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HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOLUME 3

SPRING 2014





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Cover image: *Battle of Lepanto in 1571*. Late 16th century. Oil on Canvas, 1207 x 2324 mm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich London.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>FROM THE EDITORS</b> Erica Aiken & Tom Seabrook	<b>6</b>
<b>RIGHT TO DRIVE: A WOMAN'S STRUGGLE</b> Victoria Heath	<b>7</b>
<b>TURNING THE TIDE: VENETIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO</b> Devin Serlin	<b>22</b>
<b>THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN AMERICA FROM 1908 TO 1913: THE BIRTH OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM</b> Adam Alcorn	<b>29</b>
<b>THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE IN VIRGINIA: MOSS 3 AND THE PITTSSTON COAL STRIKE OF 1989</b> Will Gipe	<b>40</b>
<b>THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT &amp; THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS</b> Grace Hemmingson	<b>47</b>
<b>IMAGE CITATIONS</b>	<b>55</b>

# FROM THE EDITORS

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Greetings and welcome to the third issue of the *Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review*. For the past three years, the *Review* has provided a publishing outlet for undergraduates at Virginia Tech. As editors, we seek to help students develop their historical research in order to take part in ongoing scholarly conversations about the past. The *Review* offers students a chance to develop their skills outside of the classroom.

Our editorial staff takes pride in the review process. We graduate managing editors would be lost without our faculty editor as well as the seven undergraduate editors on the board. All of our submissions are reviewed by two undergraduate editors, and then the entire staff considers the papers for publication. After staff meetings we take time to speak with the authors about how to improve their papers whether they are accepted for publication or not. We aim to help writers develop their papers further by paying special attention to structure, clarity, grammar, sources, historiography, and an original argument. Through this peer review approach, our staff and contributors actively engage in the research and publication process.

This year we have selected five articles for publication. The first article, by Victoria Heath, traces the development of women's activism

and the right to drive in Saudi Arabia from the Gulf War through today. Devin Serlin's submission transports the reader to sixteenth-century Venice to explore the factors behind European victory in the Battle of Lepanto. The political machinations behind the creation of the Federal Reserve are the subject of Adam Alcorn's article, followed by Will Gipe's discussion of the 1989 Pittston coal strike in southwest Virginia and its place in regional memory. Grace Hemmingson rounds out this issue with her analysis of the United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review*. We are excited to continue highlighting undergraduate historical research at Virginia Tech. We would like to thank Virginia Tech's History Department, our esteemed faculty editor Dr. Robert Stephens, the undergraduate editorial board, and all the authors who submitted their papers for publication. Our two undergraduate design editors, Andrea Ledesma and Nick Swedberg, have created a stunning layout and cover for this year's issue. We owe you two many thanks. Most of all, we thank you, the reader, for supporting this journal and undergraduate historical research!

**ERICA AIKEN & TOM SEABROOK**  
Managing Editors

# RIGHT TO DRIVE

## A Woman's Struggle

VICTORIA HEATH

***"I believe if women want to change their reality, it will change. If women are silent, I don't think anything will change. Rights are never given. Rights are taken."***

Manal al-Sharif

**M**anal al-Sharif, a divorcée and mother of two, has become a symbol of inspiration for some and an emblem of secular Westernization for others after a video of her "illegally" driving in the conservative kingdom of Saudi Arabia was found on YouTube, which led al-Sharif to create the "Women2Drive" campaign in 2011.<sup>1</sup> The issue of women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia has been both a hot topic and a taboo for decades, but today women are speaking up and taking the wheel. Not all

Saudi women have the desire to drive, however, and the country remains relatively divided on the topic. Manal al-Sharif's protest is also not the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia. Dozens of courageous and outspoken Saudi women laid the road for al-Sharif and Women2Drive 22 years ago. The protest was born on November 6, 1990, in the midst of the Gulf Crisis, when dozens of women gathered at a Tamimi Safeway supermarket, took their driver's seats, and drove on the Riyadh highway until they were stopped by police.<sup>2</sup> This unusual show of a well-organized public protest by women in Saudi Arabia shocked not only Saudis, but the international community as well. Headlines sprawled across international newspapers and media outlets immediately after they caught wind of the protest. However, there was no "official" mention or response to the protest in the Saudi Arabian media until days after the incident.<sup>3</sup> This event shook the Saudi Arabian monarchy and the religious institutions that governed the country, leaving immediate and future consequences for Saudi women in its wake.

This protest was the first of its kind. It was not the result of Western influence, as many have suggested, but of the openings and opportunities for women generated by the oil wealth that engulfed the kingdom in the decades preceding 1990. This article argues that the driving protest in 1990 was the direct result of opportunities and progress made in employment and education for Saudi women. I will discuss the reasons for the protests as well as their lasting impact, and then examine the consequences of the 1990 protest for the women who participated and women throughout Saudi Arabia.

Since the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia, literature regarding this kingdom has increased exponentially as the future of the West and the East become more and more intertwined. Despite several resources discussing women in Saudi Arabia, including *Women in Saudi Arabia Today* by Mona al-Munajjed, an analytical look into the 1990 protest is still missing. The only mention found in al-Munajjed's book pertaining to women's right to drive is a brief section focusing on the lack of public transportation in the country for women.<sup>4</sup> The newest literature focuses solely on recent protests or tends to ignore the significance of the 1990 protest. An eloquent personal essay

2. James LeMoyne, "Ban on Driving by Women Reaffirmed by Saudis," *New York Times* (15 Nov 1990), A19.

3. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in Rare Protest," *New York Times* (7 Nov 1990), A18.

4. Mona al-Munajjed, *Women In Saudi Arabia Today*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 99.

1. Alpert, "Q & A: The Saudi woman who dared to drive."



written by Saudi activist Manal al-Sharif, entitled “Driving My Own Destiny,” also fails to examine the historical implications and factors of the first driving protest. She does, however, provide insight into the social and economic changes that influenced her decision to protest.<sup>5</sup>

Several scholarly sources examine and analyze the impact oil wealth had on a majority of Saudi women and their society. “The Oil Boom and its Impact on Women and Families in Saudi Arabia” by Salwa Al-Khateeb and *State, Society and Economics in Saudi Arabia* edited by Tim Niblock emphasize the relationship the oil boom had with the kingdom and the social and economic changes wealth brought. Al-Khateeb’s article offers a reliable analysis of the impact oil had on the Saudi family, and in particular women. She examines the development plans implemented by the government during the oil boom and the social changes that occurred during this time, including education and employment for women.<sup>6</sup> Yet neither this article nor Niblock’s book examines these factors in relation to the driving protest and the significance of such protests.

There are also fictional and biographical books written either by Saudi women or authors with experience in the kingdom. Two well-known examples published in recent years offer different insights on women’s lives in Saudi Arabia. *The Girls of Riyadh* by Rajaa Alsanee, a Saudi, stirred up controversy when first published in Arabia in 2005. Alsanee’s book is unique in its style and topical manner, taking the form of a collection of email entries written by the narrator about her university friends. This book discussed and challenged Saudi culture and offered an insightful look into the younger “velvet class” generation who have emerged from the elite and middle class in the city of Jeddah.<sup>7</sup>

The second book, *Princess: A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia (1992)* by Jean Sasson, examines the ups and downs of a Saudi Arabian princess’s life. Presented as a true story, it is a tale of the tribulations of an elite class of women and issues that also trickle down to other classes of Saudi society.<sup>8</sup> This book

created controversy in the country and abroad. Opponents regarded it as fictional and unreliable, while advocates argued for its raw honesty.

Accounts that report on the recent protests arising in Saudi Arabia today generally mention the 1990 protest as an afterthought. An opinion piece written for *Al Jazeera* by Hala al-Dosari, a Saudi activist, focused on the Women2Drive protest in 2011 and briefly discussed the 1990 protest.<sup>9</sup> She offered a brief examination of the reasons the protest failed, stating, “it was easy to discredit their initiative; all it took back then was to proliferate conspiracy theories—alleging these women were pushing a foreign agenda.”<sup>10</sup> While it addressed the argument that the protest’s timing was not right, this article does not offer insight into the dynamic reasons for the protest and what historical and cultural events led to it. Articles that discuss the protest briefly, especially those written recently, tend also to misinterpret its purpose and the factors that influenced the women’s decision to participate. One article published by NBC News claimed that the women stated they decided to protest during the first Gulf War because they “saw images of female U.S. soldiers driving around in the desert” and due to “the presence of the international media.”<sup>11</sup> Both of these claims were misinterpreted and directly contradict what many of the women stated at the time of the protest; many of the participants emphasized that it did not relate to the presence of the international media or US army women.<sup>12</sup> Whether these were merely conflicting opinions among the women or misinterpretation by the media, examining which claims are true and accurate is important in understanding this historical event and its implications.

The aim of this paper is to examine the 1990 protest historically, comprehensively, and analytically in order to create a resource for those interested in the topic to understand the origins of the event, the event itself, and its effects. This topic has returned to international attention over recent years and has sparked a renewed interest in Saudi women’s rights. Often the media, their audience, and even the

5. Manal al-Sharif, “Driving My Own Destiny,” *Virginia Quarterly Review*, (1 Oct 2012), 100.

6. Salwa al-Khateeb, “The Oil Boom and its Impact on Women and Families in Saudi Arabia,” in *The Gulf Family: Kinship Policies and Modernity*, ed. Alanoud Alsharekh (London: Saqi and London Middle East Institute, 2007), 3.

7. Renee Warner Syed, review of *Girls of Riyadh (Banat al-Riyadh)*, by Rajaa Alsanee, *Azizah* 5 (Apr 2000): 25.

8. Betty Mahmood, review of *Princess: A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*, by Jean Sasson, *The Toronto Star* (23 Jan 1993).

9. Hala Al-Dosari, “Saudi women drivers take the wheel on June 17,” *Al Jazeera* (16 June 2011): <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/06/2011061694746333674.html> (accessed 25 Oct 2012).

10. Al-Dosari, “Saudi women drivers take the wheel.”

11. “Saudi women celebrate huge protest car ride,” *NBC News*, (14 Nov 2008), <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27713062/ns/world-news-mideast-n.africa/t/saudi-women-celebrate-huge-protest-car-ride/#.UMQzZkLH8t>.

12. Youssef M. Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Take the Driver’s Seat in a Rare Protest for the Right to Travel,” *The New York Times*, (7 Nov 1990), A18.

activists themselves disregard the importance of history in these events. In the case of drive campaigns in Saudi Arabia, the 1990 campaign led by pioneering Saudi women activists was a significant moment in the kingdom's history, and it offers lessons to the women, such as Manal al-Sharif, who are challenging the status quo today.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS, TRADITION, RELIGION, AND MALE GUARDIANSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA

The protest's dynamics are intricate and form a part of the larger conflict in Saudi Arabia regarding women's rights. Many who argue for women's right to drive also argue for other freedoms for women, such as mobility, employment, and political rights. They fight for freedom from the "male guardian" legal structure of their country, in which they cannot choose to leave Saudi Arabia or get an education without permission.<sup>13</sup> However, it is important and significant to note that for every petition written arguing for these rights, there is another written against them. Some, such as Rawda al-Youssef, who started the "My Guardian Knows What's Best For Me" campaign, argue that the ban is appropriate and the male guardianship system and the importance of *namus* or "honor" benefits Saudi women. Al-Youssef also argued that, "Saudi women—specifically those who are talking about women's rights—these come from a social class that is well-off and pampered," and, therefore, they do not represent a mass of the Saudi population.<sup>14</sup> Cleric Sheikh Adnan Bahareth stated in the same 2012 interview that driving would actually place more of a "burden" on women, as she, and not her husband or driver, "will have to go to the souk on her own, she will have to get the food, she will have to drive the kids to and from school." In fact, he argues, women, in this way, control men, as they must complete these tasks that women cannot.<sup>15</sup> These along with other arguments by conservative religious authorities have been reiterated and refined for several decades. They claim that women driving would result in an increase of "prostitution, pornography, homosexuality and divorce" and result in the

"moral decline" of the country.<sup>16</sup> They often cite Western countries, such as the United States, as prime examples of this "moral decline."

The strict religious and patriarchal society of Saudi Arabia derives historically from its tribal culture and its conservative form of Islam, Wahhabism.<sup>17</sup> These two aspects of Saudi culture have a profound effect on women's rights. The ulama (religious scholars), the religious establishment, and the royal family have a uniquely close relationship. The royal family owes much of its legitimacy and the loyalty of its citizens to the religious establishment. This began with Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's alliance with Mohammed Sa'ud, the ruler of Dir'iyya, in a pledge to wage jihad in 1746. Together they spread across Arabia with military force, Sa'ud's control expanding and bringing the Wahhabi movement with it.<sup>18</sup> It was not until the twentieth century, however, that the Saudi state permanently occupied the Hijaz region. The state was able to implement Wahhabi teachings in the region and become a powerful symbol as the protectors of the two holy cities Mecca and Medina. During the first period of occupation, 1924 to 1939 and after World War II, the Wahhabi ulama proved essential in bringing the Arabian tribes together under Saudi influence and control. They quickly implemented religious policies and provided the Sa'ud family with religious legitimacy in their right to rule the region.<sup>19</sup> The Wahhabi establishment also gained power after the oil boom in the 1970s. Due to money contributed from the state, it established

16. Report written by religious scholars from the Majlis al-Ifita' al-A'ala council. Taken from Jon Jensen, "Saudi female driving ban prevents prostitution, say scholars," *Global Post: The Casbah* (2 Dec 2011): <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/the-casbah/saudi-scholars-say-female-driving-ban-prevents-prostitution>.

17. The Wahhabi movement was formed by Mohammed bin Abdul-Wahhab as a reformation movement in Islam, reverting back to what he viewed as the basics of Islam found in the writings and teachings of the Koran and the Sunna, which had since been corrupted among all Muslims alike. He saw the need for reform after witnessing the rituals and the adoption of other beliefs, such as praying to saints, commonly performed in the Shi'i sect of Islam. This in his view was *shirk* and a deterioration of the Islamic community. He believed that *tawhid*, or the absolute monotheism of God, was in danger. This is one of the most prominent sections of his teachings. Taken from Natana J. Delong-Bas, "The Origins of Wahhabism," in *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.

18. Hamad Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 20-21.

19. Mohammed Ayoub and Hasan Kosebalaban, "Wahhabism and the Question of Religious Tolerance," in *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia*, ed. Natana J. Delong-Bas (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 76-77.

13. "World Report 2011: Saudi Arabia," *Human Rights Watch* (January 2011): [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/saudi.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/saudi.pdf).

14. Rima Maktabi and Schams Elwazer, "Saudi Women: Pampered or oppressed?" *CNN: Inside the Middle East* (14 March 2012): <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/14/world/meast/saudi-women-disagree-rights/index.html>.

15. Maktabi and Elwazer, "Saudi Women: Pampered or oppressed?"



schools across the world and maintained its status with the Saudi government. The existence of the Saudi state and the existence of Wahhabism as a relevant religious movement are ultimately dependent on one another. Their relationship allowed for the union of the desert kingdom and the rise of the Sa'ud family.<sup>20</sup>

The ulama today still hold profound influence over the decisions made by the monarchy, including women's rights. The relationship between church and state in Saudi Arabia has faced multiple ups and downs. Questions are continuously raised regarding who is wholly in charge of the country during periods of crisis. In relation to women's issues, it appears the religious establishment possesses strong sway in the minds of not only the monarchy, but also Saudi citizens.<sup>21</sup>

The ban on women driving originally emerged from cultural and religious concerns, despite the fact that women in other largely Wahhab Islamic countries, such as Kuwait, drive freely. Bedouin women were also known to drive in their villages. The ban could be enforced in Saudi Arabia because every driver must have a valid driver's license; to prevent women from driving the Ministry of Transportation refused to issue licenses to women. However, after the protest in 2011, the deputy Minister of the Interior "confirmed" that there was in fact a written law dating back to the 1990 protest. This took many activists by surprise because this was not public knowledge.<sup>22</sup> It is still contested whether there was or is a written ban on women driving under Saudi law. Many activists argue that the issue of women driving is not religious at all, but merely a social issue. A prominent radio journalist and writer in Saudi Arabia reiterated this view, stating: "It is not un-Islamic to drive, it is not un-Islamic to work, it is not un-Islamic to demand for your rights."<sup>23</sup> Instead, she argued, the religious establishment had transformed the issue into both a social and religious one.

King Abdullah has shown interest in freeing the restraints on Saudi women, even allowing women the right to vote in the Shura Council in 2015. In 2009, he opened a "mixed-

sex science university," a major change in a segregated society. Religious fervor rose immediately, however, and Abdullah's moves were quickly criticized. Prominent Saudi clerics issued religious decrees, or *fatwas*. Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Barrak proclaimed, "whoever allows this mixing allows forbidden things, and whoever allows them is an infidel and this means defection from Islam."<sup>24</sup> The Shura Council, the kingdom's leading religious body, has produced several studies that claim to prove that women driving would result in drug abuse, prostitution, and skyrocketing divorce rates.<sup>25</sup>

The King has remained a small beacon of hope for many activists. In a speech delivered to the Shura Council in 2010, King Abdullah brought women into the political picture, albeit sparingly. He stated, "Saudi women have participated positively in all programs of development by standing with their male brothers, whether as students, employees, teachers and businesswoman."<sup>26</sup> He symbolically showed that women's role in the economic, political, and social sphere of the kingdom was and is growing.

Despite this show of opposition to the strict rules on women's rights in his kingdom, Abdullah was and is forced to balance delicately the demands of liberals who are becoming more vocal and traditionalists who still hold significant influence. Groups such as the Ministry of Interior, the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, and the *mutawwa* (religious police) are heavily influenced by the religious establishment and serve as a powerful conservative force. Religious "control squads" (*al-hisbah*) roam most Saudi streets and shopping centers, looking for anyone breaking the "moral codes" of the country.<sup>27</sup> Often, these

24. Elizabeth Flock, "Saudi Arabian women banned from driving because of fatwa against gender 'mixing,'" *Washington Post: World Views* (June 6, 2011): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/fatwa-against-gender-mixing-prevents-saudi-women-from-driving-according-to-wikileaks-cable/2011/06/06/AGVVTDKH.blog.html>.

25. Tracy McVeigh, "Saudi Arabian women risk arrest as they defy ban on driving," *The Observer* (June 16, 2012): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/17/saudi-arabian-women-risk-arrest-ban-driving>.

26. King Abdullah's speech in 2009 to the Shura Council, translated by Majlis Ash-Shura, "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful," *Majlis Ash-Shura*, 5<sup>th</sup> term 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 1431-1432 A.H (2009): <http://www.shura.gov.sa/wps/wcm/connect/ShuraEn/internet/Royal+Speeches/>.

27. Joshua Craze and Mark Huband, ed., "Saudis tire of 'Control squads' as rigid moral guardians fall out of step with the people," *The Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 230.

20. Fouad Al-Farsy, "The Polity and Organization of the Kingdom," *Saudi Arabia: A Case Study in Development* (Kegan Paul International: Boston, 1982), 66.

21. Eleanor A. Doumato, "Gender, Monarchy and National Identity in Saudi Arabia," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 19 (1992), 38.

22. Al-Dosari, "Saudi women drivers take the wheel."

23. Rima Maktabi and Schams Elwazer, "Saudi Women: Pampered or Oppressed?" *CNN: Inside the Middle East* (March 14, 2012): <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/14/world/meast/saudi-women-disagree-rights/index.html>.

control squads and the religious establishments cite the ability of women to be mobile in cars and mingle with men as the primary reason against allowing women to drive. Reportedly, these religious police will even arrest young men driving near a car known to be full of women because of recent trends in “car chasing.”<sup>28</sup>

King Abdullah must deal not only with conservative ministers and religious scholars, but also with Saudi citizens, opines Saudi writer Lubna Hussein. Discussing the latest driving campaign, she explains:

*A lot of westerners don't realise that the king and the government are a lot more progressive than the people...They have to walk a tightrope because the people may want to be modern but they don't want to be western. This year's [2012] driving campaign is much more subdued than last year's because of apathy.*<sup>29</sup>

Hussein concludes that a majority of Saudis view these issues with relative indifference. A general complacency regarding the state of the Kingdom leads to the continued ban. Although support has increased slowly from both men and women, it has not yet reached a point for comprehensive change. Fear is a large component of apathy and indifference. These women and men are scared of the changes that women driving could possibly bring.<sup>30</sup> The influence the religious fundamentalists and conservatives have on Saudi society, along with historical customs and traditions, have proved to be obstacles for these driving campaigns.

