and Wollenberg's stories that no members of the Imperial family survived the massacre. Lacher, an Austrian orderly who had been in the Ipatiev House on the night of the murders, described being able to see "from the window of his room, . . . 'eleven bloody bundles'" loaded onto a truck.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence, while circumstantial, mounted against Anderson and her claim. The judges returned for the fourth time and presented the same result. "Judge Edgar Peterson, in reading the court's verdict said, 'In German law the plaintiff Anna Anderson should herself have been able to prove that she is identical in person with the Grand Duchess Anastasia. This proof was not provided in these proceedings.'" The court, however, again refused to support the counterclaim that Anderson was Schanzkowski.<sup>29</sup>

The court had ruled on four different occasions that Anderson was not Anastasia, yet questions remained surrounding her claim. Did Anastasia really survive the executions and escape from Russia? Since circumstantial evidence alone linked Anderson as Schanzkowski, who was Anna Anderson? Even though the court cases were concluded, these questions continued to be asked.

In 1979, Russia was still under Soviet control, which restricted its citizens in both speech and action. Two men, Alexander

Avdonin, a geologist, and Geli Ryabov, a Moscow filmmaker, came into possession of a report written by Yurovsky after the murders. This report had been kept secret for over sixty years, but its contents were fascinating. Yurovsky's own record indicated that he moved the bodies of the Romanovs and their servants from the mine shaft two days after the executions out of fear that they would be discovered. Yurovsky then attempted to destroy the bodies with fire, but he only burned two of the corpses before he realized that this method would still leave evidence. His report stated that the bodies of the tsar's son and an unknown woman were burned. Yurovsky first believed that he had burned the body of Empress Alexandra. Then he changed his mind and decided that the corpse must have been the empress' maid.<sup>30</sup> Yurovsky's records, therefore, account for two of the bodies.

Avdonin and Ryabov, using Yurovsky's description of the burial site, dug up the remains of the Romanov family in 1979. With Russia under Soviet domination, the men could not publicize their findings and were forced to rebury the bones.<sup>31</sup> On 10 July 1991, Russia entered a new age; Communism had fallen and in its place democracy was rising. Boris Yeltsin was inaugurated on this day as the first President in the history of Russia. The very next day, "an exhumation party set out for a small clearing in the forest on the former Koptyaki Road."<sup>32</sup> The scientists, following Avdonin and Ryabov's directions, uncovered nine bodies in the grave. This find would correspond to Yurovsky's assertion that two of the bodies had been burned, since there were eleven members in the imperial entourage. The scientists' task was to determine whose remains were in the grave.

Russian scientists used a technique of video recording to capture the images of the skulls from the grave, and they graphically matched these skulls with photographs to identify the members of the royal family. "By the summer of 1992, Abramov and his colleagues were convinced that they had found Nicholas, Alexandra, Olga, Tatiana, Anastasia, [and the four servants]. . . . Everyone agreed that the Tsarevitch was missing." From these conclusions, Abramov and his team believed

that Maria was the missing daughter.<sup>33</sup> The Russian government, however, was not completely satisfied with the work of their scientists and requested the aid of American scientists in studying the remains.

Dr. William Maples, a forensic anthropologist from the University of Florida, put together a research team to travel to Russia to examine the Romanov remains. The researchers included Dr. Michael Baden, a forensic pathologist, Dr. Lowell Levine, a forensic dentist, and Dr. Cathryn Oakes, a hair-and-fiber specialist.<sup>34</sup> The American team conducted its own research, developing its own conclusions, which were very different from those of the Russian scientists. Maples believed that the bodies of Alexei, then 13, and Anastasia, then 17, were missing from the remains.<sup>35</sup> His deduction was based on age; "none of these three skeletons were young enough to have belonged to Anastasia."<sup>36</sup> Dr. Maples gave two other reasons for his decision that Anastasia's skeleton was not present: the first was height and the second was development of the third molars. Using photographs, Maples was able to show that Anastasia was the shortest of the four sisters. The length of the bones exhumed from the grave indicated that Anastasia's remains were not present. The second piece of evidence came from Dr. Levine's studies. Each of the skulls of the three girls had well developed third molars, which Anastasia could not have possessed at her age.<sup>37</sup>

According to Maples, the discrepancies between his and Abramov's conclusions can be explained by Abramov's questionable research practices. If certain bones were missing from the skull, Abramov guessed in order to match the skull with a face – an unacceptable practice from Maples' perspective. Maples returned instead to Yurovsky's secret document in his attempt to solve the mystery. His conclusion rested on the fact that Yurovsky must have burned the body of Anastasia, but "how could Yurovsky have mistaken the body of a seventeen-year-old girl for that of a mature woman?" Maples looked at the situation in which the family was killed. It was mid-July, temperatures were around seventy degrees Fahrenheit, their faces had been smashed in

with bayonets and rifle butts, and the blood "would have dried into a black, caked, impenetrable mass." The bodies had been stripped of their clothes; the only obvious feature would have been the sex of the corpse, because "the naked bodies would have bloated to unrecognizability." Also aiding the decomposition would have been the flies which laid their eggs in the mutilated faces and bodies. In the two days in which Yurovsky was gone, "the eggs would have hatched into maggots." Beyond knowing that he burned a female body, Yurovsky would have been unable to identify the victim.<sup>38</sup> Based on Yurovsky's records and Maples' research, experts have determined that the other burned body belonged to Anastasia. According to this premise, all eleven bodies are accounted for; Anastasia could not possibly have escaped to the West.

The final piece of the puzzle came when Peter Gill and Kevin Sullivan, researchers at the Forensic Science Service in England, received the Romanov bones in 1992 to perform DNA research. They were able to use "DNA from the cellis nuclei . . . to determine the sex of the individuals, to compare the nine skeletons' DNA, and eventually to establish that five of the bodies were from the same family."<sup>39</sup> Gill focused his research on a form of DNA called mitochondrial DNA.<sup>40</sup> With his knowledge of the hereditary match on the maternal side, Gill could begin comparing the Romanov's mitochondrial DNA with living relatives from both sides of the family. The mitochondrial DNA from the skeletons of the three daughters matched perfectly with Alexandra's DNA. The empress' mitochondrial DNA was then compared with Prince Philip, consort of Queen Elizabeth II of England, and relative of Alexandra's through Queen Victoria. The two were a match. Alexandra's remains had been positively identified.<sup>41</sup> Nicholas' DNA now remained to be tested against living relatives. When his mitochondrial DNA was tested, it "matched those of two descendants of Louis of Hesse-Lassel, wife of Denmark's King Christian IX and his maternal grandmother."<sup>42</sup> The tangible remains from the grave in the Koptiaki

Woods were now identified and Gill was "98.5 percent certain that this was Romanov DNA"<sup>43</sup>; the mystery of Russia's last royal family was solved... or was it?

While earlier evidence had established that Anastasia's body had been burned, what about Anna Anderson? Could this new testing finally determine the identity of the woman who sought for most of her life to obtain legal recognition as Anastasia? Anna Anderson had died, however, on 12 February 1984 in Charlottesville, Virginia, and her wish to be cremated was carried out the very same day.<sup>45</sup> Fortunately for the DNA researchers, a Virginia hospital had preserved a piece of Anderson's intestine from a surgery in 1979. "Peter Gill and his colleagues extracted DNA from a section of . . . [this] intestine." They found that Anderson's DNA was missing the "pivotal sequences" which had appeared in the DNA of the tsar and tsarina. This discovery confirmed that the court had ruled correctly in the four trials: Anna Anderson was not Anastasia. One test remained to be performed on a maternal relative of Franziska Schanzkowski. "Anderson's mitochondrial DNA . . . [was] compared . . . with those [sequences] of a maternally descended great-nephew of Schanzkowski. They were identical."<sup>46</sup>

Finally, the mystery of Anastasia and Anna Anderson is solved. Based on the body count of both the remains in the woods and the burned victims, Anastasia Nicholaievna Romanov did not escape from Ekaterinburg, but instead perished with her family. And Anna Anderson, who sought in life a title that was not hers, received in death her true identity: Franziska Schanzkowski. This theory, however, will not be accepted by everyone. Because two bodies are still missing, people will continue to believe that Anastasia was a survivor and that she did live the remainder of her life in the West. Popular culture loves a conspiracy theory, and just as Elvis continues to appear around the world many years after his death, the Anastasia legends will live until tangible evidence can be produced to end all speculation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This date is given according to the Russian Orthodox (Julian) calendar, which is thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>2</sup> Mark D. Steinberg and Vladimir M. Khrustalev, *The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in a Time of Revolution*, trans. of Russian documents by Elizabeth Tucker (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1995), 117, 169-70.

<sup>3</sup> John Klier and Helen Mingay, *The Quest for Anastasia: Solving the Mystery of the Last Romanovs*, (Secaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing Group, 1997), 44.

<sup>4</sup> John Darton, "Scientists Confirm Identification of Bones as Czar's," *New York Times*, 10 July 1993, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Klier, 48.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-51, 57-59.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>8</sup> After Anderson was pulled from the canal, she was admitted to the Dalldorf Asylum, where her identity was unknown for two years. In 1922, a nurse at the hospital saw a picture of Tsar Nicholas' children. This woman believed that Anderson was Tatiana, the second daughter, and she asked Russian emigres living in Germany to look at the woman. When these people came, they said that Anderson was not the Tsar's daughter. The nurse decided that she must have been mistaken; this woman was Anastasia not Tatiana. Anderson was released from the asylum shortly thereafter, and she went to live with the Kleist family. It was in their care that she supposedly developed the story of her survival and escape from Russia.

<sup>9</sup> "Court in Berlin Rejects Suit of 'Czar's Daughter,'" *New York Times*, 30 January 1957, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Kurth, *Anastasia: The Riddle of Anna Anderson*, (Boston, Little Brown, 1986), 290-3.

<sup>11</sup> *New York Times*, 30 January 1957, 31.

<sup>12</sup> "The Lady's No Duchess," *Newsweek*, 11 February 1957, 45.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur J. Olsen, "German Court Starts New Effort to Settle Anastasia Controversy," *New York Times Magazine*, 2 April 1958, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur J. Olsen, "'Anastasia' Grand Duchess or Grand Hoax?," *New York Times* 24 August 1958, sec. 4, pg. 19, 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Kurth, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Olsen, "Anastasia," 24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Kurth, 304.

<sup>20</sup> Olsen, "Anastasia," 22, 26.

<sup>21</sup> Kurth, 305.

<sup>22</sup> "Court Says Woman is Not Anastasia," *New York Times*, 16 May 1961, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Kurth, 316-7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Anderson went by the name Anna Tschalvosky in the mid-1920s.

<sup>27</sup> Kurth, 336.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 349-50.

<sup>29</sup> "Appeal in Anastasia Mystery Is Rejected by Hamburg Court," *New York Times*, 1 March 1967, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Robert K. Massie, "The Last Romanov Mystery," *The New Yorker*, 1 & 28 August 1995, 83.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>32</sup> Maddie, 77.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>35</sup> Anastasia Toufexis, "It's the Czar All Right, But Where's Anastasia?," *Time*, 14 September 1992, 65.

<sup>36</sup> Massie, 82.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Josie Glausiusz, "Royal D-Loops," *Discover*, January 1994, 90.

<sup>40</sup> "Mitochondrial DNA is passed only from mother to child, remaining unchanged for generations. . . . This means that our mitochondrial DNA is identical to that of our mother, our mother's mother and siblings, as well as to more distant maternal relatives." (Glausiusz, "D-Loops," 90.

<sup>41</sup> Jennifer Warren, "Tooth Sleuthing," *American Health*, June 1993, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Glausiusz, "D-Loops," 90.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> "Anna Manahan Dies; 'Anastasia' Claimant," *New York Times*, 14 February 1984, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Kurth, 455.

<sup>46</sup> Josie Glausiusz, "Anastasia, Nyet," *Discover*, January 1995, 99.



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## “Those Damned Black Hats”: The Iron Brigade in the Civil War

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On the early morning of July 1, 1863, General John Buford's two brigades of Union cavalry held a thin line along a low ridge just west of the town of Gettysburg. Buford's men were facing a Confederate force that vastly outnumbered them and who had reinforcements near by. When one of Buford's aides, up in the cupola atop the Lutheran seminary, spotted blue troops coming from the southeast, the cavalry men received a welcome sight; the infantry had finally arrived to support them. Among the first two infantry brigades to arrive on the field was the brigade commanded by General Solomon Meredith, known throughout the Union army by their nickname: the Iron Brigade. This brigade was famous for their tenacity in battle. Their distinctive black Hardee hats gave them a different appearance than most of the rest of the army. (During the Chancellorsville campaign, less than two months earlier, one of Berdan's Sharpshooters, recalling a march, mentioning the Iron Brigade:

[A]s the great Western of Iron Brigade passed, looking like giants with their tall black hats, they were greeted with hearty cheers. . . . And giants they were, in action. . . . I look back and see that famed body of troops marching up that long muddy hill unmindful of the pouring rain, but full of life and spirit, with steady step, filling the entire roadway, their big black hats and feathers conspicuous.<sup>1)</sup>

The men of the Iron Brigade quickly formed into line of battle and relieved Buford's tired cavalry. As they started to engage the Confederates, one Confederate soldier was said to remark "There are those damned black-hatted fellows again! Tain't no militia. It's the Army of the Potomac."<sup>2)</sup>

The Confederates soon realized they were

not facing weak militia or cavalry, but crack Union infantry. The battle of Gettysburg was on. After the battle, a public journal would state that "It was to the Iron Brigade more than any other that the nation owes its salvation at Gettysburg..."<sup>3)</sup>

T. Henry Williams called the Iron Brigade "probably the best fighting brigade in all the army."<sup>4)</sup> It served throughout the Civil War, being formed shortly after the battle of First Bull Run. In all the battles it fought in, it was never routed,<sup>5)</sup> something few brigades in the Union Army of the Potomac can claim. It was the only all western brigade in the eastern Union armies.<sup>6)</sup> Other brigades in the Civil War had nicknames. Many, such as the Excelsior Brigade, the Irish Brigade, and the Louisiana Tigers, received their nicknames before they saw action. Relatively few brigades earned their nicknames for their performance in battle, like the Stonewall Brigade and, of course, the Iron Brigade.

What made the Iron Brigade such an effective fighting force? What enabled them to make some of the bravest stands and charges in the Civil War? Historians have repeatedly stressed some of the same issues and some different ones. Jean P. Ebling believes that the brigade's fighting spirit, (or unit pride or *esprit de corps*), stemmed from their pride in being volunteers, the high quality of leadership in the brigade, the skilled training they received, and their successful performance in battle.<sup>7)</sup> Meanwhile, Alan T. Nolan, probably the acknowledged expert on the Iron Brigade, claims that ". . . unusual leadership, the coincidental fact of the opportunity to be trained as soldiers, and *esprit de corps* made the Iron Brigade what it was- the best fighting brigade in the Federal armies."<sup>8)</sup> Both of these descriptions of what

made the Iron Brigade good fighters have merit. The brigade's leadership and training had a huge impact on crafting the brigade into a fighting unit, but what really sustained it throughout numerous battles was its reputation. They built for themselves a reputation as the best fighters in the army. It was something the men were very proud of, and no matter how terrible the odds, the men felt they have to live up to that reputation. This is what truly made the Iron Brigade great. Their story is one of great courage, sacrifice, stubbornness, and determination.

When the war broke out in April 1861<sup>9</sup>, the state of Wisconsin, in the initial call for troops, was called to furnish only one regiment. Instead of only one regiment, Wisconsin furnished two. The Second Wisconsin Volunteers were mustered into federal service on 11 June 1861 and were assigned to General Irvin McDowell's command near Washington. Initially enlisting for only three months, before they would see action they re-enlisted for three years. During the campaign of First Bull Run, the Second served in General William T. Sherman's brigade. There they saw their first action and learned of the horror's of war. Sherman wrote of the Second that "This regiment ascended to the brow of the hill steadily, received the severe fire of the enemy, returned it with spirit, and advanced delivering its fire."<sup>10</sup> First Bull Run had been a disaster for the Union, but the Second Wisconsin had fought fairly well in spite of the federal route. Around Washington, as the army was being reorganized by General George B. McClellan, three new regiments arrived: the Sixth Wisconsin, the Seventh Wisconsin, and the Nineteenth Indiana. These new regiments were assigned into a brigade along with the Second Wisconsin and the brigade was placed under command of General Rufus King. This was start of the brigade that would later be known among the annals of war as the Iron Brigade.

King's brigade of Westerners, as the brigade was soon called, was still assigned to General McDowell's command, what would later become the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac. In the spring of 1862, much to the disappointment of the green regiments, McDowell's corps did not participate in

McClellan's Peninsula campaign. Changes were made to the brigade as well. King was promoted to command the division to which the western brigade belonged and a regular army artillery captain named John Gibbon was promoted to brigadier general and assumed command of the brigade. The men from Wisconsin and Indiana did not yet know it, but their new commander was to have a such an impact that "after the war, if called upon to name the commander of the Iron Brigade, most of the veterans would have unhesitatingly named the man they served under for only six months in 1862— John A. Gibbon."<sup>11</sup>

As a regular army man, Gibbon set about making his volunteer soldiers more like regulars. Gibbon already had a positive view of the men he would command noting that "from the character of these I was already impressed with the conviction that all they needed was some discipline and drill to make them first class soldiers and my anticipations were more than realized."<sup>12</sup> Within a week of taking command he issued his men new uniforms, the dress uniforms of the regular army, complete with the black regulation hat, known as the Hardee hat.<sup>13</sup> With this action, "Gibbon achieved organizational unity by the simple expedient of providing his troops with a distinctive uniform."<sup>14</sup> His men were already distinct in makeup from the rest of the army, and now they were distinctive in looks as well. With his men looking like regulars, Gibbon next set out to train them to act like regulars. Overhearing a remark that he was just an artillery officer and knew nothing of infantry drill, Gibbon immediately set out to drill his brigade relentlessly, to make it the best drilled brigade in the army.<sup>15</sup> The result of this drill was that "before the brigade had been in action, it won a reputation as a superior unit."<sup>16</sup> One soldier in the brigade wrote later that "it was Gibbon who did much to teach us how to be soldiers."<sup>17</sup> While McClellan's Army of the Potomac was fiercely fighting in the Peninsula, McDowell's forces waited, training, defending Washington from the Confederate threat of Stonewall Jackson.