The second sphere of Saudi society that is important to understand is the patriarchal infrastructure and cultural traditions. Women's legal and ethical rights in Saudi society are essentially defined by the ulama's understanding and interpretation of Islam and the male-dominated, traditional society in which these women live.<sup>31</sup> Women's rights in Saudi Arabia are considered some of the most restrictive in the world by Western standards. The country's ranking in the 2012 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum signaled this: Saudi Arabia fell 131<sup>st</sup> out of 135 countries.<sup>32</sup>

The royal family is not oblivious to this issue and has addressed it publicly. In a speech to the Shura Council in 2000, the late King Fahd directly addressed the human rights violations of which his country was accused. The King implied that the world claimed violations against them “without knowing actually what is going on in our country, and without any objective knowledge of guidelines or our legislation in this field. Our principles are right because they are derived from our Islamic creed.” He concluded, “we assure the whole world, that we have nothing to be ashamed of or to hide.”<sup>33</sup> These statements signify a general attitude in the kingdom and take issue with these kinds of rankings. Yet they offer no cultural or religious context.

For many Westerners, Saudi Arabia is often associated with the term “segregation.” Indeed, Saudi society is segregated in both the private and public sphere. Nonetheless, it is important to restate that this is also a diverse society, with different family dynamics and degrees of conservatism. Several factors shape a family dynamic, including class, education, religious adherence, geography, and wealth.

The idea of *aql*, or “reason,” historically dominated the family household and, to an extent, still does today. Essentially this ideology deems men as mentally and physically superior to women. Women's *aql* is only reliable in tasks such as taking care of the children, the household, their husband, and themselves.<sup>34</sup> This ideology shapes many aspects of a woman's familial life. Usually women are expected to uphold their husband's or other male relative's honor and never bring *ayb* (shame) to the family by upholding the moral codes of their society. She is expected to follow instructions and act in a certain way outside of the home.<sup>35</sup> This ideology contributes to the “male guardianship” structure and paternalistic nature of Saudi Arabia. Certainly, the degree that this ideology exists depends on each family and their particular situation, but it is apparent that this ideology permeates Saudi Arabia's public sphere.

While the private sphere is considered the woman's, the public sphere is distinctly male-dominated. It is essentially men's duty to guard this sphere.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, men are in charge

28. Craze and Huband, ed., “Saudis tire of ‘Control squads,’” 231.

29. McVeigh, “Saudi Arabian women risk arrest as they defy ban on driving.”

30. McVeigh, “Saudi Arabian women risk arrest as they defy ban on driving.”

31. Soraya Altoriki, *Women in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 51-52.

32. Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, “The Global Gender Gap Report, 2012,” *World*

*Economic Forum* (2012), 11.

33. King Fahd, “Royal Speech of the King of Saudi Arabia,” *Majlis Ash-Shura*, 2<sup>nd</sup> term 4<sup>th</sup> year, 1421-1422 A.H., <http://www.shura.gov.sa/wps/wcm/connect/shuraen/internet/Royal+Speeches/2nd+Term+4th+Year%2C+1421+-+1422+A.H./> (2012).

34. Altoriki, *Women in Saudi Arabia*, 51-52.

35. Altoriki, *Women in Saudi Arabia*, 54.

36. Al-Munajjed, *Women In Saudi Arabia Today*, 33.



of their female relatives, creating a system of guardianship (*wilaya*). In this system, women need permission not only to leave the country, but to obtain a job, get married, run a business, study, or even access certain health care. This paternalistic structure was evident during the 1990 protest when the 47 women who participated were released from jail only after their male guardians signed statements promising the women would not drive again.<sup>37</sup> The Permanent Council for Scientific Research and Legal Opinions issued a *fatwa* in the 1990's regarding female employment, stating that women must "remain in their homes. Their presence in the public is the main contributing factor to the spread of fitna [strife]."<sup>38</sup> Since it is impossible to keep women inside their homes at all times, strict segregation laws govern the country, which also contributes to the ban on women driving.

Segregation in this society is essentially a mechanism to control women's behavior and their mobility, and therefore to diminish the risk of ruining the family's honor.<sup>39</sup> Gender segregation begins in school and lasts throughout a Saudi citizen's life. Most shopping malls, restaurants, and even banks are segregated, divided ideally between "family" sections and "single" sections (solely for men). Where mingling does occur, a male relative is always present. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, an increase in the number of banks for women accompanied the oil boom. Many women welcomed the banks. One bank director stated in 1982, "God gave us the right to use our own money freely, we used to feel out of place in banks."<sup>40</sup> These institutions offered employment to women and a "home away from home" that was finely decorated, accommodating, and comfortable for women in a women-only environment.<sup>41</sup> Most Saudi women do not desire the eradication of segregation wholly, but instead wish to have equal rights and abilities as men. Traditions and customs associated with segregation have proven difficult to break. A Saudi woman reiterated this idea in 1982, referring to education in particular: "If we were accustomed to attending classes

with men since our childhood, then things would have been very different by now."<sup>42</sup>

The mingling and mixing of sexes is a novel and threatening concept for many conservative and traditional Saudi citizens. The male guardianship structure and social customs of the country, along with the relationship between the conservative Islamic minorities and the Saudi government, create major challenges in the realm of women's rights. Despite the traditions of this society and the obstacles, oil wealth has indeed created opportunities for women that enabled the 1990 protest. It effectively opened the door for campaigns such as Women2Drive, although it took another two decades to begin again.

## PRELUDE TO PROTEST: 1970 TO 1990

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia owes its modern influence, wealth, and structure to the discovery of "black gold" and the oil boom of the mid-1970s. Before oil was discovered in 1938, Saudi Arabia, a newly established nation-state, had an economy based on herding, small-scale agriculture, and revenue gained from pilgrimages to Mecca.<sup>43</sup> Even as late as 1950, there were no substantial government and public structures other than what the oil companies had built and what the royal family had deemed necessary.<sup>44</sup> However, as the mass extraction of oil began, a flow of wealth spread throughout the kingdom and brought immense changes. Those who gained from the influx of oil wealth the most were women. Advances in employment and education reverberated among most Saudi families, and it was the opportunities and social issues that arose from these changes that contributed to the 1990 protest.

To assess the impact oil wealth had on women, it is imperative to explore the development plans made by the Saudi Government. George T. Trial wrote in 1950, "Saudi Arabia today stands at the doorway of world importance as well as Arab leadership due to the economic potential of its oil resources."<sup>45</sup> Saudi Arabia's potential significance was recognized even then, but it was not until the oil boom of the 1970s

37. Faiza Saleh Ambah, "Saudi women recall a day of driving," *The Christian Science Monitor* (7 Dec 2005): <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1207/p06s02-wome.html>.

38. "Perpetual Minors: Human Rights Abuses Stemming from Male Guardianship and Sex Segregation in Saudi Arabia," *Human Rights Watch* (20 April 2008), 5.

39. Al-Munajjed, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, 34.

40. Douglas Martin, "Saudi Banks for Women Thriving: Saudi Women's Banks Thrive," *New York Times* (27 Jan 1982), D1.

41. Martin, "Saudi Banks for Women Thriving," D2.

42. Al-Munajjed, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, 37.

43. Tim Niblock, ed., *State Society and Economy in Saudi Arabia* (London: Croom Helm and Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, Exeter, 1982), 199.

44. Michel G. Nehme, "Saudi Arabia 1950-1980: Between Nationalism and Religion," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 6 (Oct. 1994), 930-931.

45. George T. Trial and R. Bayly Winder, "Modern Education in Saudi Arabia," *History of Education Journal* 1 (Spring 1950), 124.

that change really swept into Saudi Arabia.

In 1960, oil brought the kingdom \$333.7 million. By 1973 that number had jumped to \$1.2 billion. By the time of the Arab-Israeli War in 1973, Saudi Arabia was secure economically, so it could act along with the other OPEC members politically.<sup>46</sup> At the end of 1973, Saudi Arabia cut oil production and prices skyrocketed, resulting in \$22.5 billion in revenue gained in the kingdom by 1974. This move put the West, including the United States, in a crippling position, moving policymakers to negotiate with the kingdom.<sup>47</sup> For many Saudis, foreign investors, businessmen, and workers, this period saw an extremely close and lucrative relationship between the West and Saudi Arabia develop. Business in the West wanted to come to the wealthy desert kingdom, while many Saudis turned to the West for development and educational opportunities.<sup>48</sup>

As a result of increasing revenue, foreign investment, and the need for technological modernization, the Central Planning Organization was created in 1965.<sup>49</sup> They designed the first Five Year Plan in 1970.<sup>50</sup> The government implemented three development plans between 1970 and 1985 (the most dramatic period of the oil boom). Each expanded infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and utilized its oil wealth. The First Development Plan (1970-1975) addressed developing human resources and reducing the country's economic dependence on oil. The Second Plan (1975-1980) focused on infrastructure development, such as roads, communications, and housing. Finally, the Third Development Plan (1980-1985) directed wealth away from infrastructure development to resource development, spending only 35.5% of government income on infrastructure projects instead of the previous 49.6%. The Saudi government also focused on vocational and technical training programs to improve their own national labor force. It promoted

an even distribution of wealth, agricultural development, and social services; the overall objective was to create a "better quality of life" for Saudis.<sup>51</sup> By looking at the increased amount of total government revenues (TGR) between 1970 and 1972, it is clear that these plans relied on the massive increase in oil wealth the country experienced. In 1970 the TGR was 5,966 million riyals. This number increased significantly in 1972 to 10,782 million. The number again increased significantly between 1972 and 1974, growing from 13,200 to 22,810 million.<sup>52</sup> The relationship between these government-run economic development plans and the influx of oil wealth allowed for public and private growth within the country that did not exist on a massive scale before the 1970s.

Segregation laws were not legally implemented until the 1960s. With this came the creation of a "female space."<sup>53</sup> The female space allowed women to interact with each other outside of the normal family atmosphere. It was within these confines that women, such as those in the 1990 protest, gathered together and developed new ideas of what their society could be.<sup>54</sup> Changes in education were the first to help create this female space because more girls were educated in a similar way to boys. Before the 1950s, education was primarily in mosques or homes and focused on religion.<sup>55</sup> In 1956, Princess Iffat created the first school for girls in Jeddah, and by 1980 more than a half million female students were enrolled in some level of education.<sup>56</sup> The Saudis knew that in order to obtain control of their economy and develop their nation they needed to focus on mass modern education for their entire population.<sup>57</sup>

In 1975, the government realized it was suffering from a shortage of manpower and its reliance on a largely foreign workforce. The country suffered from a 50% illiteracy rate; only 18,000 students attended higher education, and only a small percentage of those were women. As a result, the Saudi

46. Sandra Mackey, *The Saudis: Inside the Desert Kingdom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 6-7.

47. Richard Reston and Paul E. Steiger, "Arab Refusal to Cut Oil Prices Has U.S. in Bind," *Los Angeles Times* (1 Sep 1974), 1.

48. Mackey, *The Saudis*, 8.

49. It was also in this year that the conservative kingdom started its first state-owned television station in an effort to modernize, though with substantial censorship. Women, for example, were "permitted to appear only in minor or secondary parts." This, however, is one example of the modernization efforts within the economic shifts that began to crack open the door for social changes. "TV Comes to Saudi, but Nothing's Bawdy," *Los Angeles Times* (19 June 1965), B3.

50. A.M. Sharshar, "Oil, Religion and Mercantilism: A Study of Saudi Arabia's Economic System," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 12 (Fall 1977), 54.

51. Middle East Research Institute: University of Pennsylvania, *Meri Report: Saudi Arabia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 61-62.

52. Niblock, *State Society and Economy in Saudi Arabia*, 19.

53. Amelie Le Renard, "Only for Women: Women the State and Reform in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 4 (September 2008), 612.

54. Middle East Research Institute: University of Pennsylvania, *Meri Report: Saudi Arabia*, 26.

55. Trial and Winder, "Modern Education in Saudi Arabia," 124.

56. Middle East Research Institute: University of Pennsylvania, *Meri Report: Saudi Arabia*, 25-26.

57. Niblock, *State Society and Economy in Saudi Arabia*, 19.

economy was essentially missing out on a great deal of human capital.<sup>58</sup> Sheik Nasir Mohammed Ashemimry stated in 1980, "Saudi Arabia's third five year plan...will emphasize the development of women. We realized that 50% of our power was not being utilized."<sup>59</sup>

During the 1980s, a boom in women's higher education and their emergence in the labor force erupted. This boom was created by an estimated \$7.8 billion spent on education by 1985. Yet, once again, contradictions arose between religious and governmental institutions.<sup>60</sup> In 1983, women were formally banned from enrolling in international universities and encouraged to enroll in the ten women-only institutions in Saudi Arabia.<sup>61</sup> The government paid every expense for their education, arguing that women had no need to go abroad for education when the necessary services already existed within the kingdom.<sup>62</sup> The number of women studying abroad was not officially reported, but for the most part, Saudis who could afford to send their daughters abroad for higher education certainly did so and continued to even after the ban. By 1989, an estimated one million girls attended school, and 100,000 were enrolled in higher education. Many of these women graduated with a variety of important degrees, including doctoral, engineering, computer operating, and social work degrees.<sup>63</sup>

Due to the conflicts between ideas of modern education and conservative Wahhabi practices, the government spent millions in order to create parallel institutions for women who were itching for participation in their society.<sup>64</sup> However, there were issues that plagued women as they became educated. The most prominent was the restriction of job availability. The first section of the Labor and Workmen Law adopted in 1969 prohibited women from being employed in "hazardous operations or harmful industries" or "during the night time," but it did not deny women the right to work.<sup>65</sup>

Although the law was open to interpretation, the real restriction for employment came from traditional cultural attitudes toward women working outside the home.

The desire to keep sexes segregated significantly reduced women's job availabilities in hospitals and teaching positions.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the 1980s, more women began working in diversifying markets and for large companies such as Aramco (Arabian-American Oil Company). Naila al-Mosly, a petroleum engineer, was a manager at Aramco who supervised 186 people, including 50 men. She claimed in an interview in 1989, "When I first came to Aramco there were only three Saudi women working here. Now we have 80."<sup>67</sup> Many women fought to work and argued it was in accordance with Islam. Some high-ranking religious scholars also supported this claim. Sheik Mohammed al-Ghazali, an Egyptian religious scholar, wrote in a Saudi daily newspaper, "I say if there are 100,000 people who are doctors and 100,000 people who are teachers, there is nothing wrong with half of those being women as long as our Islamic principles are preserved and intact."<sup>68</sup> Al-Ghazali received the King Faisal Award for Islamic Studies issued by the Saudi government in 1989. This proved to many activists that the King Fahd government was giving credence to progressive ideas of women's education and employment, an important step in the fight for women's rights.<sup>69</sup>

The educational and employment system in Saudi Arabia for women did, despite its progress, lack several components to make it more successful. An extremely conservative primary curriculum, in which math, sciences, technology, and physical education were overlooked and replaced by religious and Arabic studies slowed educational attainment.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, segregation in employment led to a lack of diverse jobs for women, and the lack of transportation for most women still serves as a barrier to the effective utilization of women in the labor market.<sup>71</sup> Despite this, the changes

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58. Patt Morrison, "Arabian Visit: Saudi's Need for Education Told by Cain," *Los Angeles Times* (22 Jan 1975), CS1.

59. "Saudis plan new role for women," *Chicago Tribune* (20 Apr 1980), W7.

60. Rick Snedeker, "Saudi Oil Income Boosts Education," *Los Angeles Times* (30 Oct 1983), 31.

61. "Saudi Arabia's Superwoman," *Chicago Tribune* (31 Aug 1983), 14.

62. Snedeker, "Saudi Oil Income Boosts Education."

63. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles," *New York Times* (26 Apr 1989), A6.

64. Le Renard, "Only for Women," 612.

65. "Labor and Workmen Law (1969) continued: Chapters Seven Through Thirteen," Information Office of the

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Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (2011): <http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/laws/Labor.and.Workmen.Law-3of4.aspx> (accessed April 1, 2011).

66. Middle East Research Institute: University of Pennsylvania, *Meri Report: Saudi Arabia*, 96.

67. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles."

68. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles."

69. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles."

70. Mona al-Munajjed, "Women's Education in Saudi Arabia," *Ideation Center* (Riyadh: Booz and Co., 2008), 10.

71. Mona al-Munajjed, "Women's Employment in Saudi Arabia: A Major Challenge," *Ideation Center* (Riyadh: Booz and Co., 2009), 10.

of the 1970s through the 1990s allowed for the expansion of women's "private" and "public" spheres in Saudi Arabia more than ever before. The opportunities brought by wealth and modernization were real, especially for the elite and middle class, or the "velvet class." This is where the 1990 protest movement took root.

## THE PROTEST, 1990

The 47 women who took the wheel on November 6, 1990, outside of a Riyadh Al-Tamimi Safeway did so in their family cars: luxury models such as Lincoln Continentals, Mercedes Benzes, and Buicks. Driven to the supermarket by their chauffeurs, the women, in a convoy of about 15 cars, sat in their lavish driver's seats and drove on the highway until stopped 30 minutes later. One chauffeur recalled in a 1990 interview, "I couldn't believe my ears when madame asked me for the car keys and told me to get out and then drove away with the others."<sup>72</sup>

The cars the women drove and the fact that they had private chauffeurs reveals their economic status. It suggests that the activists involved were those benefiting from the changes wrought by oil wealth in the kingdom. These women did not particularly fear protesting the government because of their affluence, family position, and the freedom they had experienced abroad and within their own families.<sup>73</sup> One woman even declared to reporters after their arrest that they "wanted to be heard by the authorities, loudly and clearly."<sup>74</sup>

Who these women were is important in understanding the relationship between progress and opportunities in education and employment. A majority of the women were reportedly from wealthy backgrounds. Protest organizers stated that all the women had foreign driving licenses they had obtained abroad, primarily while studying. Many were teachers and highly educated. Aisha al-Maneh, a sociology professor who had studied at the University of Colorado, was a prominent figure in the protest.<sup>75</sup> She is just one example of a highly educated Saudi female leading the charge for women's rights.

Oil wealth generated opportunities for women in education and also allowed certain affluent families to send their daughters

abroad to the West or to boarding schools in Lebanon. Wealth has allowed Saudis in recent generations to travel and fund private education. It was these wealthier families who led the charge in education in the kingdom in the mid-1940s and sent their daughters to school in Jeddah after temporarily living abroad.<sup>76</sup> Education and tutoring for women before the 1960s and 1970s was regarded as a luxury for this elite class, until the government began to initiate programs to fund education.<sup>77</sup>

Although family prestige still tends to rest on the achievements of male children, women have not been deterred from studying and working as hard as men, determined to use education to fuel their own individual success. Many women wanted to work after gaining their degrees, as a 25-year-old MA graduate explained during a 1997 interview: "I want to use the knowledge gained through my education and feel that I did not waste all these years spent at the university."<sup>78</sup> Education has long been regarded as an empowerment tool important for getting citizens involved in civic development. Educated women tend to educate their children, join the workforce, understand their personal rights, and have fewer children, leading to different economic and social consequences, such as the 1990 protest.<sup>79</sup> Education was and still is regarded by Saudi women as a means of recognizing their own intelligence, their worth, and their ability to alter their society. Many women during 1997 interviews by Dr. Mona Al-Munajjed, a prominent sociologist and women's rights activist in Saudi Arabia, described education as "[giving] the Saudi woman more value...[and] courage to defend herself and to face her family... also she can better understand her religion."<sup>80</sup> Education empowered the 1990 activists. Without the expansion of opportunities from oil wealth in education, these benefits would not have been possible. A majority of the protestors were employed in the teaching profession. At least six of them worked in the Social Sciences Department of the King Saudi University in Riyadh and were effectively suspended from their jobs as a result of their short drive.<sup>81</sup>

During the 1980s, the government initiated a process of "saudization" in order to lessen

72. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in Rare Protest for the Right to Travel," *New York Times* (7 Nov 1990), A18.

73. Al-Khateeb, "The Oil Boom and its Impact on Women and Families in Saudi Arabia," 11.

74. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in Rare Protest for the Right to Travel."

75. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in Rare Protest for the Right to Travel."

76. Altorki, *Women in Saudi Arabia*, 19.

77. Altorki, *Women in Saudi Arabia*, 152.

78. Al Munajjed, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, 95.

79. "Promoting Gender Equality: Empowering Women Through Education," *UNFPA* (Oct 2004); <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/empowerment3.htm>.

80. Al Munajjed, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, 76.

81. "Saudi Women Disciplined," *New York Times* (13 Nov 1990), A14.

their reliance on foreign workers.<sup>82</sup> In 1983, King Fahd stated that women should be encouraged to work, but only in “suitable” fields.<sup>83</sup> Women jumped at new opportunities and put their degrees to use wherever they could. Most ended up working in the health and teaching sectors. The General Administration for the Education of Girls employed 50,000 women. 5,000 were employed as doctors and nurses. Many women, however, wanted to move away from those fields, and they slowly did.<sup>84</sup> Elham Mansour al-Dekheil, a director of an interdisciplinary program at a government institute, indicated in 1989 that women must obtain jobs in observance with the conservative practices of the country in order to have progressive change. Her strategy for female employment was to “[go] after jobs filled by foreign men” like those “manning computers in banks and offices or doing nursing in our hospitals.”<sup>85</sup> Opportunities like these encouraged educated women. Many wanted to be financially responsible and individually successful. Since women are allowed to own property in Islam, the female banks bustled with activity as women invested and managed their own money.<sup>86</sup> These banks also hired women, who were commonly described by managers as wealthy individuals who wanted to work so they could “wake up in the morning with some purpose in life.”<sup>87</sup>

Employment and the empowerment of the “liberal” Saudi women of the 1990 protest led them to the realization that their conservative society needed to change. If they were gaining rights in the workplace and being educated at higher and higher levels, then why should they not have other rights, such as driving? The 47 women who participated in the shocking protest belonged to an affluent professionalized class that made up a liberal minority in the kingdom.<sup>88</sup>

The organizers and participants of the 1990 protest gave several reasons as to why they chose to protest and why they chose this particular time. Most of the women’s reasons for the seeking the right to drive were not as controversial as they are regarded today. They did not want complete

eradication of the religiously conservative society or the veils that covered their faces. Their reasoning was practical, based on their religious understanding and focused on equal rights.<sup>89</sup>

Many women and liberals hoped the protest would forcibly place the issue on the government’s agenda during a time when other issues were at the forefront. They were careful, however, to state that they were not doing it in the name of democracy, nor were they protesting against the royal family.<sup>90</sup> A political science professor stated that, “You cannot say you are doing this in the name of democracy...not 70 but 700 women will come out to say they are against driving because religious authorities have not sanctioned it and because it threatens the protective cocoon that envelops their lives.”<sup>91</sup> The women were careful to articulate their reasons for the protest, never demanding democratic rights or even more “feminine rights,” but simply the ability to drive. Despite this, their actions and reasoning were demonized by the religious and government institutions they were trying to counter, and many of the women suffered immense consequences.

In reports at the time of the incident, the women claimed economic, social, and religious reasons for seeking the right to drive. The women reportedly had planned the event a week in advance. They even sent telegrams to Saudi officials explaining that they were trying to act in the “greater good of Saudi Arabia.”<sup>92</sup> Because most of these women had jobs, they claimed that the cost of keeping a private driver strained their household income and that it was unnecessary and inconvenient to rely on someone else to drive when they had the ability.<sup>93</sup> Aisha al-Mana, the main organizer of the 1990 protest, stated in an interview with the American journalist Robert Lacey that driving was “a basic necessity for ladies who work and are supporting families.” She explained that drivers could cost \$180 to \$250 a month.<sup>94</sup> Poorer women at the time, and even today, also cited economic reasons. Since they

82. Diana Abdallah, “Saudization a national goal,” *Calgary Herald* (26 June 1996), D2.

83. “Saudi Women Encouraged to Work,” *Los Angeles Times* (3 June 1983), 17.

84. Youssef M. Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles,” *New York Times* (26 Apr 1989), A6.

85. Youssef M. Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Quietly Win Some Battles.”

86. Al Munajjed, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, 81.

87. Douglas Martin, “Saudi Banks for Women Thriving,” *New York Times* (17 Jan 1982), D1.

88. Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Take Driver’s Seat in Rare Protest for the Right to Travel.”

89. Caryle Murphy, “Saudi Women Reunite to Remember Driving Protest,” *National Public Radio* (16 Dec 2008): <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97541372>.

90. Youssef M. Ibrahim, “An Outcry From The Saudi’s Liberal Minority,” *New York Times* (8 Nov 1990), A15.

91. Youssef M. Ibrahim, “An Outcry From The Saudi’s Liberal Minority.”

92. Youssef Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Take Driver’s Seat in a Rare Protest for the Right to Travel.”

93. Youssef Ibrahim, “Saudi Women Take Driver’s Seat in a Rare Protest for the Right to Travel.”

94. Robert Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 137.



could not afford a driver, they could not get a job, further exacerbating their financial situations.<sup>95</sup>

Other reasons for the protest were religious and contradicted the religious establishment's stance against women driving. However, the women's arguments were meant to satisfy the conservative Islamic culture of the country as well. The religious establishment argued that women driving would result in the "moral decline" of the country.<sup>96</sup> Several of the protestors and prominent activists countered this argument. A 36-year-old woman who participated in the event explained in 1990: "Islam says that a woman should not be left alone in the company of a man who is not her relative and that is exactly what happens every time I am driven in my car by a Pakistani, Sudanese or other person who is a driver."<sup>97</sup> The women argued that the traditional ban against them driving put them in un-Islamic positions and possibly compromising situations. Instead of acting against Islam, the women stated they were supporting Islam and the values taught in the Koran. By remaining veiled, safely driving, and not remaining alone with a male that was not a relative, they were upholding religious teachings.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, the women and other Saudi women cited several social reasons for protesting the ban and fighting for the right to drive, including the issue of male dominance and self-humiliation. A professional woman, after the ban on driving was reaffirmed in 1990, stated, "it is men telling us what to do, controlling our lives."<sup>99</sup> For numerous women, the inability to drive was just another way in which male dominance and the guardianship system controlled their mobility and their lives. One female driver declared at the time, "it is important for the authorities to understand that as educated women who have driven themselves abroad while we pursued graduate studies, we cannot be reduced to being dependent on strangers to drive us."<sup>100</sup> For

educated women, especially those who obtained higher education abroad, the fact that they were not allowed to drive to and from work, to the store, or even to the hospital was humiliating.

None of the women at the time claimed they decided to protest because they wanted to be Westernized or because they were inspired by US Army women driving during the First Gulf War. On the contrary, the protestors insisted to reporters that it had nothing to do with the presence of Americans.<sup>101</sup> Most Saudi women were actually shocked and even appalled at the women who had come to war with their male counterparts. The fact that these American women were living and working with men was distressing in this conservative society, even among more liberal Saudis.<sup>102</sup>

For Aisha al-Mana, however, the timing of the war did force her and many of the other women to face their vulnerability and helplessness. In another interview with Robert Lacy, the activist explained that many of the women wanted to assist in the war effort when it became necessary, but how could they do so if they could not drive?<sup>103</sup> The women were also concerned with their security during the war. As Kuwaiti women drove around the streets of Saudi Arabia, Saudi women felt vulnerable to an emergency if Iraq did indeed invade their kingdom.<sup>104</sup> With immense changes occurring within the country due to the war and the open dialogue that resulted among Saudi citizens, women saw this time as a chance to push their concerns to the forefront.

In retrospect, the timing—protesting during the Gulf War—was not the best idea. Despite the argument that no time was right, several liberal activists agreed that acting during the war did not help the cause. An official stated that although the women's actions were valiant, they made a mistake protesting in public and "in turn [created] a power struggle between the conservatives and liberals and [challenged] the King forthright."<sup>105</sup>

Due to the war, any event appearing to question the government and the religious establishment's legitimacy was sure to inspire

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95. Caryle Murphy, "Saudi Women Reunite to Remember Driving Protest."

96. Stated in a report written by religious scholars from the Majlis al-Ifṭā' al-A'ala council. Taken from Jon Jensen, "Saudi female driving ban prevents prostitution, say scholars," *Global Post: The Casbah* (2 Dec 2011): <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/the-casbah/saudi-scholars-say-female-driving-ban-prevents-prostitution>.

97. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in a Rare Protest for the Right to Travel."

98. Ibrahim, "An Outcry from the Saudi's Liberal Minority."

99. James LeMoyné, "Saudi Interior Minister Prohibits All Protests For Change by Women," *New York Times* (18 Nov 1990), 16.

100. Ibrahim, "Saudi Women Take Driver's Seat in Rare

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Protest for Right to Travel."

101. Ibrahim, "An Outcry from the Saudi Liberal Minority," A15.

102. James LeMoyné, "Army Women and the Saudis: The Encounter Shocks Both," *The New York Times* (25 Sept 1990), A1.

103. Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom*, 136.

104. Ibrahim, "An Outcry from the Saudi's Liberal Minority," A15.

105. LeMoyné, "Ban on Driving by Women Reaffirmed By Saudis," A19.

strong opposition. The religious establishment was already upset with the presence of foreign troops and used this controversy, paralleled with the threat of invasion by Iraq, to make the women drivers appear immoral and anti-Islamic. Some were even accused of being foreign spies trying to overthrow the royal family.<sup>106</sup>

The government followed suit with the religious establishment's reaction. After the *fatwa* issued by Sheik Abdul al-Aziz bin Abdallah bin Baz against the act, the Ministry of Interior formally banned women from both driving and protesting. They cited women driving as contradictory to Islamic and Saudi traditions.<sup>107</sup> Several prominent Saudi liberals, after the government reaffirmed the ban, responded vehemently. A professional woman stated, "it's 1990, we're on the brink of World War III and Saudi Arabia has just formally banned driving by women."<sup>108</sup> A male publisher also cried out, "They are making a joke of our country. Is this what American boys are coming over here to defend, the right of religious mullahs to perpetuate their rule?"<sup>109</sup>

The women themselves suffered personal consequences from their actions. After their arrest and quick release (following the signature of statements by male guardians), the women faced not only religious backlash, but also public backlash. Not all women in Saudi Arabia agreed with the protestors. It was a shock to the system of a society that had not experienced sudden protests and public challenges to the status quo before. Many more conservative and traditional Saudis did not appreciate the cause, feeling it was evidence that the country was undergoing threatening secular modernization. One Saudi woman living in Riyadh reiterated this idea, suggesting, "I want to drive, but the truth is that most Saudis don't agree with me."<sup>110</sup>

The 47 women who participated in the protest suffered enduring personal losses. They were accused of distracting from other women's issues, participating in a foreign conspiracy, and threatening the royal family. The women, their husbands, and even their drivers were not allowed to leave the country for a year. They were harassed and mocked, fired from

their government jobs, and suspended from their teaching jobs. Many of their husbands were also placed on suspension or regarded with suspicion at work.<sup>111</sup> Directly following the event, many of the women and those who knew them were afraid to speak to the press. When they did, they refused to give their names for fear of retribution.<sup>112</sup> The women's names were soon distributed in zealous pamphlets that called them "communist whores." The pamphlets accused them of being "secularist Americans" sent to undermine the King. Citizens were urged to "take whatever action they see fit."<sup>113</sup> In mosques, the women protestors were cast down as symptoms of the problem with society. Cassettes circulated by Abdul Aziz bin Baz reportedly claimed that, "the situation of women is the reason for all these woes that are falling on the nation."<sup>114</sup> Many of the women who were teachers found disdain among some of their students as well, being constantly referred to as "the drivers" and treated as criminals. One of the drivers found that twenty years after the protest she is still referred to as a "driver:" "Wherever you work, you are labeled as a 'driver' and you will never be promoted, no matter how good you are."<sup>115</sup>

Yet the women do not regret their decision to protest. Despite the consequences and controversial timing, the women gather every year to celebrate what they perceive as a victory. They saw the act as a step towards making every Saudi citizen aware of the issue.<sup>116</sup> Fawzia al-Bakr, an education professor and 1990 protest driver, stated during a reunion in 2008:

*In every society, you have different opinions. I think these women have the freedom not to drive, but then we should have the freedom to drive if we want to. If you drive, it means that you have access to the public; you have access to the institutions. But if you are totally unable to move unless you have a male to actually drive you, then you're completely paralyzed. And that's the essence of it.<sup>117</sup>*

111. Caryle Murphy, "Saudi Women Reunite To Remember Driving Protest."

112. LeMoyné, "Ban on Driving Reaffirmed by Saudis."

113. Video found on a blog posted by KHC, "English TV news report on the 1990 Saudi women's driving demonstration," *Saudi Women Driving: News and Thoughts about Saudi Women Driving* (15 May 2011): <http://saudiwomendiving.blogspot.com/2011/05/english-tv-news-report-on-1990-saudi.html>.

114. Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom*, 140.

115. Caryle Murphy, "Saudi Women Reunite to Remember Driving Protest."

116. Caryle Murphy, "Saudi Women Reunite to Remember Driving Protest."

117. Caryle Murphy, "Saudi Women Reunite to Remember

106. James LeMoyné, "Saudi Interior Minister Prohibits All Protests For Change By Women."

107. LeMoyné, "Ban on Driving by Women Reaffirmed by Saudis," A19.

108. LeMoyné, "Saudi Interior Minister Prohibits All Protests For Change By Women."

109. LeMoyné, "Saudi Interior Minister Prohibits All Protests For Change By Women."

110. LeMoyné, "Ban on Driving By Women Reaffirmed by Saudis."

## 1990 AND TODAY

The women of the 1990 protest were heroes of their time to some, though the Gulf War overshadowed their heroic act. Although the tides of history have washed over their protest, the effects of their actions are still present. By daring to drive they sparked a debate in Saudi Arabia and brought the issue to the attention of the Saudi government and its citizenry.

Clips of the protest can be seen today in a short video secretly filmed by a British news crew in 1990. In an interview shortly after the event, a Saudi female psychologist expressed her support for the protest but disagreement with the timing. She stated, "I admire the courageous move, we disagree on the timing but I share with them the same principle." She went on to suggest that the women should have protested after the crisis because during the war it was important "not to provoke super religious sentiment... my fear is the fanatics and the zealots."<sup>118</sup>

Although the law did not change and the protest brought harsh reactions from religious zealots, these women gained the desired attention. What does this mean today? The video mentioned above was found on a blog website dedicated to the Saudi women's push to drive and entitled "Saudi Women Driving." The existence of such a blog shows that the women's actions were not in vain, and although it has taken many years, the ban is once again under threat.

Today, the movement is alive and booming. In a recent story reported by the Associated Press, a study recommending granting women the right to drive has been introduced and is supported by 3,000 Saudi nationals. The study now rests in the hands of the Shura Council and will be debated by the members and King Abdullah.<sup>119</sup> This study is the outcome of several different driving campaigns held since 2005. Manal al-Sharif, the creator of Women2Drive, recalled hearing the news of the 1990 protest as a girl and being told, "those women were really bad." She explained, "for the next twenty-two years, we were not even supposed to talk about women driving."<sup>120</sup> However, it was al-Sharif who began the movement once again and bravely leads the protests occurring today.

There have been several isolated incidents of women driving since 2005, with one ending in the arrest and quick release of multiple women in 2008. As recently as 2012, a petition bearing 600 signatures fell into the King's lap, asking him to "encourage women...to begin driving whenever necessary."<sup>121</sup> The King boldly pardoned a woman sentenced to ten lashes after she was arrested for driving in 2011.<sup>122</sup> Another mass protest occurred only recently. On June 17, 2011, women who had previously been encouraged by Women2Drive on websites, blogs, and social media to defy the ban decided to do so. Several men supported their wives. One columnist tweeted, "ready to go to prison without fear;" another tweeted, "my wife decided to start the day by driving to the store and back."<sup>123</sup> One hundred women drove that Friday. Although none were imprisoned, al-Sharif was arrested the next day. Many liberal Saudi women and men rose in protest at her arrest, while the fundamentalists and traditionalists condemned her actions. After nine days she was released.

It could be argued that history is repeating itself as the movement begun 22 years ago has begun once again. The outcome may be different this time—at least that is what the women now hope. The reasons for the protests today are also different from that of 22 years ago. These women are asking for the right to drive, but also for the right to be free from male guardianship, oppression, and restriction. In a speech at the Oslo Freedom Forum in 2012, al-Sharif expressed: "This is not about driving a car. It is about being in the driver's seat of our destiny. I now say that I can measure the impact we made by how harsh the attacks were. It's this simple: we've started a movement in Saudi Arabia. We call it the Saudi Woman's Spring."<sup>124</sup>

To understand the protests today and the climate that exists within the kingdom, it is important to examine the efforts of the past and that of the 1990 driving protest. The oil boom is as much a contributor to the protests today as it was in 1990. The benefits of the oil wealth—progress in education, employment, and social status—have created the opportunity for Saudi women to stand up and voice their ideas

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### Driving Protest."

118. KHC, "English TV news report on the 1990 Saudi women's driving demonstration."

119. Associated Press, "More than 3,000 Saudis endorse study recommending women be allowed to drive," *Fox News* (18 Dec 2012): <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/12/18/more-than-3000-saudis-endorse-study-recommending-women-be-allowed-to-drive/>.

120. Manal al-Sharif, "Driving My Own Destiny," *Oslo Freedom Forum* (Norway 2012), 96.

121. "Hundreds petition Saudi King over women's right to drive," *The Arab American News* (16 June 2012), 6.

122. Sam Jones, "Saudi woman driver saved from lashing by King Abdullah," *The Guardian* (September 29, 2011): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/29/saudi-woman-lashing-king-abdullah>.

123. "Saudi women defy ban to take driver's seat," *Al-Jazeera: Middle East* (17 Jun 2011): <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2011/06/201161713200141723.html>.

124. Al-Sharif, "Driving My Own Destiny," 101.



and opinions. Without the immense changes brought by oil to Saudi Arabia, the protest would not have occurred in 1990 and would be very difficult today. For example, education funded by oil money allowed women to develop ideas, take courage, and gain respect. It gave many the opportunity to travel and widen their experiences. Employment opportunities also allowed many Saudi women to become more independent. These developments were necessary for these protests to occur.

But change can only come from within society, as one Saudi woman explained in 2008:

*Education alone cannot improve our lives. If local customs and values are deeply ingrained in the life of a person, then a long time is needed before the mentality changes and new things are accepted.*<sup>125</sup>

Another Saudi woman, in charge of a women's welfare association in Jeddah, stated, "The unemployment problem is basically among women [and] is mainly due to the social customs...The Labor Ministry alone will not be able to solve the unemployment problem... It requires joint efforts of families, schools and individual and social institutions."<sup>126</sup>

Many of the same obstacles of 22 years ago still stand in the way of women's right to drive, including a powerful religious minority, a conservative and traditional society, and continued contentious gender issues. Eventually such obstacles will be overcome as long as women such as Manal al-Sharif, under the auspices of the 1990 protest, remain vigilant in the struggle toward achieving their vision of freedom. "I don't know how long it will last, and I don't know how it will end. But I do know that a drenching rain begins with a single drop. And eventually there are flowers."<sup>127</sup>

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125. Mona al-Munajjed, "Women's Education In Saudi Arabia," *Ideation Center* (Riyadh: Booz and Co., 2008), 10.

126. Mona al-Munajjed, "Women's Employment in Saudi Arabia: A Major Challenge," *Ideation Center* (Riyadh: Booz and Co., 2009), 10.

127. Al-Sharif, "Driving My Own Destiny": 101.

# TURNING THE TIDE

## Venetian Contributions to the Battle of Lepanto

DEVIN SERLIN

Marco Antonio Bragadin did not set out to be a hero. The middle-aged Venetian commander of the Cypriot city of Famagusta had no intention of becoming an inspiration or a rallying cry for victory and vengeance. He was a Venetian patriot. However stoic and resolved his exterior emotions appeared, there must have been some part of him that filled with apprehension and no small amount of fear when his servants brought him the decapitated head of Nicolas Dandolo, the lieutenant general of Cyprus, in the fall of 1570.<sup>1</sup>

Bragadin had heard by then of the fall of Nicosia, the island's capital city, famed for its circular, almost seamless fortifications. After this defeat, Bragadin knew he must prepare for war. The Ottomans, led by Lala Mustapha Pasha, would soon be camped outside his city. Over the next eleven months, Bragadin and his men defended Famagusta against an army of Ottomans almost ten times their number, until food and supplies had all but vanished. The Pasha, impressed with the Venetians' heroic resistance, offered a ceasefire to the battered defenders on the condition that they surrender the city and retreat to Christian lands, therefore saving their lives. But during the formal surrender of the city, Bragadin, in his undying pride, insulted the Pasha. The Ottoman commander threw away his vows of chivalry and ordered the Christians executed.<sup>2</sup> Hundreds were slaughtered on the spot, but Lala Pasha saved Bragadin from immediate death. The Venetian commander was made to pay for his valiant defense of the ramparts and the death of thousands of the Pasha's soldiers.