In Gibbon's brigade, some changes were made in the field officers of some of the

regiments. After weeding out some officers that were unfit for command or transferred, the brigade finally had generally good quality officers to lead them at the regimental level as well as the brigade level. In Second Wisconsin, Colonel Edgar O'Connor, a West Pointer, commanded the regiment with Lieutenant Colonel Lucius Fairchild as second in command. Gibbon had a very high opinion of both of these men and it was his opinion that they were what made the Second such an outstanding regiment.<sup>18</sup> The Sixth Wisconsin had some outstanding leadership as well. Colonel Lysander Cutler, Lt. Colonel Edward Bragg, and Major Rufus Dawes constituted the Sixth's field officers. (Both Cutler and Bragg would eventually command the brigade.) Although none of them had been to West Point they would prove their caliber as leaders in the upcoming battles. The leadership in the Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana, while not as highly regarded as that of the Second and Sixth<sup>19</sup>, was also quite capable. The Seventh was commanded by Colonel William Robinson, while the Nineteenth was commanded by Colonel Solomon Meredith, who received his commission due to his political connections, who did not get along well with General Gibbon and tried to use his political influence to both remove his regiment from Gibbon's brigade and to get appointed a brigadier general. (He would later succeed in the later.) Although there was friction between Gibbon and Meredith, Meredith proved himself a capable leader, even if he was a political appointee. With capable officers and good, strict training, "Gibbon's Black Hats", the new nickname of the brigade, were shaping up into a fine body of men. The question was, how would these well trained and well led men act in combat? The brigade would soon find out.

In late Spring of 1862, McClellan's Peninsula campaign started to fall apart after a new southern general, Robert E. Lee, took command of the Confederates. With McClellan's forces still disembarking from the Peninsula, the scattered Union forces in northern Virginia, which Gibbon's brigade was part of, faced a severe threat. Not only were they threatened by Stonewall Jackson's forces, but now Lee's army

was moving up to join forces with Jackson. Quickly, the scattered commands were gathered together and placed under command of General John Pope. As elements of the Army of the Potomac arrived back in Washington, they were filtered down into Pope's Army of Virginia. In a daring move, General Jackson moved his army in between Pope and Washington, in the area near where the battle of First Bull Run had been fought a little over year ago. As Pope's army concentrated to meet this threat, King's division, to which Gibbon's Brigade belonged, marched along the Warrenton Turnpike towards Centerville on August 28. Hatch's brigade was the first brigade in line<sup>20</sup>, Gibbon's second, and Doubleday's and Patrick's brigades behind Gibbon. Hatch's brigade was a fair ways ahead of Gibbon's. As dusk was setting in, Gibbon's four regiments along with the brigade's artillery, Battery B, Fourth U. S. Artillery, (Gibbon's old command), marched past the farm of John Brawner. Unbeknownst to the Westerners, Jackson's forces were very close and he was planing to attack this lone brigade marching across his front. As the brigade passed a rectangular wood, Gibbon looked to the north and saw a Confederate artillery battery unlimbering and preparing to fire on his men. The Confederate battery fired several rounds at Gibbon's surprised brigade before Gibbon, suspecting that the battery was alone and unsupported,<sup>21</sup> ordered Battery B up to neutralize that battery's fire. He also sent the Second Wisconsin, his only veteran regiment, forward, believing he might be able to capture the enemy battery. As the Second moved forward and came to the crest of the low ridge on which the was situated, they were fired upon by the regiments Jackson had sent forward to attack. It was then, Gibbon realized his men were in for a serious engagement.

The Battle of Brawner's Farm, also known as Gainsville or Groveton in some history texts, pitted Gibbon's one brigade against elements of two Confederate divisions.<sup>22</sup> As the Second Wisconsin became engaged, Gibbon ordered the Nineteenth Indiana to move into line on the left of the Second, and the Seventh Wisconsin on the right of the Second. The Sixth Wisconsin was ordered to right of the Seventh with a

sizable gap in between the two regiments. Realizing his brigade was seriously outnumbered, Gibbon sent urgent requests for reinforcements. The only reinforcements he received were two regiments from Doubleday's brigade which moved into line between the Seventh and Sixth Wisconsin. The fighting was fierce. Rufus Dawes, of the Sixth Wisconsin, said of the battle; "the two crowds, they could hardly be called lines, were within, it seemed to me, fifty yards of each other and they were pouring musketry into each other as rapidly as men could load and shoot."<sup>23</sup> The Confederate brigades of Taliaferro, Baylor, Lawton, and Trimble, as well as some other brigades in support, pressed Gibbon's men for over an hour. The Westerners held their ground, even though they were taking appalling casualties. The more severe fighting was on the Union left flank, near the farm buildings. Seeing the other regiments of the brigade under harsher fire than his own, Dawes remarked "How long our men withstood this last attack, I cannot estimate, but in the history of war, it is doubtful whether there was ever more stubborn courage than was displayed by the Second and Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana regiments, on this field of battle."<sup>24</sup> Colonel O'Connor, of the Second Wisconsin, was killed, and Colonel Meredith's horse was shot out from under him injuring him as it fell. On the right, Dawes was receiving his orders from Colonel Cutler when Cutler was wounded. Remaining calm, he said to Major Dawes, "Tell Colonel Bragg to take command, I am shot."<sup>25</sup> No matter how many casualties they took, the brigade still held its ground. Even Jackson remarked after the battle that, the federals "maintained their ground with obstinate determination."<sup>26</sup> Finally with nightfall and exhausted men, the Confederates halted their attack and assumed their prior position. Gibbon then moved his brigade off the field, and in a conference at King's headquarters it was decided that they would continue with their original orders to march towards Centerville, but they would do it via Manassas Junction, to the south.

Gibbon's brigade had fought their first engagement and showed what they were made of. "Outnumbered, they had fought to a standstill the best men in the Army of Northern

Virginia."<sup>27</sup> Bragg would write after the war that "... there it was that Jackson's stubborn fighters learned that iron was just as enduring and immovable as stone."<sup>28</sup> (A reference to the Confederate's "Stonewall Brigade", which faced the Iron Brigade at Brawner's Farm.) The men of the brigade who hadn't seen combat before were eager for their first fight, but after Brawner's Farm, Dawes would write that "in our future history we will always be found ready but never again anxious."<sup>29</sup> The brigade had proved itself, but had suffered heavy casualties. Almost one third of the brigade was lost at Brawner Farm, losing a total of 751 men.<sup>30</sup> Even though the brigade had behaved with great gallantry, they received little recognition for it<sup>31</sup> and the small battle they fought was overshadowed by the battle of Second Bull Run, which was to be fought in the days immediately following Brawner's Farm. The question still stands; how was this brigade of mostly green, untried regiments able to hold their ground with steady determination in the face of vastly superior numbers? It seems unlikely that only excellent leadership and discipline held them to the line. Before the brigade had seen action, the Second Wisconsin men tended to view themselves in higher regard than their brigade members since they were veterans already. This constant boasting by the Second may have forced them to live up to this boast and keep from being disgraced at Brawner's Farm. This boasting may have also compelled the other regiments to try and perform as well or better than the Second Wisconsin.<sup>32</sup> This was the start of their growing reputation. Not only were they one of the best drilled brigades, they were now one of the best fighting brigades.

During the battle of Second Bull Run, Gibbon's brigade saw relatively little action until the end. When Longstreet's Confederate corps attacked the Union left flank, the flank collapsed and the Union army began to route. Gibbon's brigade was chosen to be the rear guard of the entire army. While Gibbon's men were holding their line as the rest of the army retreated, General Philip Kearny rode up to Gibbon, disgusted that the army was being routed again on the same battlefield as First Bull Run, and told him to hold his position until General's

Reno's men, which were still fighting, were able to retreat past them. Kearny would be killed in action a week or two later and in one his last letters he wrote of Second Bull Run saying, "the army ran like sheep, all but a General Reno and a General Gibbon."<sup>33</sup> Gibbon's brigade held on until the rest of the army past and then conducted a fighting retreat with his brigade. During the entire battle of Second Bull Run Gibbon's brigade lost another 120 men.<sup>34</sup> They were able to hold off the Confederates long enough for the army to regroup and fall back in an orderly fashion.

Not long after Second Bull Run, Lee decided to invade Maryland. The Union army was reorganized during the same period of time. Pope was removed from command, and McClellan was put in command again. Pope's Army of Virginia was merged into the Army of the Potomac and the corps to which Gibbon's brigade belonged was designated the First Corps and placed under the command of General Joseph Hooker. McClellan moved his army to try and get at Lee's divided forces. In his way, was South Mountain. There were several passes in South Mountain that were defended by Confederates. One of these was Turner's Gap which Gibbon's brigade was heading for. While on the march, Gibbon went to see General McClellan to request a new regiment for his brigade. He explained to McClellan that his brigade was made of western men and requested that the new regiment also be a western regiment. McClellan agreed and promised Gibbon that the first western regiment he received would go to Gibbon's brigade. Returning to his brigade, he told them what General McClellan had said and also that McClellan had told him that if the army was to do a few more days hard marching, they would destroy Lee's army. Urging his men to ridicule stragglers along the line of march, brought more pride to the men and eventually developed into the brigade's tradition of having no stragglers.