The Ottoman troops tortured and beat Bragadin for days before finally binding him to a stone column in the town square and flaying him alive.<sup>3</sup> He died as the torturer reached his waist. As a confirmation of absolute Muslim victory, his skin was stuffed with straw and paraded around the city to the horror of its surviving citizens.

In the wake of Bragadin's demise and the slaughter of Famagusta came the rallying cry that would create a wave of Venetian vengeance against their Muslim enemy, finally culminating in one of the largest Christian naval victories on record: the Battle of Lepanto. Venice, the conqueror of the Adriatic and the mightiest Renaissance naval power in the Mediterranean, was forced into a conflict that drove the Venetians to the ends of their means to survive and emerge victorious. The Battle of Lepanto is an example of two alliances throwing all of their resources into battle in an all-or-nothing attempt at victory. The outcome would resonate throughout the Renaissance Mediterranean world. Although Lepanto was the result of cooperation between many European powers, this paper argues that it was the Venetian Republic's manpower, labor, and superior fighting vessels which ultimately led to Muslim defeat off the shores of Greece in 1571.

Venice was, first and foremost, a naval power: a loyal beneficiary of the Adriatic's rolling waves and swift currents. To understand Venice's journey to becoming a world power is to understand the republic's significance. Founded upon the ideals of mercantilism and trade, the Venetian Republic consisted of a wealthy and powerful collection of islands set in a lengthy lagoon off the Veneto coast. With her roots firmly established in the silt and sand of the Venetian Gulf, one of the greatest maritime powers in the Mediterranean was baptized by fire. Venice of the year 1000 CE was in a bitter struggle to secure the safety of her home waters against the Croat pirates of the Dalmatian coast.<sup>4</sup> For Venetian ships to voyage to and from the prosperous markets of Constantinople, Alexandria, and the Levant, the Adriatic had been clear of home-grown dangers. Doge Pietro Orseolo II suspended the pirates' tribute and set off on a campaign to eliminate the threat once and for all. The Venetian fleet, led by Orseolo, attacked and conquered the pirates' stronghold and secured the Mediterranean. As historian Richard Crowley asserts in *City of Fortune*, "if there is a single moment that marked the start

1. Roger Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 21, no. 3 (April 1, 2009), 66–75.

2. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 66–75.

3. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 66–75.

4. Roger Crowley, *City of Fortune* (New York: Random House, 2011), 7–14.



of the rise to maritime power, it was now, with the doge's triumphal return to the lagoon.<sup>5</sup>

Every year afterwards, the Republic commemorated this victory with an annual celebration. On this day, with no lack of pomp and circumstance, the Venetian doge and patriarch, along with thousands of the Serene Republic's citizens, noble and merchant alike, took to their boats and sailed to the eastern end of the main *lidi*, the islands separating the Venetian Lagoon from the Venetian Gulf.<sup>6</sup> Religious leaders chanted prayers for the beginning of the sailing season. The doge would then throw a golden ring, a sign of Venice's marriage to the sea, into the brackish water and announce, "We espouse thee, O Sea, as a sign of true and perpetual dominion."<sup>7</sup> The ceremony acted as a very real metaphor. This matrimonial ritual between Venice and the Adriatic reflects the powerful respect and admiration Venice had for the sea, her provider. To the Venetians, the sea was a supplier and source of power, the medieval equivalent of the interstate.

Venice, also known as St. Mark's Republic, lived and died on the white caps of the Adriatic and Mediterranean. To protect its newfound source of prosperity, Venice began bolstering its naval power. With Venice's rise to maritime prominence came the rise of the galley, a powerful naval vessel. Crowley describes Venice as "a republic of wood, iron, rope, sails, rudders, and oars."<sup>8</sup> Venice boasted an expansive shipyard called the arsenal. The arsenal was a massive complex situated in the parish of San Martino and surrounded by large walls, an anomaly among the low-lying buildings of the island.<sup>9</sup> These large walls protected the inner workings of the shipyard from the prying eyes of civilians and foreigners. Sentries walked the length of the ramparts through rain or shine, night and day. These watchmen served to help alert and prevent a possible fire breakout, an ever-constant threat to the dry wood, sail material, and hemp used for ropes and lines lying in the arsenal's warehouses. The watchmen also guarded the area from foreign spies hoping to steal Venetian naval architecture techniques.<sup>10</sup> Here, behind its giant curtains, the manpower of the arsenal came alive.

The *arsenalotti*, the arsenal's workers, worked in unison. They were meticulous in their preparation and material selection. As an island, Venice had to utilize the surrounding regions' lumber, hemp, and sail-making supplies to construct their galleys. Shipbuilders preferred Dalmatian pine; captains also prized the expert seamen of the same region along the coast of modern-day Croatia.<sup>11</sup> In an uncommon acknowledgement for the time, Venetian officials were acutely aware of the dangers of deforestation. Workers kept detailed records of logging areas to prevent themselves from revisiting an area too soon after it had been cut, allowing for greater forest growth. Faster growth also meant larger timbers for construction.<sup>12</sup>

Venice, unlike mainland competitors such as the Papal States and Genoa, could produce both merchant and naval galleys at an astonishing speed. Crowley describes the arsenal and its workers as Venice's "Forge of War."<sup>13</sup> One report, from June 1570, claimed that the *arsenalotti* assembled 127 light galleys and 11 heavy galleys in one month.<sup>14</sup> Historian Jack Beeching asserts in *The Galleys of Lepanto* that the Venetian shipwrights could lay a keel in the morning and, using modern-day assembly line techniques, could launch the new galley's hull by nightfall.<sup>15</sup> Venice's wealth played a vital role in this venture. Out of Venice's total annual revenue—an astounding seven million ducats—at least five hundred thousand ducats were always placed in reserve to accommodate the needs of the fleet and the arsenal in case of Ottoman aggression.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the whole process of their naval build-up, Venetian eyes were wary and ever trained to the East.

The Venetian arsenal's speed and precision was crucial to the armament and deployment of Venetian fleets. The Ottomans knew this and sought to recreate Venetian construction practices in their own shipyards and foundries in Istanbul by copying, and stealing, Venetian building methods. Plans and knowledge were usually brought to the Sultan by defecting Christians.<sup>17</sup> However, the Ottomans were never able to fully comprehend and refabricate the Venetian naval construction techniques and

5. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 10.

6. Thomas F. Madden, *Venice: A New History* (New York: Viking, 2012), 104.

7. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 104.

8. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 279.

9. David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 18.

10. Chambers and Pullan, *Venice: A Documentary History*, 19.

11. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 233.

12. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 63.

13. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 278.

14. Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, The Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2009), 212.

15. Jack Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982), 152-153.

16. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 153.

17. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 152.

instead relied on slower, but similarly effective procedures for their galleys. Venice's arsenal continued to produce their fleets with greater speed than their Ottoman counterparts, an advantage that worked in their favor at Lepanto.

Sleek and long, known for their speed, agility, and shallow draft, galleys were capable of roles ranging from main battle line defenders to pirate and corsair hunters. When the galley was assembled, it became the cornerstone of any naval fleet in the Mediterranean. With one or two lateen sails, the Venetian and Ottoman war galleys varied little in appearance and operation. Both were capable of being rowed in times of calm winds or tedious tacking against the ever-changing Mediterranean gusts. Volunteers made up most Venetian galley crews while their Ottoman counterparts used Christian slaves and "an annual levy of men from the provinces of Anatolia and Europe" to row.<sup>18</sup> Ottoman slaves were forced to work long hours and endure harsh conditions:

*It was these wretches, chained three or four to a foot-wide bench who made sea wars possible. Their sole function was to work themselves to death. Shackled hand and foot...The men, naked apart from a pair of linen breeches, were flayed raw by the sun; they endured sleep deprivation on the narrow bench toward lunacy. The stroke keeper's drum and the overseer's lash...whipped them beyond the point of exhaustion.<sup>19</sup>*

Though these warships were well suited for the Adriatic, Renaissance galleys had several drawbacks. Both Ottoman and Venetian crafts, with their shallow draft and low freeboard, were relatively incapable of open-water travel, since the boats flooded easily in rough water. This, combined with the physical limits of their rowers and water stores, confined a galley fleet close to shore during travel, some having to put ashore almost every other day to replenish their supplies.<sup>20</sup> Large naval campaigns had to be planned with these issues in mind. With the galley's long-voyage shortcomings, navies relied on bigger, broader ships to carry supplies and manpower. Venice turned merchant ships into military transport craft. These vessels were round-hulled, slow, and capable of carrying 250 tons of cargo, with some large enough to move twice that.<sup>21</sup> Later on, Venice adapted these ex-merchant vessels into floating gun platforms

called galleasses.<sup>22</sup> The full complement of both galleys and galleasses, along with smaller and more agile boats called galiotes, made the Venetian fleet a force to be reckoned with. This combination of raw naval power, and the rate at which these vessels could be produced, would be an influential factor in the victory at Lepanto.

Advances in gunpowder technology and the introduction of cannon into naval warfare in the centuries before Lepanto brought about new rules for fleet engagements. Cannon could be mounted on the weather, quarter, and poop decks of a galley. However, the cannon was a clumsy, confusing, and often dangerous weapon to operate even on land and away from the constant motion of a ship on open water. Although small guns were used at times, the primary goal of a war galley was to close quickly and either board an enemy ship, using a small bridge stored on the quarterdeck, or to sink their adversary with the bow's ram.<sup>23</sup> Crowley describes how conventional tactics relied on discharging several devastating salvos and then ramming the enemy.<sup>24</sup> Once engaged, sailors and soldiers, and sometimes even the rowers themselves, would race to arms and clamber across to the enemy ship where hand-to-hand combat would commence. At this point, land and sea warfare were no different: the fight became "an infantry battle on floating platforms."<sup>25</sup> Swords, pikes, boarding axes, crossbows, and even grenades were common among the numerous galley clashes of the Mediterranean. Often, men fell overboard and drowned during battle. The slave rowers of the Ottoman galleys were especially vulnerable. They had little hope of survival in battle if their craft were holed or set aflame: "if the crews survived to enter battle, the chained and unprotected rowers could only sit and wait to be killed by men of their own country and creed."<sup>26</sup>

Galley warfare between Ottomans and Venetians had been around since the time of Alexios I Komnenos. Shipping men and equipment by sea was, and still is, the most efficient way to move large bodies of troops and supplies from one destination to another. Fleets of galleys and galleasses commonly delivered armies to the field. Control of the Mediterranean was vital to stemming the flow of enemy movement. For centuries Ottoman

18. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.

19. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.

20. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 75.

21. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 60-61.

22. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 259-260.

23. Madden, *Venice: A New History*.

24. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 257-258.

25. William Oliver Stevens and Allan Westcott, *A History of Sea Power* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 2008), 107-108.

26. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.



and Venetian sailors and soldiers fought for naval supremacy at the center of the world.

The Byzantine Empire was the strongest bulwark against Ottoman incursion. Slowly, the Ottomans advanced into Anatolia, but the Greeks stood firm. But the Greek resistance could only hold out for so long without aid. On May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell after a fifty-four-day siege. The massive army of Sultan Mehmet II breached the daunting three-tiered Theodosian Land Walls defending Constantinople with a mixture of repetitive assaults, concentrated fire, and high-arching bombard cannons capable of launching projectiles weighing hundreds of pounds. Latins, including economic rivals Genoa and Venice, fought side-by-side with their Greek allies to defend the capital. Hundreds of Venetian soldiers died on the battlements. Emperor Constantine XI discarded his royal garments and charged the advancing Ottoman lines, followed by his personal bodyguards. His body was never found.<sup>27</sup>

With the fall of the Byzantine Empire came a huge flow of Ottoman troops and influence into the western Mediterranean. Ottoman fleets had been in the Aegean before; the first Ottoman-Venetian sea engagement was off the coast of Negroponte in 1416.<sup>28</sup> Their spread remained almost unchecked by any western European power until early 1400. Ottomans had reached the borders of Venetian territory and threatened their coveted maritime trading routes.<sup>29</sup> Over the years, Venice battled on and off with the Ottoman Empire, but there was no stopping the Ottoman sultans from their mission to create a single Muslim empire. By 1570, the garrison at Rhodes had fallen. Cyprus had fallen, culminating in Marco Antonio Bragadin's martyrdom. The only bright side was Malta. The fortifications at Birgu had held, and the troops under the Grand Master of the Order of Saint John, Jean Parisot de la Valette, fought bravely and finally expelled a large Ottoman force, rumored to be upwards of 100,000 strong, from the island in September 1565.<sup>30</sup>

But the Ottomans would not be defeated so easily. They soon gained control of Famagusta. Renaissance Muslim ideology, one of aggressive expansion, had not changed. European Christians needed to take consolidated action

against the advancing Ottomans.<sup>31</sup> For decades political players in Europe had been pleading for such a response, but their advice went unheeded. Pope Pius IV called for a unified Christian army for years during his papacy.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, "unified" was a loosely defined term for Europe at the time. The mainland European kingdoms squabbled when the pope suggested they band together. Money was always the issue. Who would pay for an army; who would contribute soldiers and equipment, and who would lead it?

When Pius V renewed his predecessor's calls for a Christian alliance against the Ottomans, his prayers were answered, and the Holy League was born in the spring of 1571.<sup>33</sup> This conglomeration of states included Spain and all her possessions, including the Low Countries, Sicily, and Naples, the Republics of Genoa and Venice, and the Papal States.<sup>34</sup> The Hapsburgs in Spain provided the monetary foundation for the alliance, as they were the only power that could match the wealth of the Ottomans. Don Juan de Austria was appointed the League's fleet commander. Known as Gerónimo, Don Juan was the Spanish king Philip II's half-brother.<sup>35</sup> Don Juan was a capable captain, but he was young—only twenty-one years old at the time of his appointment—lacked general seamanship skills, and had little tactical knowledge. Instead, Don Juan relied on the advice of veteran sailors like Gian' Andrea Doria and Luis de Requesens.<sup>36</sup> Though many openly questioned his ability to lead such a force against battle-hardened Ottoman sailors, Don Juan took command as planned. In the summer of 1571, the fleet of the Holy League, twenty ships carrying close to 15,800 men, set out to relieve the Cypriots under Ottoman siege.<sup>37</sup>

Despite Pius V's best hopes, the Holy League's fleet was not a unified force. Greed, national rivalries, and general mistrust among the ranks nearly caused the fleet to disintegrate on several occasions. In several incidents, soldiers and sailors attacked and even killed each other on their galleys.<sup>38</sup> Officers were forced to execute troublesome ringleaders to enforce discipline. Supplies were stolen when men deserted their posts. Genoese and Venetians, long-time competitors with a mutual dislike that at times

31. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 195.

32. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 102.

33. T.C.F. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, 2006), 59.

34. Hopkins, 59-61.

35. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 30-31.

36. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 232.

37. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto*, 77-78.

38. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 250-251.

27. Roger Crowley, 1453: *The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 215-234.

28. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 301-303.

29. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 304.

30. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 86-187.

boiled over into hate, refused to sail with each other. Cooperation between the two merchant powers seemed improbable. Venetians disliked the Genoese commander, Gian' Andrea Doria, while the Genoese sailors openly distrusted one of the Venetian commanders, Sebastiano Venier.<sup>39</sup> Don Juan called the individual states' captains together to restate the need for cohesion. The Holy League could not afford to lose the quick and agile Venetian galleys.

Men were unhappy with the fleet's progress as it sailed eastward, raiding occasionally as it went. Some captains and commanders suggested that it was simply too late in the sailing season to engage the enemy. October was closing in, and the Mediterranean's swells began to chill. Philip of Spain even wrote a letter to Don Juan begging him to abandon the operation, winter his fleet in Sicily, and start again next summer.<sup>40</sup> These men needed to work together, or else a joint European assault on the Ottomans seemed doomed for failure.

That all changed in early October 1571. The Holy League's fleet was weathering a storm off the island of Corfu when they met a small frigate carrying news of Famagusta and the almost complete extermination of its defenders. The story of the courageous sixty-eight day defense of the city and the vicious sacking and pillaging that took place afterwards inspired the Holy League's soldiers.<sup>41</sup> The men looked past their differences as cries to avenge Bragadin and Famagusta's defenders reverberated throughout the Christian fleet.

The primary purpose of the fleet, however, had been negated. Famagusta had fallen. Spanish commanders counseled Don Juan to turn back.<sup>42</sup> It was worthless to sacrifice valuable men, ships, and money for no apparent goal, they argued. What happened next proved to be a pivotal point in the conflict-ridden history between Muslims and Christians. Crowley describes the effect of Marco Antonio Bragadin's death on his fellow Venetians:

*Word of Bragadin's fate had a sudden and electrifying effect on the Christian resolve. The Venetian naval commanders clamored for revenge and declared to Don Juan that they would proceed alone if the Spanish failed to support them. Forward momentum became unstoppable.*<sup>43</sup>

To avenge Bragadin's heroic death, the Venetians were set for the encounter. Nothing could sway their intentions. At last a united Holy League fleet headed for Lepanto to face the Ottomans.

On October 7, 1571, the two fleets met. Arrayed at Lepanto was the largest assortment of vessels ever assembled in the Mediterranean. Over 140,000 soldiers and crewmen perched on the decks of 600 ships, close to seventy percent of the total galleys afloat on the sea between Europe and Asia.<sup>44</sup> The Christian battle line was made up of sixty-two galleys in the center commanded by Don Juan, Gianandrea Doria of Genoa on the right with fifty-two galleys, and the Venetians on the left with fifty-seven galleys commanded by Agostino Barbargio.<sup>45</sup> Most of the left wing's galleys were lighter and more agile than the rest of the battle fleet. Their goal was to use their superior mobility to force their Ottoman counterparts against the lee shore, limiting their movement for the rest of the engagement.

On the eve of battle Don Juan made his rounds to the various squadrons to inspect and inspire. He paused at the Venetian left wing. He called for them to avenge the death of their countrymen, adding: "My children, we are here to conquer or to die as heaven may determine. Do not let our impious foe ask of us 'Where is your God?' Fight in his holy name, and in death or victory you will win immortality."<sup>46</sup> As the eleventh hour approached, the banner of the Holy League flew. In historian T.C.F. Hopkins's words, "the European silence ended."<sup>47</sup> The crew of the Spanish flagship *Real* raised the Crucifix above their decks and Don Juan fired his pistol to signal the fleet's advance.

As the Venetian galleys fought on the left flank, the Venetian galleasses acted as moving gun platforms on the right.<sup>48</sup> These six ships had an advantage in firepower that no contingent of Ottoman ships could match. Two of these vessels were commanded by relatives of Marco Antonio Bragadin, out for Ottoman blood.<sup>49</sup> With the avenging Venetians leading the way, the Holy League began to break through the Muslim lines. Crowley comments on the furiousness of the Venetian sailors and soldiers: "the Venetians had come for revenge; many of their ships were from Crete, the Dalmatian coast, and the islands,

39. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 242-243.

40. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 243-248.

41. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 238.

42. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 252.

43. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

44. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 256.

45. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 257.

46. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 261.

47. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam*, 131.

48. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 259.

49. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

all ravaged by Ali Pasha's summer raids.<sup>50</sup> Soon, the Holy league trapped and beached the Ottoman right wing, led by Shuluch Mehmet. With their galleys aground, Muslim sailors fled into mainland Greece. They were followed by the Venetians, who beached several of their own ships in pursuit, calling for revenge for Bragadin and yelling "Famagusta! Famagusta!"<sup>51</sup>

As night fell, the fighting died down. Close to 40,000 men, Ottoman and European, lay dead or dying after just four hours.<sup>52</sup> Venetian casualties numbered around four to five thousand.<sup>53</sup> Only three thousand Ottoman prisoners were taken alive. One hundred thirty-seven of their ships sat burning on the sea's surface or lay floundered on the ocean floor, where seventeen Christian ships joined them. Christendom had its victory, but it was a hard-fought battle.

According to Francis Bacon, quoted by Jack Beeching in *The True Greatness of Kingdoms and States*, "The battle of Lepanto arrested the greatness of the Turk."<sup>54</sup> At Lepanto the Holy League proved that the defenses at Malta were not a fluke, and that victory against the powerful Muslim empire was possible. Christian forces were not inferior to the Ottomans.<sup>55</sup> Though the forges and dry docks of Istanbul could easily replace what had been lost at Lepanto, the battle signaled the beginning of the end for Ottoman sea dominance. For decades, Christians had become accustomed to inferiority at sea against the Ottomans, falling in defeat after defeat. Lepanto changed that. Christian Europe leapt from its naval depressive state in a single bound.<sup>56</sup> Andrew Hess describes the Holy League's victory at Lepanto as the establishment of a permanent limit to Ottoman expansion, one which "ended the fear of Ottoman invincibility."<sup>57</sup> The Ottoman Empire's maritime reign was slowly but surely beginning to subside.

Venetian contributions, although seemingly small in comparison to the financial resources of the Hapsburgs, were indispensable at Lepanto. Venice's swift galleys and imposing galleasses ensured a Holy League victory. The Venetian left flank held strong, protecting the

larger Spanish galleys to their starboard. With the galleasses' guns, the overwhelming number of Muslim vessels stood no chance. Marco Antonio Bragadin's death in Famagusta spurred the soldiers of Venice, as well as many others, to lay down their differences and focus on the elimination of the Ottoman fleet. Bragadin's death was a motivation for revenge. Sometimes a call to action can turn the tide in battle. Without Bragadin's ultimate sacrifice, the Holy League might have fallen apart on that October morning. Marco Antonio Bragadin was a Venetian hero. In turn, without Venetian influence and assistance, Lepanto would have been a failure. The Holy League united in a Venetian cause, and emerged victorious thanks to Venetian vessels. Miguel de Cervantes, the author of the famous Spanish novel *Don Quixote* and a soldier at Lepanto, described the battle as "the most memorable and honorable occasion that could be in the light of past and present centuries."<sup>58</sup> Lepanto changed the course of history.

50. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 267.

51. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

52. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 276-277.

53. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam*, 150.

54. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 11.

55. Andrew C. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History," *Past & Present Society* no. 57 (November 1972), 55.

56. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 286.

57. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History," 55.

58. Jenny Jordan, "Galley Warfare in Renaissance Intellectual Layering: Lepanto Through Actium," *Viator (Berkeley)* 35 (July 1, 2004), 563.



# THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN AMERICA FROM 1908 TO 1913

## The Birth of the Federal Reserve System

ADAM ALCORN

The issue of central banking was not new to Americans by the 1913 establishment of the Federal Reserve. At the time, economic conditions were unstable and wealthy industrialists and investment bankers were prominent fixtures of society. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. Pierpont Morgan. All were men of great wealth, visibility, and influence. Rockefeller held a near monopoly over oil refinement, as did Carnegie over steel, and Morgan over investment banking. The financial condition of the United States however, had been less than stellar with panics in 1857, 1873, 1893, and 1907, and it seemed clear to the public that these industrial tycoons were at the least partially responsible for the mess. This animosity underpinned what came to be known as the Progressive struggle in American politics. The defining economic legislation adopted during this era was the Federal Reserve Act, also known as the Glass-Owen bill, which created a central Bank of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

1. G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature from Jekyll Island: A Second Look at The Federal Reserve* (Westlake Village, CA: American Media, 2002), 461.

How was the institutionalization and centralization of the nation's banking and currency passed into law during this era of Progressive populism? It was a highly controversial proposition that had failed on two previous occasions, though it was finally passed in 1913. It was sold to the American public as a way to stabilize the economy and create a more "elastic" currency to enable expansions of credit during crises, thus protecting the common man from economic recession. What will be made clear is that the American congress was fighting a deep ideological war, and the bankers won. The question is how: what tactics were used to make political progress? What were the characteristics of the political climate that made it possible to establish a central bank in America? It is important to understand several things about banking reform, as it was a primary issue of congressional consideration during this time of progressivism in American politics.

A rather conspicuous cast of protagonists in the public arena enabled the passage of the Glass – Owen bill on December 23, 1913.<sup>1</sup> The men that lobbied in support of centralized currency reform at some point included John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, Senator Nelson Aldrich, and others. One might not think that this patrician assortment of wealth would represent the populist and progressive outlook of the common man, but nevertheless these men were some of the driving forces behind the Federal Reserve System being enacted into law. Upon observation of the circumstances preceding the creation of the Federal Reserve, it becomes clear that the bill was written by a group of unelected powerful businessmen with the intent of securing their own fortunes.

## FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT

Over one hundred years after its founding, current criticisms of the Federal Reserve often include accusations of its role in enabling political influence over monetary policy. This is neither new criticism, nor is it baseless. During the earliest debates of currency reform, in Congress and among public, politicians and laymen alike were concerned about the politicization of the nation's economy. James J. Hill expressed this in a critique that made newspapers across America on October 10, 1913. Hill became wealthy in the railroad industry, and was in frequent competition with the other industrialists of his time. He frequently and publically opposed government favors for industry. "Naturally," Hill said "the [Federal Reserve] board being a political instead of a financial body by the law of its constitution,



its seat is placed in Washington.”<sup>2</sup> Hill’s complaints were based on what he claimed was “political discrimination” against his industry, the railroads, and their exclusion from a bond issuance subsidy included in the currency reform bill that was currently being debated in congress. His motive of receiving government privilege does not draw much sympathy. However, this highlights just one of the potential controversies regarding centrally appropriated wealth.

Senator Nelson Aldrich, a leading political proponent of currency reform, proposed the first plan regarding banking and currency reform in January of 1911 entitled the Aldrich Plan.<sup>3</sup> Nelson Aldrich had close business and personal relationships with some of the most powerful – and unpopular – banking dynasties in the world. The marriage of his sister, Abby Greene Aldrich to John David Rockefeller Jr. on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1901 would cement this relationship in the public eye.<sup>4</sup> Rockefeller Jr. was the son of oil tycoon J.D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil, whose reputation was less than stellar with the average middle class American by 1910. The unpopularity of the Rockefeller dynasty was shared by many other wealthy industrialists and bankers, including John Pierpont Morgan, Frank A. Vanderlip, and A. Piatt Andrew. This negative sentiment largely resulted from what the public saw as an active role in monopolizing vast amounts of wealth and therefore causing the credit contraction crises of 1897, and more recently 1907. The banker’s response to credit contraction, however, was of much greater importance to the future of currency reform in the United States.

There was much currency and banking legislation written and enacted between 1907 and 1913. This was in the midst of the Progressive Era, spanning the end of William Howard Taft’s presidency and the beginning of Woodrow Wilson’s years in office. Americans had Teddy Roosevelt fresh in their minds, and his rhetoric of trust busting was still deeply entrenched in the political arena. After the Panic of 1907, banking reform took center stage on the Progressive agenda.

## WHAT ABOUT 1907?

In January 1910, the *Morning Oregonian* printed an article entitled “The Big Six of Finance;

The Most Powerful Group in the World.”<sup>5</sup> According to this piece, the group, including J.P. Morgan of banking fame and John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil, represented a combined 800 million dollars of net worth. During this period of national economic hardship following the panic of 1907, the public was outraged by so much wealth concentrated in so few hands. The author of the article quipped, “someone recently told Senator Aldrich, when he was advocating the creation of a great, central National Bank ‘We already have practically a central bank, it is the allied financial institutions controlled by the big six.’”<sup>6</sup> The sentiment here was not lost on the American people, and thus trust in large banking firms was declining. The causes and effects of the Panic of 1907 were important, but politics dictated the course. In grasping public opinion, the narrative presented by the media is of utmost importance. In politics, perception is everything.

In 19<sup>th</sup>-century America there were two primary, but opposing schools of economic thought. The “hard-money” advocates supported a solely gold or silver-backed currency, whereas “soft-money” advocates preferred bank notes backed by the government. The soft-money advocates had been winning the ideological war since the issuance of emergency currencies during the Civil War. Successive Panics in 1873, 1897, and 1907 resulted in a lack of political pressure to remove National bank charters, perhaps signaling the victory of fiat, or government backed, currency. The debate was no longer about the fundamentals of currency and banking. It was no longer whether Americans should have a central bank, or whether government should be involved, but *how* government was to be involved in said central bank.

The Panic of 1907, otherwise known as the “Knickerbocker Crisis,” was integral to the formation of the Federal Reserve. According to the contemporary mainstream press, the “Knickerbocker Crisis” was not vastly different from the panics of 1873 or 1897. In 1908, NYU economist Joseph French Johnson published an influential article in *Political Science Quarterly* that shaped mainstream opinion. In the article, “The Crisis and Panic of 1907” he described the events of 1907 and lobbied for a central bank. Johnson wrote, “that which will probably appear to historians the most important is the great increase in the gold supply with the resultant

2. “Hill Denounces Currency Bill as Socialistic,” *Boston Journal*, 10 Oct 1913, accessed 12 Oct 2012, America’s Historical Newspapers.

3. “No Central Bank, but a Federation, Is Aldrich Plan. His Reform is Sweeping Liberalization of Present,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 Jan 1911.

4. “Rockefeller’s Bride Gets a Fortune in Wedding Gifts,” *Boston Morning Journal*, 10 Oct 1901.

5. “The Big Six of Finance; World’s Most Powerful Group,” *Morning Oregonian*, 16 Jan 1910.

6. “The Big Six of Finance; World’s Most Powerful Group,” *Morning Oregonian*, 16 Jan 1910.

rise of prices.”<sup>7</sup> While Johnson interpreted the increase in gold production as paramount, what has drawn the studies of historians was not the increase, but the subsequent contraction in the money supply and its effects in the United States.

Since the Civil War, government-chartered banks (known as National Banks) had been an increasingly important fixture of American economic life.<sup>8</sup> The method used by government banks to maintain the value of paper currency was to peg the value of the notes to the value of gold and silver, both of which had enjoyed a long history of relative price stability. Despite the relative price stability, gold production was frequently able to influence the price of gold and gold-backed currencies. According to Johnson, “the average price of commodities in gold-standard countries rose some forty percent” between 1897 and 1907, and “in the stock market the upward movement of prices during those ten years was even greater.”<sup>9</sup> The resultant rise in stock market prices reveals the relationship between gold production and gold-backed currencies. That is, some portion of the economic growth seen from 1897 to 1907 was attributable to increased market value of the economy, and some attributable to the increased supply of gold. It does not tell us how much growth was attributable to credit created out of thin air by bankers unsatisfied with their shrinking market shares.

Rising prices in the preceding decade as not in itself a direct cause of the Panic of 1907. Johnson wrote that, “it is very difficult to escape the conclusion that all this advance of prices and expansion of credit must in the main be attributed to the great increase in the world’s stock of gold.”<sup>10</sup> But where, then, did the credit come from, and what happened to it in 1907? There were several factors leading to the mass credit expansion, but without the system of government backed fractional reserve banking it could have never occurred.

Fractional reserve banking is the prevailing banking system in the modern world and has long been a subject of serious study. The primary characteristics of a fractional reserve system are the disproportionate “reserve requirements,” or capital requirements, in relation to liabilities that a bank may carry. An average reserve requirement as established by the government

could be, for example, ten percent. This means that a bank is required to carry only ten percent reserves (gold, silver, assets, etc) in relation to the amount of liabilities, loans, and any potential payouts. Reserve requirements in the United States were set at a five percent requirement by a standardization process through the issuance of National bank charters beginning in 1864.<sup>11</sup> Compliance with the reserve minimum and a multitude of other regulations were required to qualify for a National Member Bank Charter, which implied solvency and placated investor concerns. Accounting measures were slightly altered in 1874 and again in 1902 with congressional acts, but the reserve requirement hovered at the five-percent mark throughout the duration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>12</sup> This appears steady but when the exponential fractional reserve effect of increased credit is applied, the potential for mass expansion of credit is better understood.

By 1907 the price of gold had been rising for over a decade. This created the opportunity for unprecedented growth and investment of capital. As money made its way from large National banks, to smaller banks, and eventually to the investor, the sum created opportunities for the banks to extend credit in a ratio of twenty to one (five percent requirement minimum) at each step of the way. Once in the hands of the borrower, a particular sum of money had generated additional money available for other borrowers at a rate of ninety-five percent. In a fractional reserve system banks are encouraged by market and other forces to lend the maximum amount of money that they can maintain legally sufficient reserves for. This increases profit, as interest is the primary income source for all investment institutions. The more borrowing that occurs within an economy, the more plentiful the money supply becomes. An increase in the supply of money requires a corresponding decrease in the price of money, otherwise known as interest. This is an incentive to keep interest rates high and provides the only market force that checks the otherwise endless expansion of credit and inflation. If banks were not given government charters to legalize their system of fractional reserve banking, they would be subject to a reputation of solvency or insolvency in the market, and thus be incentivized to have a sufficient reserve to liability ratio. This was not the case in 1907.

Additional factors contributing to the

7. Joseph F. Johnson, “The Crisis and Panic of 1907,” *Political Science Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1908): 455-67, accessed 19 Nov 2012, JSTOR.

8. Griffin, 12-14

9. Johnson, 455 – 467.

10. Johnson, 455 – 467.

11. Philip Cagan, “Determinants and Effects of Changes in the Stock of Money, 1875 – 1960,” (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1965), 151-233.

12. Cagan, 151 – 233.

mass expansion of credit included some very destructive developments. Johnson wrote, “what is much more significant is the fact that the absorption of capital during the last ten years in railroads, ...industrial plants, in subways and tunnels, ... [and in] South American enterprises, combined with *the positive destruction* of capital in three very costly wars...”<sup>13</sup> Referring to the Spanish American war of 1898, the Boer War of 1900, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 – 1905, Johnson termed these events “positive destruction.” The only positive he could have been referring to was the increased economic activity and credit expansion resulting from the *destruction* of capital during the wars. This had a negative immediate impact on net worth, but the credit expansions created as a result of massive expenditures helped to lower interest rates and therefore increase borrowing. So it can be concluded that the so called “positive destruction” of the decade preceding the panic was yet another contributing factor to the credit expansion experienced.

*After 1897 there was a considerable increase in the total of banking capital and surplus in the United States, but it was not proportionate to the immense expansion of banking liabilities*  
- J.F. Johnson

## EASY MONEY

Many twenty-first century economists agree on the significance of “positive destruction,” long-term modest investments in industry, the inflationary nature of the fractional reserve system, and an increase in the gold supply as precipitants leading to credit expansion. What is it about credit expansion, then, that leads to a panic? How can a more plentiful money supply be so potentially damaging to the economy? Answers to these questions can be found by looking at the Panic of 1907.

The “Knickerbocker Crisis” of 1907 was on its face nearly identical to the panics that had come to be expected. Its significance lies in the fact that it was the last major economic crisis before the creation of the Federal Reserve. The Panic of 1907 set the table for banking and currency reform in America. The crisis began in January of 1907 marked by a steady decline in stocks that lasted months.<sup>14</sup> When stocks decline across all sectors of industry, as was the case in the first quarter of 1907, it is necessarily caused in part by currency devaluation, or inflation. As Johnson noted, there had been heavy investment

in railroad and mining stocks, which had been barely scratching a profit even in the “boom” years of the preceding decade. The Hepburn Rate Bill that established government enforced cartel regulation on the industry was passed in 1906, but confidence was already shaky.<sup>15</sup> Due to the low rate of return, there was a decreasing rate of investment, and so the industrialists we mentioned earlier were struggling to raise capital. Johnson also wrote that, “during 1906, on account of needs that seemed imperative, railroads and other corporations had subjected the money market to intense strain by their issues of new stocks and bonds.” When stocks and bonds are issued against currency, either the value of the stock, or the value of the currency must correspondingly decrease if there is no value added to offset the increased nominal value. This contributed to an exhaustion of capital that made new investment more difficult.

With the currency artificially and arbitrarily allocated, demand for money outgrew the corresponding supply. This does not represent an over investment, but a misallocation of capital ushered in by the false prosperity signaled by the mass credit expansion. Again according to Johnson, “this meant that a more painful and probably longer period of liquidation was necessary...”<sup>16</sup> This period of liquidation is what we call a recession, or crisis. Investors trying to take advantage of the market conditions will always drive interest rates higher as the money supply becomes strained. The Knickerbocker Trust in New York City was rumored to be insolvent and the panic began.<sup>17</sup> When banks were subject to “bank runs”, prior to 1907 their only option has been to close their doors and declare “cash payment suspensions.” This created further panic and usually did not remain contained to one bank, but spread throughout the market. What set this particular panic apart from the rest was the response.

*To combat depression by a forced credit expansion is to attempt to cure the evil by the very means which brought it about; because we are suffering from a misdirection of production, we want to create further misdirection—a procedure which can only lead to a much more severe crisis as soon as the credit expansion comes to an end.*

- Friedrich August von Hayek

15. Johnson, 456.

16. Johnson, 462.

17. “Knickerbocker Trust Co. is Compelled to Suspend. Act Occurs after 8,000,000 Have Been Paid out to Depositors,” *Wilkes-Barre Times*, 22 Oct 1907, accessed 11 Oct 2012, America’s Historical Newspapers.

13. Johnson, 457.

14. Johnson, 455.



The exact details of the financial predicament that the Knickerbocker trust had gotten into are uncertain. As reported in newspapers in October 1907, the Knickerbocker trust had been borrowing money from the government at privileged interest rates for months, via Secretary of the Treasury Cortelyou.<sup>18</sup> What happened next has gone down in history as the time J.P. Morgan bailed out the U.S. Government. We have seen things were a bit more complicated, but the narrative presented by the press was simple. The news coverage can be summed up fairly by this headline of the Baltimore American Newspaper: "J.P. Morgan is In Command. Directs Campaign And Saves The Day. Millions Poured In... Rockefeller Will Help."<sup>19</sup> This was in effect a multi-million dollar public relations campaign.

In March 1908, the Senate took up discussion of the causes of the panic. Senator James P. Clarke identified the incredible credit expansion as key. He reminded the Senate that, "the Knickerbocker Trust Company, of New York, with a capital of only \$1,000,000, was able to make loans to the amount of \$50,000,000. So the proportion of capital to loans was not that of one to five, as the Senator from Rhode Island suggests, but was the relation of one to fifty."<sup>20</sup> There is no debating that the Knickerbocker trust was experiencing a crisis, whether truly solvent or not we will likely never know. The fundamental causes of the Panic we have been over, the immediate consequences were made public by the failure of the Knickerbocker trust, and the response would determine the course of United States monetary policy.

At first it is difficult to see how the Knickerbocker Trust Company and others like it managed to stay "solvent" for so long under such a fragile system, but throughout much of modern history, the ten percent reserve requirement has been almost always sufficient. According to economic historians G. Edward Griffin and John Klein, the Knickerbocker Trust Company experienced a "currency drain." In short, a currency drain occurs when a lending institution loans money disproportionately with its reserve, thus causing a disproportionate amount of required payments to other banks via

check payments.<sup>21</sup> The corresponding drain on the reserves of the initial bank then incites panic, and the remainder of the financial institutions and customers attempt to settle payment with the troubled institution, usually resulting in a cash payment suspension followed by a bankruptcy. According to Griffin, "the banks did not fail because the system was weak. The system failed because the banks were weak."<sup>22</sup>

Responding to the panic, Rockefeller stated publicly: "every man with the good of his country at heart should, by word and deed, lend a hand now to reestablish confidence, and I propose to do my part to the full extent of my resources."<sup>23</sup> Why were Rockefeller and Morgan willing to inject their own resources when Secretary of the Treasury Cortelyou was consistently affirming that he would continue to "assist...in every proper way legitimate business interests?"<sup>24</sup> The number of banks in the United States had been on the rise since the turn of the century, and by 1910 the amount had doubled to 20,000 banks, the majority of which were formed in the expanding West and South. By 1900, the number of non-federally chartered banks was over sixty percent. By 1913 the number of non-federally chartered banks was up to seventy one percent, holding a majority of the nation's reserves.<sup>25</sup> Morgan and Rockefeller both had financial interests located in New York, and this geographical decentralization of reserves was a threat to their market share.