On September 14, the battle for South Mountain was on. Gibbon's brigade was detached from the division and moved into position at the base of Turner's Gap where the National Road passed through the gap. There the brigade waited until about five o'clock in the

afternoon<sup>35</sup>, when it was ordered to attack the gap up the National Road. The brigade marched up the road, the Nineteenth Indiana on the left of the turnpike, with the Second Wisconsin behind them, in support, and the Seventh Wisconsin on the right of the turnpike, with the Sixth Wisconsin supporting them.<sup>36</sup> As they marched forward, a section of Battery B was placed on the road, to support the advance. They were attacking up a mountain side against Colquitt's brigade of D. H. Hill's division. They advanced steadily, driving back Colquitt's pickets. Soon the Seventh Wisconsin came up against a stone wall, behind which the Confederates took shelter and poured deadly fire onto the Seventh. The Confederates behind the wall started moving around the Seventh's right flank and poured flanking fire into them. Captain John B. Callis, commanding the Seventh, since the three field officers of the Seventh had been wounded at Brawner's Farm, quickly sent word the Colonel Bragg, of the Sixth, asking for support. Bragg quickly wheeled his regiment to the right. Dawes, commanding the right wing of the Sixth, was ordered by Bragg to have his men to fire a volley into the woods where the flanking fire had been coming from. As soon as they had fired this volley, Dawes heard Bragg order, "Have your men lie down on the ground, I am going over you."<sup>37</sup> Dawes gave the order and right wing lay down as the left wing, commanded by Bragg, which had moved into position behind the right wing while the volley had been fired, charged over their prone comrades and fired another volley into the woods. The right wing then repeated this maneuver and did this several times, attacking the woods and driving off the Confederates that were there. Meanwhile, on the left of the road, the Nineteenth Indiana swept forward running into slight opposition. As they moved up parallel to the Seventh Wisconsin which was still bogged down by the Confederates behind the stone wall. The Second Wisconsin then came up and formed a line parallel to the turnpike and charged into the flank the Confederates behind the stone wall. This forced them to fall back. The Sixth Wisconsin, moving up, found a position to inflict severe fire on the main body of

Confederates. As dark came the fighting ceased, and the Confederates withdrew. Late in the night, the brigade was relieved by fresh troops, except the Sixth Wisconsin which stayed on the field all night, in their advanced position.

Bragg's report rings with sarcasm saying, "Soon after daylight my regiment was relieved by the Second New York from Gorman's brigade, who had been lying in the field, under cover of a stone wall, at a safe distance in the rear, refreshing themselves with a good night's sleep, after a long and fatiguing march of some 10 miles."<sup>38</sup>

Watching the battle from his headquarters, was General McClellan and General Hooker. They were both very impressed with the brigades performance in the battle. After the war, McClellan related his verbal exchange with General Hooker that reportedly gave the Iron Brigade its nickname.

McClellan: "What troops are those fighting on the Pike?"

Hooker: "General Gibbon's Brigade of Western men."

McClellan: "They must be made of iron."

Hooker: "By the Eternal, they are iron! If you had seen them at Bull Run as I did, you would know them to be iron."

McClellan: "Why, General Hooker, they fight equal to the best troops in the world."<sup>39</sup>

Gibbons Black Hats had new nickname that would come into popular use just after the battle of Antietam, only three days away. After South Mountain, McClellan wrote to the governor of Wisconsin saying:

I beg to add my great admiration of the conduct of the three Wisconsin regiment in General Gibbon's brigade. I have seen them under fire acting in a manner that reflects the greatest possible credit and honor upon themselves and their state. They are equal to the best troops in any army in the world.<sup>40</sup>

At Brawner's Farm, the brigade had proved itself in battle, but was unnoticed; at South Mountain, the brigade had shown its worth under the eye of the commanding general and had received the nickname that would follow them ever after.

The Iron Brigade had performed exceedingly well at South Mountain. Gibbon would write that "the conduct of the officers and men was during the engagement everything that could be desired, and they maintained their well-earned reputation for gallantry and discipline . . ."<sup>41</sup> The brigade was building a reputation that they would have to live up to, but it was also a costly one. The brigade lost 318 men at South Mountain, heavy casualties.<sup>42</sup> The brigade had shown itself admirably so far in this trial by fire, but Antietam was only three days away.

After the Union gained possession of the passes through South Mountain, they marched towards Sharpsburg, where Lee was trying to concentrate his forces. McClellan decided to attack on the morning of September 17. Hooker's First Corps would open the assault, attacking from north, through the Miller farm which had a cornfield just to the south of it. The Iron Brigade was to be in the first wave of the assault. They would be going up against some of the same men they fought at Brawner's Farm. Early in the morning, the brigade marched down the Hagerstown turnpike, the Seventh Wisconsin and the Nineteenth Indiana on the right of the turnpike, and the Second Wisconsin on the left, with the Sixth Wisconsin in two groups on both sides of the turnpike.<sup>43</sup> Battery B moved in behind them in support. The bloodiest day in American history had begun.

As the regiments advanced, the Second Wisconsin and part of the Sixth, commanded by Major Dawes, moved through the cornfield. As they were moving through the corn, the other regiments of the brigade and the rest of the Sixth Wisconsin, under Colonel Bragg, moved forward and encountered the enemy in the woods. After some hard fighting the Confederates fell back, and Colonel Bragg fell wounded. While the Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana were clearing out the West Woods, the Sixth and Second Wisconsin appeared at the edge of the cornfield, where they received heavy fire from the Confederates. Nevertheless, the Sixth and Second Wisconsin pushed forward towards the Dunker church at the end of the clearing. The Confederates soon counter attacked however, and after a brief attempt to hold their position,

the Sixth and Second were forced to withdraw through the corn. Bragg wrote of this that "the enemy broke and ran before their advance, leaving his dead and wounded in large numbers on the field, and the regiment pursued, and only retired again in the presence of a host that would have been madness to have opposed with a handful of men, brave though they were and fearless."<sup>44</sup> As they withdrew, the Confederates pressed their advantage and tried to take Battery B. The men of the Second and Sixth attempted to defend the battery. Gibbon himself was sighting some of the cannons of the battery, pouring double canister into the attacking Confederates. Just when it looked as if the battery might be lost, Lt. Colonel Bachman, commanding the Nineteenth Indiana in the absence of Colonel Meredith, led the Nineteenth Indiana in charge onto the flank of the attacking Confederates. This brave charge forced the enemy back, but the Nineteenth lost heavily; Bachman and many others were killed in the charge. The battery was saved and shortly after this, the Iron Brigade was relieved by another, and sent to the rear to reform. Later in the battle, many of the Union regiments were routed and the Iron Brigade attempted to stop the route. Captain John Kellogg, of the Sixth Wisconsin, rallied some of the stragglers behind a stone wall. Then General Doubleday, commanding the division, rode up and asked Kellogg "What regiment is this?" "A regiment of stragglers" Kellogg replied. "What regiment do you belong to?" "The Sixth Wisconsin, sir." "Are these Wisconsin men?" Then Kellogg replied, "No sir, Wisconsin men never run."<sup>45</sup> The men of the Iron Brigade had again performed exceedingly well in battle.

In just three weeks, the Iron Brigade had fought in four engagements, earned a reputation as one of the best brigades in the Union army, and suffered near catastrophic casualties. The brigade lost another 348 men at Antietam.<sup>46</sup> Gibbon would say of this that "the loss of the brigade is again evidence of its well-earned honors."<sup>47</sup> Between Brawner's Farm and Antietam, the brigade had lost 1,592 casualties,<sup>48</sup> far more than fifty percent casualties. They had fought valiantly and both earned and upheld their reputation. It has been written that "... if

South Mountain had given them a reputation, Antietam reinforced it."<sup>49</sup>

After Lee retreated from the battlefield at Antietam, the Union army stayed around Sharpsburg, regrouping and reorganizing itself. McClellan was removed from command and Ambrose Burnside was put in charge. Hooker was promoted to command one of Burnside's grand divisions and General Reynolds was placed in command of the First Corps. While this was going on, the Twenty-fourth Michigan regiment arrived at the army and was assigned to the Iron Brigade. While Colonel Henry Morrow of the Twenty-fourth brought his regiment before the veterans of the Iron Brigade, and extolled their qualities, the Wisconsin and Indiana men were silent and did not enthusiastically welcome the new members. As one member of the Twenty-fourth later put it, they "had a right to know before accepting our full fellowship if we, too, had the mettle to sustain the honor of the brigade."<sup>50</sup> The men of the Twenty-fourth, although not pleased with the cool reception they received from the other regiments, were excited to be part of "a fighting brigade, a fighting division and a fighting corps, all commanded by fighting generals."<sup>51</sup> Although they didn't show it openly, many of the officers and men of the Wisconsin and Indiana regiments thought fairly highly of their new Michigan companions. Gibbon wrote of it that "from its bearing I have no doubt it will not be long before it will be a worthy member of the 'Black Hats.'"<sup>52</sup> Gibbon would not be with the brigade long enough to see this, though. Soon after the Twenty-fourth joined the brigade, Gibbon was offered a divisional command and took it, but not without regrets. Gibbon had created the Iron Brigade, and the men who served in it would always think of it as Gibbon's brigade.

Even more distressing to Gibbon than leaving his precious brigade, was the new commander. Solomon Meredith finally received his promotion to brigadier general and received command of the Iron Brigade. Although the way in which got the promotion and Gibbon's dislike of him paint Meredith in a bad light, it is worth noting that "whatever Meredith's faults, Gibbon alone left a record unfavorable to



him.<sup>53</sup> In fact, "the soldiers' letters and diaries are warmly admiring of Meredith."<sup>54</sup> Along with a new commander of the brigade, some old faces came back as well. Colonels Robinson and Cutler had recovered from their wounds enough to retake the field. The army then proceeded to march south towards Fredricksburg and another looming battle with Lee's army.

On December 12, the First Corps crossed on pontoon bridges over the Rappahannock, south of Fredricksburg, and took up position across from Stonewall Jackson's Confederate corps. The battle opened the next morning. While several Union corps assaulted the Confederates atop the heights just outside of Fredricksburg, down where the First and Sixth Corps were, Meade's and Gibbon's divisions assaulted Jackson's lines. The Iron Brigade, in Doubleday's division, saw relatively little action, compared to their previous battles. At one point in the battle, however the brigade was ordered to advance on some woods where some enemy fire had been coming from. The Twenty-fourth Michigan and the Seventh Wisconsin led the advance on the woods. Taking some fairly heavy fire from the woods, the Twenty-fourth kept advancing. As the regiment faltered slightly, Colonel Morrow told his men, "Steady, men, those Wisconsin men are watching you."<sup>55</sup> and the men kept steadily advancing. They cleared the rebels out of the woods and won recognition from the rest of their brigade.

Meredith praised the efforts of the Twenty-fourth in his report saying, "the Twenty-fourth Michigan, commanded by Col. Henry A. Morrow, is a new regiment, having never been under fire before. They showed themselves to be worthy of the praise they have received, and of association with the old Iron Brigade."<sup>56</sup> Meredith was not alone in his assertion that the Twenty-fourth had lived up to the Iron Brigade's reputation. Dawes wrote that "No soldiers ever faced fire more bravely, and they showed themselves of a fibre worthy to be woven into the woof of the 'Iron Brigade.'"<sup>57</sup> The chaplain of the Twenty-fourth wrote that "the Twenty-fourth won its spurs in the late battle and has a right to wear the Black Hats of the 'Iron Brigade.' the only entire brigade that wears them, and the old regiments say that they can

now swear by the Twenty-fourth."<sup>58</sup> The distinctive hats of the Iron Brigade had become a badge of honor to be earned, and the Twenty-fourth Michigan earned theirs at Fredricksburg, although they would not receive the hats until shortly before Gettysburg.

After the Union defeat at Fredricksburg, the Union army re-crossed the Rappahannock and the two armies spent the winter across the river from each other. Burnside was relieved of his command and General Hooker was placed in command of the army. In the spring of 1863, Hooker devised a plan to swing around the Confederate army and attack Lee from the rear. To do this, he would need several diversions in order to keep Lee's army in its present position. The Iron Brigade would launch one of these diversionary assaults at Fitzhugh's Crossing. On April 29, the Twenty-fourth Michigan and the Sixth Wisconsin charged down the bank of the Rappahannock, boarded pontoon boats, and crossed the river under heavy Confederate fire. Meanwhile, the other regiments of the brigade supported the crossing from the river bank and then crossed themselves. The Twenty-fourth Michigan and the Sixth Wisconsin quickly cleared out the Confederate defenses and occupied them. It was a daring operation that probably should have caused many casualties, but the Iron Brigade received relatively few casualties for such an attempt.

Not too long after this engagement, the battle of Chancellorsville began, but the First Corps arrived too late to participate and prevent the Union defeat. At Fitzhugh's Crossing, the Iron Brigade "had done what was asked of them and more, and the defeat the army suffered seemed in no way to be attached to them."<sup>59</sup> Although the Union army had suffered severe defeats at both Fredricksburg and Chancellorsville, the Iron Brigade in its part in both these battles was not defeated. As the Union army regrouped after this defeat, Lee and his army marched north to invade Pennsylvania. Hooker's army turned to pursuit with the First Corps in the lead. Hooker would be replaced before the next engagement by General George Meade, but this mattered little to the Iron Brigade as they marched towards the small town of Gettysburg on June 30 and a meeting with destiny.

On July 1, Wadsworth's division, to which the Iron Brigade belonged, was the first infantry division to arrive on the field. His division consisted of two brigades: the Iron Brigade and Cutler's brigade. (Lysander Cutler had been promoted earlier and received a brigade command.) As Wadsworth's division relieved the tired cavalrymen, Cutler's brigade moved to either side of the Chambersburg pike and the Iron Brigade moved forward into McPherson's Woods, to the left of Cutler's brigade.<sup>60</sup> The Sixth Wisconsin, under command of Lt. Colonel Rufus Dawes (Bragg was not at the battle), was initially held in reserve. The rest of the Iron Brigade charged forward into Archer's brigade of Confederates, smashing the Confederate assault and capturing many of Archer's men, including General Archer himself. As General Reynolds was ordering them into position, he was shot dead from his horse. After they had broken the Confederate assault, the brigade reformed in the woods and prepared to repel future assaults. Meanwhile, Cutler's regiments on the right of the pike were being routed. Dawes took the Sixth Wisconsin over towards a railroad cut which was cut through McPherson's ridge, where Confederates from Davis' brigade were advancing. Dawes, seeing the situation, ran over to the major commanding the Ninety-fifth New York and told him, "We must charge."<sup>61</sup>

Together, the two regiments charged the railroad cut, losing many men but forcing the surrender of an entire Confederate regiment, the Second Mississippi. The battle continued to rage on and both armies received reinforcements, but the Confederates received more. Soon the Iron Brigade regiments began to be pressed. Meredith's horse was shot out from under him and landed on him, severely wounding him. The Nineteenth Indiana, which held the extreme left of the Iron Brigade's line soon began to buckle under heavy pressure from the front and flank. Colonel Morrow said that the Nineteenth Indiana "fought most gallantly, but was overpowered by superior numbers..."<sup>62</sup> As the Nineteenth Indiana was forced to fall back, the Twenty-fourth Michigan was exposed to some severe flanking fire and compelled to fall back to a second line of defense. As the Confederates superior numbers pressed the

Union brigades backwards, the Iron Brigade fought a fighting retreat, constantly making stands even in the face of overwhelming numbers. At one point in the battle, the Seventh Wisconsin was surrounded by Confederates on three sides before they were compelled to retreat. Over by the railroad cut, the Sixth Wisconsin was forced steadily back as well. They ordered to defend Battery B, which was stationed astride the railroad cut on Seminary Ridge. As the men of the Sixth defended the battery, Dawes noticed that Eleventh Corps in the fields to the north of Gettysburg had been completely routed and that his command was in danger of being taken from the rear by the Confederates. The Sixth fell back through the town fighting as they retreated, trying to make their way to the Union rallying point on Cemetery Hill. They finally made it and joined up with the rest of the shattered Iron Brigade, which had fought bravely as they retreated, even though many other Union regiments had been completely routed.

The brigade saw little action in the next two days of the battle. The brigade was less than a shadow of its former strength. Out of the 1,883 men that were in the brigade on the morning of July 1, only 671 men were left at the end of the battle.<sup>63</sup> The Twenty-fourth Michigan had more men killed than any other Union regiment at Gettysburg.<sup>64</sup> They also lost nine color bearers on the first day.<sup>65</sup> The Iron Brigade had been decimated, but they had held their ground long enough to enable the Union to defend Cemetery Hill. After the battle, General Wadsworth told Colonel Morrow "Colonel Morrow, the only fault I find with you is that you fought too long, but God only knows what would have become of the Army of the Potomac if you had not held the ground as long as you did."<sup>66</sup> Gettysburg was the crowning achievement of the Iron Brigade, but it was also the beginning of the end of the brigade.

Gettysburg was the last stand of the "Iron Brigade of the West."<sup>67</sup> After Gettysburg, new regiments were added to the brigade, and some of them weren't western regiments. First the 167th Pennsylvania was attached to the brigade for a short while. These men were draftees and at one point refused to march, and the rest of

the brigade was almost forced to shoot them before they kept marching. The Seventy-Sixth New York served with the Iron Brigade for a few weeks in 1864 and were then moved elsewhere. Finally a battalion of the First New York Sharpshooters and the Seventh Indiana joined the brigade permanently. None of these regiments which joined the Iron Brigade after Gettysburg wore the black hats. Before the Union army started on the Wilderness campaign in 1864, the First Corps was merged into the Fifth Corps. This was a source of irritation for many of the men of the Iron Brigade because being in the First Corps was a great source of pride to them, especially being the First Brigade, First Division, First Corps, (which they had been since Chancellorsville). These effects started demoralizing the old Iron Brigade.

At the Wilderness, the Iron Brigade was led into battle by General Cutler, and later by Colonel Bragg after Cutler assumed command of the division when Wadsworth was killed. They still managed to fight bravely at the Wilderness and in the rest of Grant's campaign. The biggest blow to the morale of the Iron Brigade was the removal of the Second Wisconsin after the Wilderness. Later on, the Nineteenth Indiana would be merged with the Twentieth Indiana, losing their name and being moved out of the brigade. In spite of these demoralizing maneuvers, many men of the Second Wisconsin, Sixth Wisconsin, Seventh Wisconsin, and Nineteenth Indiana re-enlisted in the army when their terms of service ran out. Dawes wrote of the Sixth Wisconsin,

Our detached men who have been cooks for officers, hostlers, clerks, and teamsters, . . . nearly all decline to re-enlist, but the men who have stood by the old flag through fair and foul weather, and through many bloody battles, almost to a man dedicate their lives and service anew to their country.<sup>68</sup>

The Iron Brigade although altered in its composition continued to fight bravely until the

end of the war.