The crisis created opportunity for this financial consortium. Bailing the banks out was a fail-safe venture. The hard money advocates in the political arena of the United States had long since lost the war, and the public had all but resigned to the "complicated" economic policies of government planning. There was little to no influence of sound money economists on how to handle a fiat currency crisis, as could be expected. When the currency drain was in full force, we saw that Morgan and others loaned massive amounts of money to banks that were in less than perfect condition.<sup>26</sup> These men were no slouches when it came to the world of business, as their fortunes would attest, and they could not have suspected the Knickerbocker Trust to repay the funds in a timely manner if

18. "Rich Concern Goes to Wall in Panic. Knickerbocker Trust Company Closes Doors," *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 23 Oct 1907, accessed 21 Oct 2012, America's Historical Newspapers.

19. "J.P. Morgan In Command," *Baltimore American*, 24 Oct 1907, accessed 11 Oct 2012, America's Historical Newspapers.

20. Knickerbocker Trust Co. is Compelled to Suspend," *Wilkes-Barre Times*.

21. Griffin, 14.

22. Griffin, 15.

23. "J.P. Morgan In Command," *Baltimore American*.

24. "J.P. Morgan In Command," *Baltimore American*.

25. Griffin, 13-14.

26. "Rich Concern Goes to Wall in Panic," *Albuquerque Morning Journal*.

they were to survive at all. Morgan and others could simply have let the bank fail and relied upon the Treasury of the United States, but that would have been a missed opportunity. Not only did they receive many praises in the public sphere for their “generosity”, but they obtained a large chunk of the market share in the process. The official death of the Knickerbocker Trust went largely unnoticed in the national press, but was noted in the hometown newspaper of C.T. Barney of Tucson, Arizona, former head of the Knickerbocker Trust Company. “Former Banker Deposed From Position, Ends Life,” noted the paper.

To quote Johnson again: “the October panic made perfectly clear two great banking needs: (1) an elastic currency; (2) financial solidarity.”<sup>27</sup> He explains elasticity in currency as banks having the legal right to “utilize their credit as common medium of exchange” as opposed to having to package and sell their debt to investors, he insists banks should be able to sell debt to themselves and lend it again.

Economist Arthur Reynolds penned a report for the Academy of Political Science in New York in October 1913, entitled “The Centralization of Banking and Mobilization of Reserves,” that encouraged reform towards central banking, in America. As part of the campaign to soften public opinion on central banking Reynolds simply redefined it to leave room only for benevolent disinterested public servants, he wrote:

*The mere formation of an institution with immense capital and authority to hold the reserves will accomplish centralization and concentration. In a way, indeed, we have this in our present system; but instead of considering it a benefit, we complain of it as an abuse and a disturbing factor. This suggests the error in present popular conceptions relative to a central bank. The people regard the main feature of such an institution as purely centralization and therefore they fear its power, whereas, when properly organized and administered, its main feature is responsibility and disinterested public service. This fact is clearly shown by experience in other countries extending over a long term of years.*<sup>28</sup>

But, proponents of a central bank found it difficult to agree on what such a bank would look like. Writing on the first edition of the Aldrich

Banking Plan, E.D. Hulbert of the University of Chicago argued that, “the adoption of such a plan would lead almost immediately to unexampled prosperity and business activity I have no doubt, but would not be the kind of dangerous prosperity and activity that always follows a period of inflation?”<sup>29</sup> Hulbert warned of a period of malinvestments resulting from inflation that had contributed to so many crises, including the most recent panic in 1907. Hulbert continued, “when the plan was first published, many leading bankers who are now supporting it, said there should be some safeguard against the expansion of credit. If on further study of the plan they have found some safeguard that was first overlooked, they should give the rest of us, who are unable to find it; the benefit of their discoveries.”<sup>30</sup> This is a valid point, and it was made frequently by critics of central banking, but not the most important takeaway from the debate over currency and banking reform. In the midst of his scathing and irreconcilable criticisms of the inflationary tendencies of central banks around the world, he interjected a qualifying statement that captures the framework of the debate. “That there should be a plan, however, to enable banks to use their credit when the necessity for it arises is admitted by everybody. The idea embodied in the Aldrich plan of combining all the banks into local associations is ideal, and so clearly in the line of development that it ought to be adopted whether the plan as a whole is adopted or not.”<sup>31</sup> That even the fiercest of critics viewed the “easy money” strategies employed by Morgan and others as the only way to manage a fractional reserve system makes clear that central banking was winning the ideological war, and soon it would win the political struggle as well.

## STRATEGY OF REFORM

The decentralization of financial reserves in America went largely unnoticed by the general public and was accompanied by a period of financial growth that helped the largest industries maintain their unprecedented levels of growth. When Johnson referred to financial solidarity, he was referring to a centralization of reserves. He explained the need for currency elasticity, saying it would ease interest rates in times of uneasy credit. It is this point of the Aldrich banking plan, and later of the Glass – Owen Bill, that makes currency manipulation and interest rate suppression remotely possible, creating

29. E.D. Hulbert, “Some Points in Opposition to the Aldrich Plan,” *Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 1 (1912): 25-32.

30. Hulbert, 27.

31. Hulbert, 29.

27. Johnson, 465

28. Arthur Reynolds, “Banking and Currency in the United States,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 4, no. 1 (1913): 118 - 126.

what is unmistakably a cartel arrangement between banks. It is no stretch of the imagination to perceive as a threat the centralization of such vast wealth under the direction of a few powerful bankers. These fears would have to be allayed in order to gain popular support for cartelization, albeit under a different name.

Senator Nelson Aldrich appeared with Assistant Secretary of the Treasury A. Piatt Andrew at the American Academy of Political and Social Science in Philadelphia on December 8, 1910, to introduce their plan to the public. They each gave remarks on "The Need for Currency Reform." Aldrich noted, "my studies have led me to believe that this question of reorganization of credit is...of immediate importance."<sup>32</sup> He softened the blow of advocating for centralization of reserves by referring to "credit" because in a fractional reserve system, they are indistinguishable. Aldrich continued to make one of the more superficial arguments in favor of centralization put forth by the reformers. He said, "elsewhere reserves are concentrated and used in any direction needed, and the resources of all are available for any...No system in any country has a system as antiquated as...the United States"<sup>33</sup>

A. Piatt Andrew joined Aldrich in his condemnation of the current system, and in praise of European central banks. Americans were told at the time, in Andrew's speech and countless other commentaries on the subject, that European central banks were not just necessary, but desirable. Economist E.D. Hulbert summed up the financial conditions of the great European banks with a more skeptical eye and convincing statistics:

*Since the Imperial Bank has been in operation Germany has enjoyed an era of industrial expansion and prosperity unequalled in history. For some years past, however, symptoms of overexpansion have grown more and more acute. Instead of recovering rapidly from the crisis of 1907, the situation there has been getting more and more out of hand, until today, with a world-wide condition of ease in money, the Imperial Bank of Germany is apparently unable to cope with the situation. Both the German government and the great German banks are borrowing immense sums of money at high rates from the despised American banks, and the Ger-*

*man banks have been obliged to announce a partial suspension of payment at the times of quarterly settlement. Those who have been allured by the vision of cheap money in the Aldrich plan should consider carefully the fact that our banks are today loaning money to the great German banks at rates which are higher than they are charging at home to ordinary commercial customers. Statistics show that for the past ten years interest rates in Germany have averaged higher than in either France or England, and that financial operations have been conducted there with greater difficulty in times of trouble.*

*- E.D. Hulbert<sup>34</sup>*

Hulbert shared an inconvenient truth in his report, that the European central banks were not immune to such a crisis, but it went largely unanswered. Johnson, by contrast, provided an alternative and more appealing description of centralized reserves in his commentary, writing that the system, "on account of its immense reserve of gold, its note-issuing power and its prestige as a government institution, it would seem an indestructible bulwark of finance, an unassailable guardian of solvency."<sup>35</sup>

Besides the obvious advantages to cartelized bankers of having amassed reserves under centralized control, there was yet more to be gained by this centralization. We saw that the Panic of 1907 was exacerbated by a loss of confidence in the bank's ability to meet its liabilities, thus resulting in a currency drain. Economic historian G. Edward Griffin wrote, "if all banks could be forced to issue loans in the same ratio to their reserves as other banks did, then, regardless of how small that ratio was, the amount of checks to be cleared would balance in the long run. No major currency drains would ever occur."<sup>36</sup> The simplest way to require all banks to issue loans in the same ratio is to centralize and control the majority of reserves and have federal enforcement of cartel regulations. Griffin calls this a "Bankers Utopia."<sup>37</sup> That, in a nutshell, is the Federal Reserve.

## HOW DID THIS MOVEMENT RESULT IN THE FED?

The process started with a duck-hunting trip to Jekyll Island, Georgia in November 1910. It was a secret meeting, not wholly confirmed to the public until Paul Warburg revealed that he had indeed been present, in his 1930 publication

32. L.S. Rowe, N. Aldrich, T. Burton, A.P. Andrew, and G. Roberts, "The Need for Currency Reform," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1911): 1, 3-32.

33. Rowe, Aldrich, and Burton, "The Need for Currency Reform," 1, 3-32.

34. Hulbert, "Some Points in Opposition," 29-30.

35. Johnson, "The Crisis and Panic of 1907," 467.

36. Griffin, 15.

37. Griffin, 15.



*The Federal Reserve System, Its Origin and Growth*.<sup>38</sup> Paul Warburg was a German-born immigrant to the United States and an investment partner with Kuhn, Loeb & Company. He was most widely known as the brother of Max Warburg, who, according to Griffin, represented the Rothschild Banking Dynasty in Germany and the Netherlands. In *The Federal Reserve System*, Warburg wrote, “the results of the conference were entirely confidential. Even the fact there had been a meeting was not permitted to become public...Though eighteen years have since gone by, I do not feel free to give a description of this most interesting conference concerning which Senator Aldrich pledged all participants to secrecy.” Warburg’s testimony was confirmed by Frank Vanderlip’s writing in the *Saturday Evening Post* February 9, 1935. Vanderlip, Acting President of the New York branch of National City Bank, represented the investment interests of the Rockefeller dynasty wrote a similar account, explaining, “there was an occasion, near the close of 1910, when I was as secretive – indeed as furtive – as any conspirator...I do not feel it is any exaggeration to speak of our secret expedition to Jekyll Island as the occasion of the actual conception of what eventually became the Federal Reserve System...”<sup>39</sup> Senator Aldrich’s biographer Nathaniel Wright Stephenson also confirmed much of this story, giving lie to the “duck hunt”: “Mr. Warburg...gives an amusing account of his feelings when he boarded a private car in Jersey City, bringing with him all the accoutrements of a duck shooter. The joke was in the fact that he had never shot a duck in his life, and had no intention of shooting any...”<sup>40</sup> Again in an effort for secrecy, according to Vanderlip’s article in 1935: “we were told to leave our last names behind us. We were told further, that we should avoid dining together on the night of our departure.” If the necessity for all this secrecy was in doubt, let us only examine Vanderlip’s closing argument. He stated, “if it were to be exposed publicly that our particular group had got together and written a banking bill, that bill would have no chance whatever of passage by Congress.”<sup>40</sup>

The reason for all the secrecy is made clear by the reports of the National Monetary Commission. The National Monetary Commission was established in response to the Panic of 1907 by the Aldrich-Vreeland law, which was passed in 1908. University of Northern Iowa

Economist and future co-sponsor of the Federal Reserve bill Robert Owen wrote in 1913 an article titled, “The Origin, Plan, and Purpose of the Currency Bill” featured in *The North American Review*. He refers to the National Monetary Commission as a subcommittee intended to, “study the financial system of the United States and ascertain what remedy is necessary to make it serve its high and proper purpose.”<sup>41</sup> The Aldrich-Vreeland law also made legal the issuance of emergency currency for use in time of panics. It was admittedly a temporary measure to be of use until further reform could be agreed upon. Even as temporary measure however, it was not unanimously supported in congress. Senator Robert LaFollette argued in a filibuster speech, “the Aldrich bill would only serve to strengthen this great money power of Wall Street.”<sup>42</sup> In this speech, LaFollette argued against the concentration of wealth in the United States. Referring to his prior assertion that American industry was controlled by only one hundred men, LaFollette warned that he had been “too conservative and in fact a much smaller number of men dominate industry.” The first two men on this list were of course J.P. Morgan and J.D. Rockefeller, and regarding the perceived frosty, competitive relationship between the two, LaFollette said, “the old fights between these two great powers have been put aside. Mr. Morgan’s picture adorns the wall of the inner room of the Rockefellers at 28 Broadway.” It was clear that Senator LaFollette did not feel that the proposed National Monetary Commission was to be of much benefit, perhaps because the chairman was to be Senator Nelson Aldrich, a friend of the banks.

In the meantime, the National Monetary Commission established a subcommittee with the mandate to determine if a “money trust” existed in the United States. The majority report authored by Louisiana Congressman and Committee Chair Arsène Pujo reported the following:

*If, therefore, by a ‘money trust’ you mean ‘an established and well-defined identity and community of interest between a few leaders of finance which has been created and held together through stockholdings and interlocking directorates and other forms of domination over banks, trust companies, railroads, public services, and industrial cor-*

38. Paul M. Warburg, *The Federal Reserve System, Its Origin and Growth* (New York: Macmillan, 1920).

39. Griffin, 9.

40. Griffin, 9.

41. Robert L. Owens, “The Origin, Plan, and Purpose of the Currency Bill,” *The North American Review* 198, no. 695 (1913): 556-569.

42. “Morgan’s Picture Adorns John Rockefeller’s Wall,” *Macon Telegraph*, 25 Mar 1908, accessed 1 Dec 2012, America’s Historical Newspapers.

porations and which has resulted in a vast and growing concentration of the control of money and credit in the hands relatively few men...your committee...has no hesitation asserting as the result of its investigation up to this time that the conditions thus described exists in this country today.<sup>43</sup>

Congressman Pujo's unequivocal belief that such as money trust did exist was featured prominently in the papers of the day. Headlines from March 1, 1913, were equally unequivocal: "Money Trust Does Exist, and Should be Curbed."<sup>44</sup> Similarly featured in *The Cleveland Gazette* a headline read "Money Trust Brandies Says Three Banks Control Large Sum."<sup>45</sup> Also featured in Pujo's majority report is a list of the "most active agents in bringing about the concentration of money and credit." The report lists "J.P. Morgan and Co., First National and National City Banks, Kuhn, Loeb and Company out of New York..." This makes it clear why Paul Warburg was so sure that public knowledge of the Jekyll Island 'conference' would be so disastrous. The Money Trust itself had written the banking reform legislation that was meant to curtail the aggressive strategies that they employed.

There were six men who participated in drafting the Federal Reserve System at Jekyll Island in November of 1910.<sup>46</sup> Senator Nelson Aldrich was of course there, as was Frank Vanderlip. Vanderlip was President of National City Bank in New York, and thus represented the investment interests of the Rockefellers. Abraham Piatt Andrew Assistant Secretary of the Treasury at the time, was also present at Jekyll Island, as were Henry Davidson and Benjamin Strong, both representatives of the J.P. Morgan dynasty. Strong would later serve as the first chairman of the Federal Reserve. Paul Warburg was also present, representative of German and Dutch investors and the well-known Rothschild banking dynasty in Europe. The group featured some of the most influential

43. US Congress. House. Committee on Banking and Currency. Money trust investigation. Investigation of financial and monetary conditions in the United States under House resolutions nos. 429 and 504, before a subcommittee of the Committee on Banking and Currency. Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1913.

44. "Money Trust Does Exist, and Should Be Curbed," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 1 Mar 1913, accessed 10 Oct 2012, America's Historical Newspapers; "Discusses the 'Money Trust.' Brandies Says Three Banks Control Large Sum," *Cleveland Gazette*, 29 Nov 1913, accessed 10 Oct 2012, America's Historical Newspapers.

45. "Discusses Money Trust Brandies Says Three Banks Control Large Sum." *Cleveland Gazette* 29 Nov. 1913 *America's Historical Newspaper* Web. 10 Oct. 2012

46. Griffin, 5.

financial empires of the day, so perhaps it is no surprise that the Aldrich plan was one of centralization and institutionalization. The Aldrich plan contains all necessary legal measures to eliminate competition between banking, and thus eliminate panics caused by credit contraction. There were still no checks for credit expansion in the Aldrich plan or the subsequent Federal Reserve System.

## THE REST IS HISTORY

Congressman Charles Lindbergh, an American luminary in his own right, was a fierce opponent of centralized currency reform, and no fan of Senator Aldrich. On the floor of Congress he accused that, "Wall Street brought on the 1907 panic, got the people to demand currency reform, brought the Aldrich-Vreeland currency bill forward, and if it dares will produce another panic in order to pass the Aldrich central bank plan."<sup>47</sup> Lindbergh was a fierce opponent of centralized currency reform, and no fan of Senator Aldrich. In the same report to congress he declared it "a broad challenge to the government by the champion of the money trust. It means another panic, if necessary to intimidate the people. Aldrich, paid by the government to represent the people, proposes a plan for the trusts instead." Lindbergh was one of the few legislators to maintain this view, and he incited a storm of criticism. Senator Elihu Root was a Democrat from New York who joined Lindbergh in criticizing the Aldrich plan. In testimony on the senate floor, Senator Root said, "without statutory limitation on the issuance of the proposed new currency, it could bring about an inflation of credit that would result in a dreadful financial catastrophe."

In 1912 Senator Nelson Aldrich was voted out of office, and Progressive Democrat Woodrow Wilson was elected president. Although Wilson's election officially killed the Aldrich banking plan, the push for banking reform was still in full force. One critic of the Aldrich plan, Senator Carter Glass, gave a speech entitled "Opposition to the Federal Reserve Plan." His criticisms included this outline of what he considered the three most critical problems of the Aldrich plan:

*first, that the bill confers dangerously autocratic powers upon the Federal Reserve Board, an alleged political board, and that the banks should be given direct representation upon this board; second, that it*

47. "Lindbergh Files Minority Report," *Duluth News Tribune*, 7 Sept 1913, accessed 20 Oct 2012, America's Historical Newspapers.

*is unjust and confiscatory to require national banks to join the system on penalty of forfeiting their national charters if they fail to do so; third, that it is unreasonable and contrary to the best banking practice to deny to banks joining a regional reserve bank the privilege of counting deposits with reserve agents as lawful reserve money.*<sup>48</sup>

Senator Glass subsequently became primary sponsor of the Glass-Owen Bill, which passed into law December 23, 1913, creating the Federal Reserve System. There were few differences between the Aldrich plan and the Glass-Owen bill. Paul Warburg wrote that, “brushing aside then, the external differences affecting the ‘shells,’ we find the ‘kernels’ of the two systems very closely resembling and related to one another.”<sup>49</sup> Economic historian G. Edward Griffin fundamentally agreed with this assessment. The Glass-Owen bill was, he wrote, “in every important detail... merely the old corpse of the Aldrich Bill pulled from its casket, freshly perfumed, and dressed in a new suit.”<sup>50</sup>

There was a combination of factors that resulted in the creation of the Federal Reserve System, the most important of which included the Panic of 1907 and the subsequent cornering of the reserves by J.P. Morgan and Company. Followed by a congressional subcommittee that was chaired by Senator Nelson Aldrich, whose connections introduced a conflict of interest at best. Congressman Lindbergh and others rejected legislation that would only further the interests of the “Money Trust”, but they were unsuccessful. A piece of legislation was written by a small group of the world’s wealthiest men in secret for the purpose of gaining further control over the finances of a nation by creating a pure cartel. This “lender of last resort” has enabled over 16 trillion dollars in debt by the very government that established it.

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48. Carter Glass, “The Opposition to the Federal Reserve Bank Bill,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 4, no. 1 (1913): 12-19.

49. Warburg, *The Federal Reserve System*, 10.

50. Griffin, 14.

# THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE IN VIRGINIA

Moss 3 and the  
Pittston Coal Strike of  
1989

WILL GIPE

Throughout American history, there have been labor strikes that have dramatically affected the nation. Most strikes began regionally, with some taking on national importance and involving a wide variety of people. One strike that came to the entire nation's attention was the Pittston Coal Strike from 1989-1990. The Pittston Coal Strike was an intense movement that led some to believe that Southwest Virginia looked like a war zone.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the strike, the Pittston Coal Company was the largest exporter of coal in America.<sup>2</sup> Pittston was also "one of three large-scale producers of metallurgical coal used to produce coke for the steel industry."<sup>3</sup> By the late 1980s, the Pittston Coal Company impacted both the local economies of Southwest Virginia and the national economy.