During the war, the Iron Brigade suffered the heaviest losses, in proportion to their numbers, of any Union brigade in the war.<sup>69</sup> Lance Herdegen points out that the brigade had to uphold its name on the battlefield and as a result of this, ended up fighting themselves to death.<sup>70</sup> Through the comments of many of the men and historians, it can be clearly seen that their pride in their reputation as the best troops in the Union army often influenced the brigade to stand up and fight against fierce odds. It is doubtful that the Twenty-fourth Michigan would have performed so well in battle as quickly as they did had they not felt the pressure to live up to the reputation the brigade had already carved for itself. Jean P. Ebling emphasizes this spirit when she remarks:

The staunch spirit of the Iron Brigade was an outgrowth of the success they experienced on their own part of the line in every one of the seven battles in which they had fought. The army as a whole might retreat or fail to capitalize on victory, but the Brigade had always given as good or better than it had taken.<sup>71</sup>

Reputation and pride can be powerful motivators. The Iron Brigade had these as well as uniqueness, excellent leadership, and excellent training.

Due to their feats on the battlefield, the Iron Brigade will always be revered for their bravery. The pride the men felt at being members of the Iron Brigade was incredibly tangible. John Gibbon was always extremely fond of his little brigade, even after he ceased to command it. When invited to a reunion of soldiers from Wisconsin, Gibbon replied "I was never a Wisconsin soldier . . . but at the judgment day I want to be with Wisconsin soldiers."<sup>72</sup> This remark of his would probably hold true for any of the regiments of the Iron Brigade. The Iron Brigade earned for itself a reputation of valor.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, as quoted in Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (Ann Arbor: Historical Society of Michigan, 1983), 219.

<sup>2</sup> Champ Clark and the editors of Time-Life Books, *Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide, The Civil War* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1985), 48.

<sup>3</sup> O. B. Curtis, *History of the Twenty-fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade* (Detroit: Winn and Hammond, 1891), 166.

<sup>4</sup> T. Henry Williams, as quoted in Alan T. Nolan, "Iron Brigade General: John Gibbon", in "Rally Once Again": *Selected Civil War Writings of Alan T. Nolan*, Alan T. Nolan (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Publishing, 2000), 57.

<sup>5</sup> Some historians have claimed that the Iron Brigade was routed in the battle of the Wilderness, in May 1864, but there is some evidence against this. For more information about this and the Iron Brigade in the Wilderness, see Sharon Eggeleston Vipond, "A New Kind of Murder": The Iron Brigade in the Wilderness", in *Giants in Their Tall Black Hats: Essays on the Iron Brigade*, eds. Alan T. Nolan and Sharon Eggeleston Vipond (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> While most historians do inherently claim that the Iron Brigade fought well because westerners fought better than easterners, they do recognize that the Brigade's westernness was a great source of pride to the men who served in the brigade.

<sup>7</sup> Jean P. Ebling, "The Fighting Spirit of the Iron Brigade: A Study of Morale in a Civil War Volunteer Unit" (M. A. thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1963), 83.

<sup>8</sup> Alan T. Nolan, "Virginia's Unwelcome Visitors", in "Rally Once Again", Nolan, 190.

<sup>9</sup> William DeLoss Love, *Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion: A History of All Regiments and Batteries the State has Sent to the Field* (Chicago: Church and Goodman, 1866), 228.

<sup>10</sup> Report of Col. William T. Sherman, 25 July 1861, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, vol. 2 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1971), 369.

<sup>11</sup> Ebling, 51.

<sup>12</sup> John Gibbon, *Personal Recollections of the Civil War* (Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1978), 27.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>14</sup> Ebling, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Gibbon, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Ebling, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Lance J. Herdegen, *The Men Who Stood Like Iron: How the Iron Brigade Won its Name* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 72.

<sup>18</sup> Ebling, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Ebling believes that the leadership in the Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana was not as good as that in the Second and Sixth Wisconsin, because the Second and Sixth outperformed them on the parade ground. Ebling, 31.

<sup>20</sup> General Pope's report on the battle indicates that Gibbon's brigade was first in line, but this was not so. See *Reports of Maj. General John Pope*, 27 January 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 37, and *Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon*, 4 December 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 380-382.

<sup>21</sup> *Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon*, 3 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 378.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix B for a map of the battle.

<sup>23</sup> Rufus R. Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1962), 62.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Report of Lieut. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, 27 April 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 645.

<sup>27</sup> Ebling, 59-60.

<sup>28</sup> Steven J. Wright, "John Gibbon and the Black Hat Brigade", in *Giants in Their Tall Black Hats*, 66.

<sup>29</sup> Dawes, 70.

<sup>30</sup> *Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon*, 3 September 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 378.

<sup>31</sup> Many histories of the Second Bull Run Campaign mention the battle of Brawner's Farm as occurring between King's division and Jackson's corps, ignoring the fact that the battle was fought only by Gibbon's brigade and two of Doubleday's regiments. Even Pope's report, elsewhere referred to, seems to indicate that all of King's division was engaged when that was not the case. Gibbon said, in his response to Pope's report that "... my single brigade was left almost alone to sustain itself against a division of the enemy, and that the division as such was not engaged at all; that in place of being 'supported handsomely by Doubleday's brigade,' but two regiments of that brigade came to our assistance." (*Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon*, 4 December 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 380.) Some histories that perpetuate the fallacy that King's division was engaged are Francis F. Wilshin, *Manassas National Battlefield Park, Virginia*, National Park Service Historical Handbook Series, no. 15 (Washington, 1933), and Edward J. Stackpole, *From Cedar Mountain to Antietam: August-September, 1862* (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Co., 1959), 160.

<sup>32</sup> Nolan, "Virginia's Unwelcome Visitors", 186. Nolan puts forth this explanation of why the brigade may have fought as well as they did for their first engagement. He makes a fairly compelling argument for this.

<sup>33</sup> Philip Kearny, as quoted in Gibbon, 66.

<sup>34</sup> *Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon*, 3 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 12, 379.

<sup>35</sup> Report of Col. Solomon Meredith, 20 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 249. Meredith gives an estimate on the exact time the brigade was ordered forward.

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix C for a map of the battle.

<sup>37</sup> Dawes, 82.

<sup>38</sup> Reports of Lieut. Col. Edward S. Bragg, 20 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 254.

<sup>39</sup> This conversation is related in: Herdegen, *The Men Stood Like Iron*, 146.

<sup>40</sup> George B. McClellan, as quoted in Dawes, 85.

<sup>41</sup> Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, 20 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 248.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix D for a map of the battle.

<sup>44</sup> Reports of Lieut. Col. Edward S. Bragg, 21 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 255.

<sup>45</sup> This story is reported in: Herdegen, *The Men Stood like Iron*, 183.

<sup>46</sup> Return of Casualties in the Union forces at the battle of Antietam, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 189.

<sup>47</sup> Reports of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, 20 September 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 19, 249.

<sup>48</sup> Dawes, 53.

<sup>49</sup> Dennis S. Lavery and Mark H. Jordan, *Iron Brigade General: John Gibbon, A Rebel in Blue* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1993), 66.

<sup>50</sup> Curtis, 65.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>52</sup> Gibbon, 92.

<sup>53</sup> Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (Ann Arbor: Historical Society of Michigan, 1983), 173.

<sup>54</sup> Nolan, "Virginia's Unwelcome Visitors", 189.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>56</sup> Report of Brig. Gen. Solomon Meredith, 22 December 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 21, 476.

<sup>57</sup> Dawes, 112.

<sup>58</sup> William C. Way, as quoted in Curtis, 102.

<sup>59</sup> Marc Storch and Beth Storch, "Like So Many Devils": The Iron Brigade at Fitzhugh's Crossing", in *Ghosts in Their Tall Black Hats*, 100.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix E for a map of the battle.

<sup>61</sup> Dawes, 167.

<sup>62</sup> Report of Col. Henry A. Morrow, 22 February 1864, in *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 27, 268.

<sup>63</sup> William Wade Dudley, *The Iron Brigade at Gettysburg* (Cincinnati, 1879), 15.

<sup>64</sup> William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865* (Albany: Albany Publishing Co., 1898), 17.

<sup>65</sup> Curtis, 166.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>67</sup> Many historians of the Iron Brigade, including Alan T. Nolan and John Selby, consider Gettysburg the last battle of the Iron Brigade. Although the regiments continued on, the brigades composition changed and it was never the same.

<sup>68</sup> Dawes, 235.

<sup>69</sup> Fox, 117.

<sup>70</sup> Herdegen, *The Men Stood like Iron*, 198.

<sup>71</sup> Ebling, 70.

<sup>72</sup> John Gibbon, as quoted in Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, 167.