Since little time has passed since the strike in 1989-1990, few historians have written on the events. Those who have written on the strike, including Anne Lewis, believe that the strike represented an incredible community-wide effort that brought the people of Southwest Virginia together in a special way; it unified

the people of Southwest Virginia like never before.<sup>4</sup> Historians of the Pittston Strike also believe one reason for the strike's apparent irrelevance in the area today is a result of the United Mine Workers Association's lack of continued involvement and the reassertion of Pittston's power in Southwest Virginia once the strike was over. Like most authors who have written about this strike, I agree that what made the Pittston Coal Strike so significant was how many people the strike brought together from both Appalachia and other areas. Not only were miners from Southwest Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and West Virginia on strike, but there was also wide support from community members. The strike likewise garnered support from people all across the nation and the world.

Although the strike had its roots in a large area of Appalachia, this paper will focus on the events and the impacts of those events that occurred in Southwest Virginia around the small town of Saint Paul in Wise County, Virginia, during 1989 and 1990. This article will trace the strike as a whole, and it will offer a more in-depth look at some of the critical points of the strike, including the Moss 3 sit-in and Camp Solidarity. It will discuss how the strike ended, the impacts of the strike on the people living in the area at the time, and the future impacts of the strike upon the miners and other locals. This article examines the importance of the outcome of this strike on the livelihood and employment of many people in the area and the overall economy of Wise County. This analysis brings together various perspectives on the strike, including historical viewpoints found in books and documentaries, portrayed in local newspapers, and gleaned through interviews conducted with two individuals who played essential roles in the strike.

## THE PITTSTON COAL STRIKE

The Pittston Coal Company sparked the 1989-1990 strike by taking away the retirement and health benefits of its miners. As historian Steven L. Fisher writes, like "many employers in today's economy, Pittston invoked global competition as a reason why coal miners should agree to a lower standard of living and less control over their own workplaces."<sup>5</sup> In 1988, Pittston sent a letter to its miners stating, "As of February 1, 1988, health benefits that we are providing under this contract will no longer be provided. Issues will be taken up during

1. Steven L. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 202.

2. Anne Lewis Johnson, *Justice in the Coalfields* (Whitesburg, KY: Appalshop, 1995).

3. Adrienne M. Birecree, "The Importance and Implications of Women's Participation in the 1989-90 Pittston Coal Strike." *Journal of Economic Issues* 30, no. 1 (Mar. 1996): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4227055>.

4. Anne Lewis, interview by author, 16 November 2012.

5. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 197.





the upcoming negotiations with the Union.<sup>6</sup> This was a particularly hard blow since coal miners faced the pressure that one could suffer a career or life-ending injury while on the clock. The main focus for the union, and Pittston as well, during the strike was the pension fund.<sup>7</sup> Miners feared that without a guaranteed pension they could not support their families if they happened to be injured in an accident while working. Originally, the Pittston workers did not want to go on strike. Despite a long history of refusing to work without a contract, Pittston miners remained on the job for fourteen months after their previous contract ran out.<sup>8</sup> Though these workers remained on the job, community-based organizations in the area were preparing during these fourteen months to be ready if a strike occurred.

The United Mine Workers Association (UMWA), under president Richard Trumka, led the Pittston strike. In April 1989, Trumka “called a selective strike against Pittston operations to protest the company’s systematic violation of federal labor laws.”<sup>9</sup> Approximately 1,700 miners from Southwest Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and West Virginia went on strike against the Pittston Company. The union miners on strike used three strike tactics. First, members of the union worked to negotiate with the Pittston Company through verbal communication. After this tactic produced less-than-satisfying results, strikers began to peacefully protest on Pittston-owned property. One encounter that will be discussed in greater detail later was the sit-in at the Moss 3 Preparation Plant. The third form of resistance was violent protest. Although this form of protest was seldom used, some strikers resorted to violence after Pittston would not acknowledge their verbal negotiations or peaceful protests.<sup>10</sup>

An example of this violent form of protest occurred in July 1989, when it was reported in Russell County, Virginia, that a coal truck driver had been shot at by UMWA strikers. Police investigators found two small-caliber bullets had been fired into the truck’s windshield but had not injured the driver. The police never identified the shooter.<sup>11</sup> The striker was

probably firing at this truck driver because coal truck drivers did not join the UMWA miners in going on strike.<sup>12</sup> There were also instances of striking miners sabotaging Pittston coal trucks, even though the Union would eventually have to pay fines for the assessed damages.<sup>13</sup>

The peaceful and violent forms of protest led to Virginia sending in hundreds of state troopers. State troopers had to break the strike to enforce Virginia’s “right-to-work” law.<sup>14</sup> While the union was on strike, there were many replacement miners working for Pittston. The state troopers’ job was to make it possible for operations to continue peacefully at Pittston’s facilities. One of the state police leaders during this strike was Lieutenant J.B. Willis. On the status of the state troopers, Willis said, “we are there to occupy a neutral position.”<sup>15</sup> The number of state officers in the area was so large that it was believed there was one state police officer to every two strikers in Virginia.<sup>16</sup> During the strike, most people in Southwest Virginia strongly opposed state troopers being in the area. Locals believed the state government in Richmond had forgotten that Southwest Virginia was a part of the state, until Richmond wanted to impose martial law upon them.<sup>17</sup>

The Pittston Strike ended in January 1990 when miners reached a tentative agreement with Pittston. The new contract included medical benefits for retirees, widows, and disabled miners. It also changed the medical benefits for current working miners. In return, Pittston gained greater control over union work rules. With the end of the strike, many union workers spoke of how they were glad to be going back to work after such a long ordeal.<sup>18</sup>

Although there were many events that the union miners and their supporters rallied behind, there was one event that was the turning point of the strike: the takeover by union workers of Pittston’s Moss 3 preparation plant. There was also another major rallying point where union members and supporters displayed the greatest amount of support and vigor for the effort. This was a place called Camp Solidarity. To fully comprehend the Pittston Coal Strike one must understand both Moss 3 and Camp Solidarity.

6. Johnson, *Justice in the Coalfields*.

7. Steve Fisher, interview by author, 31 October 2012.

8. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 198.

9. *The 1989-90 Pittston Strike*, <http://www.buffalocreekflood.org/89-90pittstonstrike.htm> (accessed 19 Nov. 2012).

10. Richard Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike: Law & Resistance During the Pittston Coal Strike of 1989-1990* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 2.

11. Labor in America, “‘We Won’t Go Back:’ UMWA/ Pittston Strike 1989-90” (Clinchco: *Dickenson Star*, 1990), 60.

12. Labor in America, “‘We Won’t Go Back,’” 98.

13. Deborah Rouse, “Miners Continue Demonstrations,” *Coalfield Progress*, 23 May 1989, 1.

14. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 153.

15. Deborah Rouse, “Talks Resuming; UMWA Claiming Growing Support,” *Coalfield Progress*, 18 April 1989, 7.

16. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 154.

17. Johnson, *Justice in the Coalfields*.

18. Johnson, *Justice in the Coalfields*.



## MOSS 3 SIT-IN

Union strikers deliberately planned the Moss 3 plant takeover. Moss 3 was Pittston's central coal preparation plant in Virginia and the third largest coal preparation plant in the world.<sup>19</sup> Before the takeover, Moss 3 was the main focus of protests in the six-month UMW strike.<sup>20</sup> In one instance, state troopers arrested five hundred strikers around the plant and sent them to local jails in several buses and vans.<sup>21</sup> The takeover of Moss 3 occurred "only after the courts and National Labor Relations Board had effectively closed off an entire range of peaceful, nonviolent tactics the union was attempting to pursue."<sup>22</sup> The miners were beginning to realize they "could not win unless they could somehow retake the initiative, slow coal production, and challenge the legitimacy of the legal rules that were being used to cripple the strike."<sup>23</sup> Former UMW president Sam Church made the occupation possible by luring several state policemen out of the Moss 3 area, located near the border of Russell and Wise County. Church led them to a preparation plant in McClure, in Dickenson County, Virginia. With the policemen cleared out, a U-Haul and a white delivery truck pulled into the Moss 3 plant, dropping off ninety-nine union workers and a local minister named Jim Sessions.<sup>24</sup> The fifty-three-year-old Methodist minister said he intended to remain with the miners to make sure the protest inside the plant remained nonviolent.<sup>25</sup> Sessions and the strikers brought with them supplies they believed would suffice for a few days in the plant and proceeded to march into the plant wearing camouflage, the typical attire of the strike.<sup>26</sup> Sessions and the miners successfully entered the preparation plant in a mere twenty minutes.<sup>27</sup>

The Moss 3 takeover was well planned by those who participated, including local citizens who did not occupy the plant. Locals mapped out where they would congregate on this day so they could protect Sessions and the miners

looking to occupy the plant.<sup>28</sup> Many of these protestors filed out around the gate of the Moss 3 preparation plant so that state troopers or members of Pittston could not interrupt the sit-in. Strikers even cut down trees to prevent others from entering the plant. After four days of occupation, federal marshal Cecil Roberts was brought in to negotiate with the miners. They were told to vacate the area or else be forcefully removed from the plant. At 9:20 p.m., the strikers left the preparation plant, leaving behind only litter and the stench of urine.<sup>29</sup> The Moss 3 takeover proved significant because, "it was a direct challenge to Pittston. For the first time in the strike the UMW had carried protest onto the private space of Pittston and threatened its hegemony over its turf."<sup>30</sup> The Moss 3 takeover was to "be the last major act of civil disobedience and collective protest during the strike."<sup>31</sup> As a result of the Moss 3 takeover, all Pittston coal production throughout Virginia was put on hold for almost a week.<sup>32</sup>

It is hard to say any event affected the outcome of the Pittston Coal Strike more than the Moss 3 preparation plant takeover. The takeover was crucial because it was the first time the union really brought the strike into Pittston territory. The takeover was also important because it received support from various groups who made the takeover possible, whether that be by caravanning the police away from the scene, forming a human barricade around the plant so that officials could not get to the protestors in the plant, or being a part of the actual takeover itself. The Moss 3 preparation plant takeover was a perfect example of the community-wide support the union mobilized to win this strike.

## CAMP SOLIDARITY

Camp Solidarity, located only a few miles from the Moss 3 preparation plant, was originally established as a place to house UMW and other union allies aiding and visiting the Pittston strikers.<sup>33</sup> From its beginning, the camp hosted large numbers of people involved with the strike. On June 19, 1989, "the camp opened with a gathering of a thousand strikers and supporters."<sup>34</sup> The camp was initially a place to

19. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 205.

20. "99 Miners Occupy Pittston Plant," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 Sept. 1989, 8.

21. Bill McKelway, "500 strikers are arrested at coal plant," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 April 1989, 1.

22. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 199.

23. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 199.

24. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 172.

25. "99 Miners Occupy Pittston Plant," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 Sept. 1989, 8.

26. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 204.

27. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 207.

28. Peter Crow, *Do, Die, or Get Along: A Tale of Two Appalachia Towns* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 134.

29. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 172-174.

30. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 175.

31. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 175.

32. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 222.

33. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 179.

34. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 179.

house and feed visitors involved with the strike. Along with being a place to aid outsiders who were in support of the union, the camp also became a safe haven for locals needing a break from striking. The camp was conceived by those involved as a place of “liberation outside of company control.”<sup>35</sup> Camp Solidarity was the backbone of union strikers and supporters. It brought them together throughout the Pittston Strike. On most days, it was not unusual to see Camp Solidarity feed more than 2,000 people in a day. The camp upheld morale during the strike and helped miners raise thousands of dollars in strike support funds.<sup>36</sup>

Along with being the backbone of the strike, Camp Solidarity provided a place where people involved who would usually not interact with each other could come together and focus on the shared goal. The camp broke down barriers between people of different incomes and backgrounds.<sup>37</sup> Minister Jim Sessions believed Camp Solidarity had become “a gathering place for local strikers and community members and for the constant stream of visitors who come [sic] to offer support and to witness for themselves what [was] happening in this amazing strike.” In a single visit to the camp, a visitor could find “an auto worker from Michigan, an Eastern Airlines flight attendant from California, a British labor journalist, a Free Will Baptist preacher, and a Jesuit priest.”<sup>38</sup> It was a place of diversity, which was new for Southwest Virginia, a region sheltered and isolated by the Appalachian Mountains.

During the strike, Camp Solidarity became the center for the miners involved. One union striker at the camp suggested a chain link fence be put up around the camp’s borders to preserve it as a monument to the union’s fight in 1989-1990.<sup>39</sup> Camp Solidarity was not just a place to have a hot meal, take a hot shower, or discuss the issues of the strike. The camp was also a major symbol of the strike. The camp represented the unity, hard work, and improvisation the union, their families, and outside supporters used to win the strike. The camp was “a space for education in militancy and resistance through civil disobedience and the collective venting of frustrations about Pittston that reinforced the

identity of the striker with his cause.”<sup>40</sup> It was reported that there were around forty thousand supporters of the strike that paid a visit at some point or another to Camp Solidarity.<sup>41</sup> The camp was not only exceptional in bringing people together, but it also broadened the beliefs of unionism and issues such as human rights for both coal miners and other supporters.<sup>42</sup>

## A COMMUNITY VICTORY

The Pittston Coal Strike ended on February 20, 1990, with sixty-three percent of mining strikers from Southwest Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and West Virginia ratifying a contract settlement created on New Year’s Eve 1989. With this ratification, work camps—including Camp Solidarity—were shut down, and some seventeen hundred Pittston miners were ready to return to work.<sup>43</sup> With this signing, UMWA Vice President Cecil Roberts stated, “I hope we can bring peace back to Southwest Virginia and let people get on with their lives. I hope the future is now in our hands.”<sup>44</sup>

The Pittston Coal Strike lasted nearly eleven months and involved up to as many as ten thousand people. The strike “was one of the longest and largest incidents of civil disorder and insurgency in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century.”<sup>45</sup> Many believe political pressures put upon both parties by the George H.W. Bush administration ended the strike.<sup>46</sup> One of the major results of the Pittston Strike was that it united not only the people of Southwest Virginia, but also people from across the nation and world who came to support the cause. Most support from outside Southwest Virginia came from ally unions, such as the United Steelworkers Union and the British National Union of Mineworkers.<sup>47</sup> The Pittston Coal Strike was truly a community strike. The joy of winning the strike was a victory for every member of the Southwest Virginia community. The unionism of the communities of Southwest Virginia led to a victory that the people of the area believed could never have been achieved if the communities had struck separately.<sup>48</sup> Even people not on the scene of the Pittston property protesting contributed to the effort in one way

35. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 181.

36. Birecree, “The Importance and Implications of Women’s Participation in the 1989-90 Pittston Coal Strike,” 197-198.

37. Anne Lewis, interview by author, 16 November 2012.

38. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 203.

39. Hans R. Agrawal, “Struggling at Camp Solidarity: The Pittston Coal Strikers,” *The Harvard Crimson*, 3 Jan. 1990, 1.

40. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 181.

41. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 180.

42. Anne Lewis, interview by author, 16 November 2012.

43. Labor in America, “We Won’t Go Back,” 99.

44. Labor in America, “We Won’t Go Back,” 100.

45. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 2.

46. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 3.

47. Brisbin Jr., *A Strike Like No Other Strike*, 180.

48. Anne Lewis, interview with author, 16 November 2012.

or another. Reverend Jim Sessions said, “like many people in the Appalachian region and throughout the country, we found our lives touched by the 1989 United Mine Workers strike in the southern Appalachian coalfields.”<sup>49</sup> Before the Moss 3 event had even taken place, it was believed that over twenty thousand union, religious, and community supporters from across the nation marched upon Pittston.<sup>50</sup>

Many restaurants, convenience, and grocery stores located within the protesting areas refused service to state troopers who were arresting members of the strike. One restaurant owned by Laurel and Wayne Rasnake in Dickenson County, Virginia, said they refused service to state troopers for two reasons: “survival” of the business and support for the UMWA.<sup>51</sup> The sign outside of their place of business stated, “we respectfully refuse to serve state troopers during the period of the UMWA strike.”<sup>52</sup> Another great source of community support for the UMWA during the strike came from local high school students. In Dickenson County, approximately one hundred and fifty camouflaged students walked out of their classrooms one morning as a form of protest in favor of the strike. Even though the students were told beforehand a walk-out would incur an automatic three to ten day suspension, they were still willing to fight for their family members and friends on strike. The large student participation at high schools did not include the group of students striking alongside the miners at Moss 3.<sup>53</sup>

## AFTERMATH IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

The Pittston Coal Strike was one of the most important events in the history of coal mining in Southwest Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and West Virginia. It was also a standout event in the histories of the United Mine Workers Association and other labor unions. Without a victory in this strike, the lives of many coal-mining families would have been crippled by the removal of benefits and retirement funds. Yet despite the positives, there were still several major problems that arose from union victory.

Because the Pittston Company could not afford to keep many of the workers they had before the strike, a large percentage of miners were laid off after 1990. As early as February 1995, of fourteen hundred Virginia miners who

went on strike, only four hundred seventy still worked union jobs with Pittston.<sup>54</sup> Not only could Pittston not afford to keep all the workers they had before this strike on staff because of financial reasons, the large coal company was also angry about losing the strike and wanted to show they still had dominance over the union in Southwest Virginia. Pittston began to show their frustration with the emergence of heavy strip mining in the area. Strip mining led to the polarization of Southwest Virginia communities as people had different views on the issue. Feelings towards strip mining were divided mainly upon the basis of income: it made the rich people in the area richer and the poor people poorer.<sup>55</sup> With the emergence of strip mining, poverty swept through the area due to fewer jobs available in the strip mining industry. Strip mining also led to division in the communities of Southwest Virginia over issues such as degradation of the environment. This community polarization within five years of the strike discouraged people who wanted to remember the strike as a success.

Another reason for this polarization and Pittston dominance was that the union lost much of its strength in Southwest Virginia after the strike ended. The union decided on its own to pull many of its resources out of Southwest Virginia. This lack of follow-through is not uncommon with the UMWA. Some who follow the union today believe one of its downfalls as a group is that it does not do a good job sticking with the communities it puts so much time and effort into during strikes.<sup>56</sup> With the polarization of Southwest Virginia communities through the power and control of Pittston and the lack of follow-up by the UMWA in the area, many miners lost their jobs and their communities fell deeper into economic depression.

## A FORGOTTEN CAUSE?

Though I have lived in Wise, Virginia, only twenty miles from the site of the Moss 3 preparation plant, for most of my life, I had never heard about the Pittston Coal Strike until I entered my second year of college. After learning of the strike’s existence, it was so strange to me that I had never been told about an event that had such a major impact upon the livelihood of the people of Wise County. I interviewed two people involved with the strike when conducting research for this paper: Anne Lewis and Steve Fisher. I asked them why, if this

49. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 195.

50. Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 198.

51. Labor in America, “We Won’t Go Back,” 60.

52. Labor in America, “We Won’t Go Back,” 60.

53. Labor in America, “We Won’t Go Back,” 18-19.

54. Johnson, *Justice in the Coalfields*.

55. Anne Lewis, interview with author, 16 November 2012.

56. Steve Fisher, interview by author, 31 October 2012.

strike was such a success for the area, had I never heard about the Pittston Coal Strike growing up?

Fisher blamed this lack of enthusiasm and pride for the strike on the UMWA for not staying in the area to make sure the Pittston workers were still being taken care of by their company. Also, he believed that with the union losing power in the area, smaller interest groups within these Southwest Virginia communities wanted to get back to their own affairs.<sup>57</sup> Lewis believed it was the Pittston Company's political power that led to the lack of remembrance for the event in Southwest Virginia. She explained that the workers are rarely remembered after a strike is over. The large corporations of the area overpower the workers' opinions in the communities to the point where the workers are silenced. Just like the conflict over strip mining in the area, Lewis believed the battle between Pittston and the people of the area is class-based. Those who are wealthier, i.e., the Pittston hierarchy, will be heard more loudly than those members of the lower and middle classes, the Pittston miners.<sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Although the Pittston Coal Strike may not currently be a hot topic of conversation in Southwest Virginia, it was nevertheless an event that affected and continues to affect the lives of those living in the area today. The strike resulted in a renewed security blanket for a great number of families in the area through the renewed health and retirement benefits package with the new contract. However, the victory brought grief to others in the area as they lost their jobs with the growth of strip mining.

It is tough to say whether there will be unity like that displayed during the protests at the Moss 3 Preparation Plant or at the meetings within Camp Solidarity ever again in Southwest Virginia. The Pittston Coal Strike of 1989-1990 was not only a tremendous display of will through protest, it was also an event of unionism Southwest Virginia had never seen before.