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## July 1967 Detroit Riots: A Culmination of Economic Frustration

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In the aftermath of the Detroit riots of 1967, thirty-nine were reported dead and more than one thousand injured. In the week following the riot, which started on 23 July, over 1,317 fires raged through the city, most out of control. The damage estimate totaled more than \$250 million, including the looting of 1,700 stores. Two thousand police officers on duty, with 6,800 National Guardsmen and 3,800 US Army troops assisting, made 3,400 arrests.<sup>1</sup> What motivated the rioters? Would a "race riot" be the correct label for the violence? Urban and sociological studies tend to place great emphasis on race as a motivating factor for the rioters.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, a plethora of historical evidence shows a greater emphasis on the economic factors that played a role in the riots. The Detroit riots were fueled by economic differences between not only black and white Detroiters, but by the economic gains some black Detroiters had made supposedly at the expense of poor blacks.

In the week following the riot, a Detroit Free Press article presented a survey of the responses of black Detroiters when asked: How much did each of these grievances have to do with the riot? Although police brutality received the highest ranking, lack of jobs, poverty, and anger with local business people were listed as a few of the top six grievances having a great deal to do with the riot. White public officials and hatred of whites did have a great deal to do with the riots according to approximately one third of the 437 blacks sampled, but too much drinking ranked higher than those factors respectively.<sup>3</sup> Racism may have been an intrinsic part of the economic factors, but further analysis shows that much of the looting and arson itself was colorblind.

Van Gordon Sauter and Burligh Hines,

journalists who covered civil rights activity in the north and south, note that during the first day of looting certain shops were spared—those marked with signs saying "Soul Brother" or "Black All The Way!" But by the end of day "looters ceased to practice discrimination and stole without regard to the owner's color or creed."<sup>4</sup> Black homeowners banded together. With hunting rifles and shotguns they defended their homes from gangs of youngsters breaking in and protected firefighters. "The looters were enraged by the armed Negroes. 'We're going to get you rich niggers next,' a looter screamed at a Negro psychiatrist."<sup>5</sup> Arsonists did not seem to care if their molotov-cocktails burned stores and spread to well maintained black homes. Twenty-two black firefighters were called to Twelfth Street, the origin the riots, but reported being pelted with bottles and bricks.<sup>6</sup>

Who were the rioters? The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reported in 1968 that the typical rioter in the summer of 1967 was a black male aged 15-24, had not graduated from high school, and was frustrated because of lack of training for anything but menial, low-status job. In an attempt to explain further reasoning behind their violence, the commission reported the rioter held hostility toward whites, but equal hostility toward middle-class blacks.<sup>7</sup>

Living only a few blocks from the epicenter of the riots at the time, lifelong Detroitier Peter Buchanan recalls that the riot was not a race riot in his mind, but "was a riot of haves and have-nots."<sup>8</sup> Rioters made known their hatred of the grocery store by ransacking its shelves, then burning it. According to the Detroit Free Press, forty-seven grocery stores were burned. Furniture was strapped on top of cars and taken home because according to one rioter, they had

been charged outrageous prices for the overpriced junk.<sup>9</sup>

Breaking in and entering, looting, and arson collectively expressed the outrage rioters felt for their economic condition. Most economic factors such as hiring for jobs or renting apartments in slums were related to racism and discrimination the young black men faced. But during the actual rioting, economics played a greater role than racism, resulting in the destruction of property, belonging to both blacks

and whites. Sauter and Hines called much of the looting and freedom to take things unattainable, "a source of sheer spiritual ecstasy, sometimes coupled with revenge."<sup>10</sup> Whether a riot over economics or race, one distraught Vietnam soldier felt it did not make sense, considering blacks and whites were fighting side by side half a world away.<sup>11</sup> A riot full of animosities toward the haves by the have-nots: economic frustration only begins to explain the unexplainable.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Detroit Riots, Facts on File, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit.

<sup>2</sup> Richard A. Chikota and Michael C. Moran, eds., *Riot in the Cities* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970). The eds. present "An Analytical Symposium on the Causes and Effects" of the riots. Relevant analysis includes *Detroit 1967: Racial Violence or Class Warfare*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Detroit Free Press*, 6 August 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Van Gordon Sauter and Burleigh Hines, *Nightmare in Detroit: a Rebellion and its Victims* (Chicago: Regency, 1968), 13. *Nightmare* describes the lives of the forty-three victims whose lives were taken during the riot. They also chronicle the events and motivation of the rioters starting 27 July.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. The word choice used to describe the black Detroiters obviously dates itself with the use of "Negroes."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, at 2-50 to 2-52. Noted in *Riot in the Cities*.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Buchanan, interviewed by author, 9 January 2001, Detroit.

<sup>9</sup> Sauter, 33.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

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## Fashoda: The Pitfall of Imperial Policy and a Possible War Avoided

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Starting with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1859 and concluding by 1887, Egypt became a semi-autonomous satellite of the rising British Empire in Africa.<sup>1</sup> An immediate result of this imperial British triumph was the violent separation of the Sudan from its former masters in Cairo, by the success of the largely anti-Western reactionary forces of Mahdism.<sup>2</sup> Another relatively immediate result was a feeling of jubilation among those British subjects, home and abroad, that had invested so much effort, money, and personal vision to making a reality of a British Empire in Africa that stretched from the pyramids of Egypt to the farms and mines of the Cape Colony. This joy was contrasted by the disgust of other imperialists who had dreamt of a colonial empire in Africa from west to east and not from north to south. These disgruntled imperialist thinkers were, of course, French.<sup>3</sup>

In 1896, ministers and men of military and political standing in Paris moved to assert French power in Africa and issue forth the destabilization of British control over Egypt by launching a seizure of the former Egyptian outpost on the Sudanese Nile, Fashoda. This action the French government intended to cement through a new alliance with the virulently anti-European Mahdists<sup>4</sup> and the recently triumphant Ethiopian emperor, Menilek II.<sup>5</sup> The expedition from the French Congo to Fashoda that followed, led by Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand, succeeded in taking the Sudanese Nile territory, yet not only gained no serious local support, but almost opened the door to war with Britain.<sup>6</sup>

There are two aspects of the Fashoda Crisis that make it an incredibly fascinating event. The first was the how it illustrated the dangers for Europe inherent in the imperial race. Newspapers in France and Britain rallied for a war between two countries that were increasingly forgetting the pre-1815 history of Anglo-French animosity.<sup>7</sup> Though sober heads prevailed in the wake of Kitchener's victory at Omdurman and the French government ordered Marchand and his force home in November, 1898, for a moment the possibility of a new Anglo-French conflict was a reality.<sup>8</sup>

The other aspect of Fashoda that is amazing to contemplate is how different modern history may have been had France and Britain unleashed the nightmare of technological mass butchery upon each other. Would Germany have entered the conflict against the Third French Republic and thus revived the pre-1815 Anglo-Prussian alliance? How would Italy, Russia, Spain, and the United States have reacted to a Fashoda based conflict?

Historians obviously will never know, yet Fashoda teaches that even those accepted notions of historical study, such as the ever increasing friendship of France and Britain since Germany's unification, were not concrete guarantees of an era, but were events that were fragile and hostage to an unseen future. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 was the simple stroke that turned the Balkans into a powdered keg for world war. Incidents like the Morocco Affairs and the Fashoda Crisis likewise could have functioned as incendiary actions.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, 2nd ed., London: Longman, 1999, 80.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Fashoda: Colonialism and African Resistance*, New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1987, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991, 467.

<sup>5</sup> D. W. Brogan, *The French Nation: From Napoleon To Pétain*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957, 200.

<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain 81.

<sup>7</sup> Darrell Bates, *The Fashoda Incident of 1898: Encounter on the Nile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, 154-155.

<sup>8</sup> Sir Harry H. Johnston, *A History of The Colonization of Africa By Alien Races*, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1966, 227.

## The Most Famous Gunfight

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The most famous gunfight occurred in Tombstone, Arizona where the Earps and the cowboys were fighting for control of the town. The Earps were three brothers who came to Arizona looking for a way to become rich and powerful, they were Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan. They were once lawmen, but wanted to try their hand at some other profession since that profession did not bring them the wealth they all craved. The cowboys were a wild bunch of lawless men who did anything they wanted, and let no one stand up to them.

The Earps did not want to cause trouble with anyone; they only wanted to peacefully start their own businesses. Wyatt and Virgil were power hungry men who would not let some cowboys stand in their way of accomplishing what they wanted. The cowboys controlled the town and everything that went on in it, so they were not about to let some new guys disrupt their control. The cowboys wanted to send the message from the start who was in charge of the town; so they showed the Earps just how powerful they were by ransacking the town and no one did anything to stop them. Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan noticed that the law did nothing to control the cowboys, and that the cowboys owned the lawmen. Wyatt was the leader of the Earp brothers, but did not want to get back into law, so the Earps tried unsuccessfully to start their business without interfering with the cowboys. But the cowboys were not going to let the Earps do what they wanted without paying the cowboys off. The Earps refused to give in to the cowboys and the bitter clash would begin.

Virgil took things into his own hands and became the deputy Marshal of Tombstone, and Morgan served under Virgil as a deputy. Wyatt refused to get back into law and opened his own gambling house. The cowboys knew that they

no longer had complete control and would have to fight to get it back.

Virgil and Morgan would begin their crusade to rid the town of the lawless cowboys, so the citizens of Tombstone could walk down the street without fear of getting shot. This would also give the Earps the opportunity to make their own wealth. Virgil enacted a law that Wyatt invented earlier in his career of no carrying firearms into city limits. Virgil hoped that if no one had weapons, no one would get hurt. This seemed like the best way to gradually force the cowboys out, but the cowboys were not going to give up the town without a fight. The cowboys would see how far they could push the Earps by disobeying the laws and causing trouble. Virgil could always handle the situation with peaceful measures if possible, but on occasion he would have to "buffalo" the cowboy.<sup>1</sup> This tactic that Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan used infuriated the cowboys. On October 26, 1881 Ike Clanton, a member of the cowboys, was drunk and yelling that he was going to kill the Earps, so Wyatt "buffaloed" him and took him to jail, where Virgil locked him up for disorderly conduct. Wyatt was not a lawman, but when the cowboys started to attack his brothers he joined in to defend them.

Five other members of the cowboy gang rode into town, not knowing that Ike had been arrested. Virgil had to let Ike go after he paid his fine, and Ike told the Earps that they picked a fight that they could not win. Ike went down to where the other cowboys were and tried to stir them up to go and kill the Earps, but the McLaury brothers and Ike's brother did not want to start the first today without the consent of the cowboy's leader Johnny Ringo and Curly Bill Brosius. The cowboys had carried their guns with them into city limits. This was in

direct violation of the law; so Virgil deputized Wyatt and John "Doc" Holliday to help Morgan and him peacefully disarm the cowboys.

The Earps only wanted to disarm the cowboys, not have a shoot out, but when Virgil told them to throw up their hands and turn over their guns, Frank and Tom McLaury thumbed their six shooter.<sup>2</sup> With this, the most famous gunfight started. The fight lasted only about thirty seconds, but three men lay dead at the

O.K. Corral. The McLaury brothers and Billy Clanton were shot and killed. Ike had ran off and begged Wyatt not to shoot him. Morgan, Virgil, and Holliday were all shot and injured, but Wyatt came away without a mark on him. This was the most famous gunfight of the west, and with this fight a legend would be born. Wyatt would become a legend for his involvement in the battle. The only one to escape without injury.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> "Buffalo" was the term used by the Earps. It was when they would use their butts of their colts to hit the other person in the head to arrest him.

<sup>2</sup> In the west this was a sign that you are getting ready for a gunfight. They are about to draw their weapons to shoot.

## Walt Disney World: From Florida Swampland to Magic Kingdom

*By Melinda Scott*

*Wittenberg University Class of 2004*

*Hartje Award Finalist*

On Sunday afternoons, after going to church, a father would take his two daughters to the local amusement parks for some family time. While the two girls rode the carousel, their father noticed how bored the other parents seemed, the littered grounds of the park, the poor upkeep of the rides, and the unfriendly nature of the employees. The man longed for a place where he could take his children and they could have fun together. This man was Walt Disney, and it was here, at these dingy, run-down amusement parks, that the idea for Disney's theme parks was born.

Disneyland celebrated its grand opening in Anaheim, California on July 17, 1955. The park had been promoted by Disney as "a new experience in entertainment."<sup>1</sup> He mandated the daily upkeep of the rides, continual cleaning of the grounds, and development of attractions that would entertain the whole family. He also began calling his employees "Cast Members," wanting his guests to feel like they were experiencing a show from the moment they stepped on the property. While the area inside Disneyland's gates had been meticulously planned by Disney and his Imagineers, as his imaginative engineers were known, the area just outside the gates was quickly turned into a "second-rate Las Vegas,"<sup>2</sup> brimming with cheap motels, restaurants, and strip malls. Within just a few years of Disneyland's opening day, Disney began to consider a second park, one where he could have better control over his guests' complete experience.

In the early 1960s, Walt Disney and his team of Imagineers began scouting sites for a new park. It had already been decided that the new park should be located east of the Mississippi River, to tap a different segment of

the population than Disneyland. A site with a pleasant climate was also necessary, to allow the park to remain open throughout the year. Florida was ultimately determined as the ideal location, given its tropical climate. Once this decision was made, many areas of the state were considered. Palm Beach was looked at, but quickly eliminated because of its proximity to the ocean, which would cause high humidity and hurricane risk. The northern portion of the state was also eliminated from consideration because of its cold winters. During a fly-over of the state in 1963, Disney and his staff decided on central Florida as the locale that would best serve their needs, where they would be insulated from the ocean storms while having the tropical climate of the south.

In the early 1960s, central Florida was a land of limitless swamps and forests and the city of Orlando was a sleepy community. These two factors enabled Disney to do what he was unable to do in Anaheim, buy enough land not only to build a second theme park, but also "clusters of hotels and resorts and recreational facilities."<sup>3</sup> Disney began purchasing land in small parcels under various names in early 1964. By the fall of 1965, 27,000 acres, twice the size of the island of Manhattan, had been purchased on the Orange-Osceola County line near Orlando for the price of only \$183 per acre.<sup>4</sup> With this immense amount of land changing hands, the local newspapers began to become suspicious. The *Orlando Sentinel* reported the transactions in May, 1965 and had deduced it was Disney by October of that year.<sup>5</sup> The secret was out; it was time for Disney to inform the world of his plans.

After the story ran, a hastily arranged press conference was called by Governor Haydon

Burns to announce Disney's plans. Burns introduced Disney as "the man of the decade, who will bring a new world of entertainment, pleasure and economic development to the State of Florida."<sup>6</sup> Burns also announced during the press conference that the state would give Disney any cooperation necessary to make this venture successful. Over the next two years, the Florida legislature passed bills in Disney's favor, including tax incentives, establishment of a municipality, and control over zoning and environmental affairs. Disney and his team began work on the site later that month. Unfortunately, Disney would not live to see the completion of his dream.

On December 15, 1966, Walt Disney died of lung cancer.<sup>7</sup> The completion of the new park was left to Disney's brother Roy, the financial genius behind all of Disney's ventures. Roy oversaw the completion of the park and titled the park Walt Disney World. He stated, "It's going to be *Walt Disney World*, so people will

always know that this was Walt's dream."<sup>8</sup>

When Roy Disney dedicated Walt Disney World on October 23, 1971, he did so in the memory of his brother. He said, "Walt Disney World is a tribute to the philosophy and life of Walter Elias Disney... May Walt Disney World bring Joy and Inspiration and New Knowledge to all who come to this happy place... a Magic Kingdom where the young at heart of all ages can laugh, and play, and learn... together."<sup>9</sup>

Walt Disney's dream for a self-contained theme park had come true. Through his imagination and ingenuity, a place was established where parents and children could have fun together. Walt Disney World quickly became the standard to which developers looked when designing a theme park. Walt Disney World continues to be the most visited vacation spot in the world, proving that like its creator, Walt Disney World is truly an American original.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bob Thomas, *Walt Disney: An American Original*, (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 423.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>5</sup> Jeff Kurtti, *Since the World Began: Walt Disney World The First 25 Years*, (New York: Hyperion, 1996), 13-15.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, *Disney: American Original*, 337.

<sup>7</sup> Kurtti, *Since the World Began*, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, *Disney: American Original*, 357.

<sup>9</sup> Kurtti, *Since the World Began*, 39.

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## Contributors

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Jamie Chope is a senior history major at Wittenberg University. He has completed his degree requirements, but will return to campus on May 12, 2001 to graduate with his classmates. He is currently travelling the country, seeing all the historical sites that the United States has to offer.

### **Luke Clarkson**

Luke Clarkson is a junior history major at Wittenberg University. Luke is involved in many campus activities, including the History Journal. He is also a member of the men's track program.

### **Stephen Scott Doucher**

Stephen Scott Doucher was born in Dayton and graduated from Olentangy High School, in Lewis Center, Ohio. He is a senior class student of history at Wittenberg and while interested in numerous historical and historiographical periods, topics, and issues, focuses mostly on European history. His parents, younger brother, cat, and dog all currently reside in the town of Powell, a few minutes north of Columbus.

### **Amanda Kutz**

Amanda L. Kutz is a junior Political Science and History double major. Currently, Amanda is interning in Washington D.C. with the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute. After graduation, she plans to study law and public policy. Eventually she hopes to work in politics, as a political strategist or run for office.

### **Nick Long**

Nick Long is a senior history major at Wittenberg University. He is also a member of the four-time North Coast Athletic Conference champion football program at Wittenberg University. He will complete his degree this spring, but will student teach in the fall to obtain a teaching certificate. Nick plans to teach middle or high school history after graduation.

### **Mandy Oleson**

After transferring from Indiana University two years ago, Mandy Oleson is currently in her junior year at Wittenberg. She spent last season as a member of the Tiger women's basketball team. This semester, she is enhancing her History major and improving her German by studying in Salzburg, Austria.

### **Adam Ruschau**

Adam Ruschau is a senior history major. He is especially interested in nineteenth century military history, but does not plan on making history his career. After graduation, he is planning on attending a Lutheran seminary and becoming a Lutheran pastor in a small town or rural congregation.

### **Melinda Scott**

Melinda Scott is a senior at Wittenberg University, double majoring in elementary education and history. She is active in the Gamma Zeta chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta History Honorary, the Wittenberg Education Department Honorary, the History Journal, and the Student Democrats. Melinda is the winner of this year's Margret Ermarth History Department Award. She is currently the Interim Sports Information Director and is a member of the statistical crew for football and men's and women's basketball. Melinda is originally from London, Ohio and is searching for a teaching job, as graduation is fast approaching.