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57. Steve Fisher, interview by author, 31 October 2012.

58. Anne Lewis, interview by author, 16 November 2012.

# THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT & THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

GRACE HEMMINGSON

On 18 February 2013, Mississippi became the last state to officially ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, formally overturning slavery. Their refusal to ratify the amendment represents one example of the disconnection between the way the law says society should behave and actual social practices. In the early twentieth century, the centrality of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment to national memory spurred the march toward civil rights for African Americans. While these laws were certainly momentous, they were not decisive, nor were they effective in bringing about racial equality. The Thirteenth Amendment failed to better the lives of ex-slaves because it did not specify how to treat former slaves, but merely abolished the existence of the institution. The Fourteenth Amendment addressed this omission, but the enforcement of this document was limited, especially on the part of the Supreme Court and the President.

Much has been written about the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment and the subsequent challenges in interpreting the document. In his 1957 article “There Is No ‘Fourteenth Amendment,’” David Lawrence, founder and longtime columnist for *U.S. News and World Report*, argues that the Fourteenth Amendment was never a valid document.

Three-fourths of the states that comprised the union at the time needed to ratify the amendment. This did not happen, according to Lawrence, and since then, the courts have been acting under false pretenses. His interpretation of history illustrates the southern states’ reluctance to ratify the amendment and the courts’ unwillingness to interpret it as part of the ongoing struggle society against the idea of incorporation of the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>1</sup> Historian Irving Brant considers the Fourteenth Amendment’s incorporation in his book *The Bill of Rights: Its Origin and Meaning*. He argues that the amendment was intended to overturn those decisions of the Supreme Court that upheld the states’ right to violate the Bill of Rights, such as the case *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which denied that African Americans were citizens of the United States. This 1857 decision allowed states to create laws like the Fugitive Slave Act and other legislation that treated slaves as property. Brant goes on to argue that the framers’ intent in writing the Fourteenth Amendment was not carried out until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, over eighty years after it was ratified.<sup>2</sup>

Connecting these two concepts, it is clear that white society’s reluctance to accept freedmen as equals led to white society’s denial of freedmen’s civil rights. The unwillingness of many whites to accept the change in the social status of freedmen was mirrored in the court’s limited interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment in cases such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Additionally, the Presidents of the late nineteenth century could have used their power and influence to push for greater equality among the races. Whether the reluctance to fully enact and enforce the Fourteenth Amendment was caused by the fact that the justices and the President were themselves part of a society that would not accept African Americans as equals or their fear of societal backlash against any efforts to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment is unclear. What is clear is that white society’s prejudices affected the courts in a way that prevented the legal system from upholding the amendment. The Fourteenth Amendment was intended to undo the attempts of the southern states to enforce limits on African Americans in both political and social spheres through the Black Codes. However, the ratification of the amendment achieved little real change in the life of the everyday African American. The unwillingness of the Supreme

1. David Lawrence, “There Is No Fourteenth Amendment,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 27 Sept. 1957.

2. Irving Brant, *The Bill of Rights: Its Origin and Meaning* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), 316-340.



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Court and the President to enforce the *de jure* equality of African Americans outlined in the Fourteenth Amendment rendered the changes to the US Constitution impotent.

The story of the Thirteenth Amendment's failure provides a framework for understanding executive and judicial attitudes toward African American civil rights. For months after the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification, the legislatures of the southern states worked to restore the social order that had existed before the Civil War, which had been taken away by the federal government at the beginning of Reconstruction. The Black Codes, laws enacted mostly in 1865, spurred the US legislative branch to pass the Fourteenth Amendment. The amendment was limited by the fact that the Supreme Court largely ignored the Black Codes and did not rule on them until the 1950s and 1960s, almost a century after they were passed. Due to judicial and executive inaction, the amendment was not interpreted as anything more than a reiteration of the Thirteenth Amendment's declaration of emancipation for slaves, and it did not guarantee African Americans any civil rights as citizens of the United States. In other words, it produced the basis of *de jure* equality for former slaves, but in itself it had no power because its interpretation was so limited by the Supreme Court and the President.

The actual mechanism for the enforcement of *de facto* equality of freedmen was meant to be the Fourteenth Amendment. However, the Fourteenth Amendment lacked the proper support it needed to become an effective part of the Constitution due to the lack of consensus about how to treat the newly freed African American population. Almost all of the southern states refused to ratify it in 1866, mirroring the prevailing attitude of most white southerners.<sup>3</sup> Though it was eventually ratified in 1868 by the reconstructed southern legislatures, the amendment still faced intense opposition from those parts of government that were the most responsible for ensuring that it was properly followed.<sup>4</sup> The state legislatures did not abide by the amendment, creating the discriminatory laws that would later be called the Jim Crow laws in response to a white society that was unwilling to accept freedmen as equals. However, what truly doomed the amendment's effectiveness in the late nineteenth century were the Supreme Court and the executive branch's willful obstruction of the enforcement

of the Amendment. In effect, their refusal to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment allowed the malicious practices introduced by the Black Codes to continue under the Jim Crow laws.

It is hard to define what civil rights are, or when a person or race has achieved them. As such, it is important to look at the outward evidence of the "right or privilege, which if interfered with by another gives rise to an action for injury."<sup>5</sup> By the broadest definition of civil rights—the legal recognition of a citizen's rights—the members of Congress did everything they could by ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment. Even if the amendment was not being followed, on its own the Fourteenth Amendment recognized that all people born slaves were entitled to the same protections that free people were. The Fourteenth Amendment overturned the accepted view established by the Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that African American slaves were not citizens of the United States and thus did not deserve the protections associated with citizenship. However, the Fourteenth Amendment was only as effective as the people charged with enforcing it would allow it to be. Freedmen were given the authority to exercise their rights, but they did not have the power to do so. This partial *de jure* equality was not enough on its own to remove the years of damage that the institution of slavery had done to the balance of power between the races. It did provide a starting place, however, for the movement to develop when society was more ready to accept a change in the social structure. Though the Fourteenth Amendment did not spur momentous change, none of the later change could have been achieved without the amendment as precedent.

A narrower definition of civil rights is the opportunity for a citizen's rights to be practiced in safety. By this definition, the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment failed, because though African Americans were granted the legal rights to act as full citizens, they could not do so without fear for their lives and those of their family. About 3,000 blacks were lynched between 1888 and 1968, many of these men wrongly accused of rape.<sup>6</sup> White Americans were afraid that giving African Americans legal rights would become a slippery slope and that the freedmen would soon gain social rights and be the equals of white men. For this reason, southern legislatures, which by 1877 were all firmly in the hands of the Democratic Party, enacted laws specifically

3. James E. Bond, *No Easy Walk to Freedom* (Westport, CN: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 5.

4. Bond, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 5.

5. Cornell, "Civil Rights: An Overview," *Legal Information Institute*, 19 August 2010, accessed 10 Nov. 2013.

6. Charles Chessnut, "Lynching," *Chessnutachive.org*, 29 Jan. 1999, accessed 7 Dec. 2013.

limiting the rights of African Americans.<sup>7</sup> In other words, society denied blacks the legal rights that the constitution said they possessed. Though they had *de jure* equality, they did not have *de facto* equality. *De facto* equality can be broken further down between equality in practice and equality in fact. While after the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment African Americans had the right to equal citizenship, there were still underlying prejudices that prevented them from having true equality in society. The Fourteenth Amendment achieved neither form of civil rights, because *de facto* equality requires an effort by the society as a whole, whereas *de jure* equality only requires an effort by the people in power in the courts and the legislation.

In the years after the Civil War, society was unsure of how to incorporate the African Americans freed by the Thirteenth Amendment. Out of about twelve million people living in the South at the start of the Civil War, around three to four million were slaves.<sup>8</sup> The question of what to do with the slaves quickly became a point of contention. Would they become integrated into white society? Was it possible, as many had thought in earlier years of slavery, to send them back to Africa? The fact was that the majority of white southerners, whether former slaveholders or men who had never owned a slave in their lives, did not consider freedmen equals. There was a basic religious idea that Africans were evil in nature due to the color of their skin, taken to be an outward sign of God's curse upon black men that they were to be "servants of servants" as descendants of Ham.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, many whites in both the North and the South believed that African Americans deserved to be subordinate. If they could not be slaves anymore, then they would have to be "put in their place" through other means.

This idea of the inherent inferiority of African Americans found its way into many of the changes worked by the southern states during

early Reconstruction. When the plantation system fell apart with the end of slavery in 1865, government officials began a process of finding a new solution to the labor problem. The end of slavery created a hole in the labor industry, leaving many large plantations without their coerced labor force. This gave many former slave owners a large incentive to retain as many of their former slaves as they could. For the most part, this meant that freedmen were no less dependent on their masters than they had been as slaves, though some were awarded wages or allowed to rent.<sup>10</sup> African Americans themselves had little choice except to continue working for their former owners. Very few former slaves were trained in trades, which meant that the only real option for their economic advancement was continuing to work the land. Even those who were skilled in trades could usually not procure a business license from the state governments, as African Americans were not allowed to own businesses in most states according to sections of the Black Codes of 1865 and 1866.<sup>11</sup> Though radical Republicans wanted to confiscate plantation land and redistribute it to the newly freed slave population, there was not much support for this idea in the North.<sup>12</sup> Since this course of action would have ended the days of labor-intensive, large-scale lucrative farming in the South, it would have made little economic sense for white southerners to actually implement the "40 acres and a mule" plan that became the rallying cry of the freed slaves.<sup>13</sup>

The new solution looked a lot like the old one, only with a different face. Most planters initially claim to have tried wages, but they found that black labor was less reliable under this system.<sup>14</sup> In some regions, former slaves found that working only a few days could sustain them for a week, which led them to work other odd jobs, a practice called turpentineing. African Americans tended towards jobs that lent them the most freedom. But the wage system was not a good option for the planters economically. Therefore, they began to use a system of sharecropping in which blacks worked their plot of land under the supervision of the landholder and had to give up a certain amount of their crop. Gerald D. Jaynes, an economic historian, argues that white planters turned to the sharecropping

10. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "A Portrait of Southern Sharecropping: The 1911-1912 Georgia Plantation Survey of George Preston Brooks," *Georgia Historical Society* (1993): 171.

11. Bond, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 36.

12. Harris, *The Making of the American South*, 239.

13. Brundage, "A Portrait of Southern Sharecropping," 167.

14. Brundage, "A Portrait of Southern Sharecropping," 171.

7. J. William Harris, *The Making of the American South: A Short History, 1500-1877* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 232.

8. Bowdoin, "Data Analysis: African Americans on the Eve of the Civil War," *Bowdoin.edu*, accessed 12 Nov. 2013.

9. Ham was the son of Noah, who, happening upon his father naked and passed out from drinking, did not turn his eye away from the shame of his father. For this Noah cursed his son and all of his descendants to be the servant of servants. This story is told in Genesis 9:24-27. One interpretation of this verse was that God marked men black to show their evil lineage and to signify them as the fitting servants of white people. See Daniel Roger, "Evidence of Black Africans in the Bible," *Grace Communion International*: 1998, 2007, accessed 12 Nov. 2013 for explanations of the different theories for the appearance of "blacks" that have arisen from the Bible.

system in a time of economic distress.<sup>15</sup> However, blacks only accepted sharecropping as an alternative to wages when they had no other choice.<sup>16</sup> Sharecropping was a symptom of the *de facto* persistence of the institution of slavery in that there was much supervision of the black workers by white planters and that landholders received an unfairly large percentage of the profits made from the crop. To be sure, sharecropping was not the same everywhere. Some white landowners made their sharecroppers partners in the business and allowed them to keep more of the profits. In either case, the fate of the former slave was still economically entangled with that of his former master.

White society throughout the former Confederacy also began rebuilding the social order of the antebellum South. After being readmitted to the Union, many of the former Confederate States began to pass laws specifically differentiating between blacks and whites.<sup>17</sup> These laws negated the freedom promised to African Americans in the Thirteenth Amendment. Though African Americans were no longer slaves, they were still treated as second-class citizens. As the editor of the Gainesville *New Era* announced in June 1865, months before the adoption of Florida's Black Codes, an inferior social and political status for blacks and a status of superiority for whites was "the natural order of American Society."<sup>18</sup>

Slaves were generally considered by white southern society to be fraudulent and untrustworthy individuals who tended toward criminal activities. Before emancipation, slave owners had constantly worried about slaves who were trying to get out of work by lying about sickness, breaking farming equipment, or stealing from the master.<sup>19</sup> White critiques of African American morality did not fade with emancipation. As previously stated, there was a wide-spread view that blacks who received wages worked less reliably than blacks who sharecropped. This prejudice was one of the main reasons that Black Codes were passed in the southern states. Southern legislators thought these codes would protect society

from the untrustworthy freedmen population.<sup>20</sup> Another justification for these laws was that many white southerners believed emancipation would not last and that the next Congress would abolish the Thirteenth Amendment.<sup>21</sup>

In the North, these laws were met with harsh criticism, as it became evident that there would be no *de facto* freedom for freedmen until there was protection for them under the law.<sup>22</sup> The Black Codes undid many of the hopes that abolitionists had for the Thirteenth Amendment. Florida's Black Codes, for instance, had sections that recommended temporary slavery for those who could not pay their fines or taxes.<sup>23</sup> This law put many African Americans constantly struggling to support themselves back on the auction block. To make matters worse, freedmen were required to pay a head tax and fund their own public schools.<sup>24</sup> These drains on their income increased the economic stresses on freedmen. Black Codes in many states also strove to define a "Negro" as someone with as little as one-eighth African blood.<sup>25</sup> This allowed the law to give preferential treatment to whites and to create special punishments, such as whipping, for blacks. Though the Thirteenth Amendment declared that slaves were freed from bondage, there was no guarantee that they would be able to exercise their rights in the former Confederacy.

All of these conditions required the drafting and ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Northern abolitionists knew they had to impose some official restrictions on the southern states in regard to their treatment of the freedmen. In 1866, Congress passed both the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, which imposed fines on states that did not enforce the equal status of freedmen, and the Civil Rights Act, which extended citizenship to former slaves and granted them equal protection under the law. These were both vetoed by President Andrew Johnson, though in the case of the Civil Rights Act, Congress was able to override the veto. Legislation was not working. A constitutional amendment, it was thought, was the only way. The Fourteenth Amendment was furiously debated in every southern state, and the amendment was not passed in six states outside the south.<sup>26</sup> The source of the strife in the south, interestingly enough, had more to do with sections two

15. Gerald D. Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots: The Genesis of the Black Working Class, 1862-1882* (New York, 1985), 191-192.

16. Jaynes, *Branches without Roots*, 217-218; Brundage, "A Portrait of Southern Sharecropping," 172.

17. Joe M. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," *Florida Historical Society* (1969): 365

18. *Gainesville New Era*. 9 June 1865; Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 367.

19. Hirschfeld, Fritz. *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (1997).

20. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 368.

21. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 367.

22. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 368.

23. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 374.

24. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 374.

25. Richardson, "Florida Black Codes," 374.

26. Lawrence, "There Is No Fourteenth Amendment."

through four of the Amendment, which detailed punishments for former Confederates. Section Three stated that they could no longer serve in public office if they had defected during the war, which automatically eliminated many of the powerful men of the antebellum period.<sup>27</sup> The Republicans wanted state legislatures and congressmen from the Confederacy that they could trust to work with the government of the United States. More importantly, they wanted to get rid of secessionists in the southern governments. Therefore, the people elected to the Congress in 1866 were mostly pre-war Whigs and Constitutional Unionists who wanted their states to reenter the Union, though the “reconstructed” legislatures did not last more than a few years in every state.<sup>28</sup>

The Fourteenth Amendment consists of five sections aimed at protecting the rights of African Americans. Section One of the amendment defines an American citizen as anyone “born or naturalized in the United States” and, more importantly, contains several clauses protecting the privileges of a citizen from interference by state governments.<sup>29</sup> Section Two repealed the three-fifths compromise by declaring that representation will be determined by the whole number of persons in each state, and stipulates that if the voting rights of any male twenty-one years of age or older is denied him, the state will be denied part of their representation. Section Three bars any man who served as a representative in Congress prior to the Civil War and then abandoned his post to side with his state from serving in Congress. Section Four takes over the responsibility for the debt the rebelling states incurred during the war, but also denies them any right to compensation for the slave property they lost as a result of the Thirteenth Amendment. Section Five gives Congress the power to enforce the amendment.

Section Four proved to be a major point of contention. It said that the federal government took over responsibility for the war debts of the southern states, but also prohibited the US or state governments from giving compensation to slave owners whose slaves had been freed.<sup>30</sup> Many former slave owners hoped that they could convince the federal government to compensate them for the slaves that they had lost. The amendment effectively took that off the table. Although the states needed the federal

government to take some of the burden of the war debts off of them, they did not want to give up the possibility that they could reap some economic benefit from the loss of their property.

Section One did not get much of the press’s attention at the time, but in later years it came to be considered the most important part of the amendment.<sup>31</sup> The amendment declared that the states could not “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” and could not deny citizens “the equal protection of the laws.”<sup>32</sup> In effect, the amendment declared that the states had the responsibility to protect the rights of all citizens, including freedmen. The fact that Section Five gave Congress the power to intervene if the states did not follow the amendment also made the states reluctant to ratify it. In fact, ten southern states rejected the amendment in 1867 before ratifying it in 1868.<sup>33</sup>

Such was the state of reconstruction when Homer Plessy boarded a white car in a segregated train. Plessy was seven-eighths Caucasian and one-eighth African, and he exhibited few physical characteristics of a black man.<sup>34</sup> He sat in the white car and refused to move when the conductor asked him to. In Louisiana, under the Separate Car Act of 1890, Plessy was supposed to be traveling in a separate car meant for African Americans. The Supreme Court of Louisiana convicted him of breaking the law, but Plessy appealed the decision, and the case went to the Supreme Court of the United States. The main question that had to be answered by the court was whether or not the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments had been violated by the arrest of Homer Plessy.

The decision of the court was that the law violated neither the Thirteenth nor the Fourteenth Amendment. The court’s reasoning was that Plessy’s race was not indicated when he was asked to move into the car meant for Negroes.<sup>35</sup> He was not forced into involuntary servitude, which meant that the Thirteenth Amendment was not violated. The court also decided that the Fourteenth Amendment had not been breached because the cars were equal in quality. Though the phrase was not used in the opinion, this decision led to the phrase “separate, but equal” which dominated society until the 1960s. The longer-lasting effects of this case were that the Supreme Court refused to incorporate the Fourteenth Amendment, allowing state

27. US Const. amend. XIV, § 3.

28. Bond, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 8; Harris, *The Making of the American South*.

29. US Const. amend. XIV, § 1.

30. US Const. amend. XIV, § 4.

31. Bond, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, 8.

32. US Const. amend. XIV, § 1.

33. Lawrence, “There Is No Fourteenth Amendment.”

34. Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 US 537, 539 (1896).

35. Plessy, 163 US at 539.



laws that legally sanctioned segregation to continue. This interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment remained prevalent until after World War II. As a result, two generations grew up experiencing segregation and blatant racial discrimination against blacks. The Supreme Court is supposed to protect the Constitution and to strike down laws made by the states that take away the rights of their citizens. By upholding the legislation that had become common in every southern state, the Supreme Court actively violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

The *Plessy* decision on its own did not cripple the Fourteenth Amendment. Though the case legally sanctioned the separation of the races, there was an explicit instruction in the decision that commanded the facilities of each race must be equal in quality. It was up to the President to carry out those instructions. However, President Andrew Johnson had not created an enforcement mechanism to ensure that facilities were the same quality for blacks as they were for whites. Johnson famously vetoed both the Civil Rights Act and the Freedmen's Bureau Act in 1866. Johnson, a Tennessee senator before the war, grew up in the slave society of the South, though he never owned any slaves. As a result, he had sympathy for the southerners and was often criticized for not punishing the southern states as much as some Radical Republicans wanted. Many people feared that in his haste to readmit the south into the union, Johnson would sacrifice African Americans rights to "security for social rights of any kind."<sup>36</sup> While Congress was able to override Johnson's veto and pass some legislation protecting African American rights, the enforcement of those laws fell to the President. Johnson was apathetic at best toward the plight of the freedmen. In fact, Johnson actively opposed equal rights for African Americans, especially voting rights. Johnson suggested that, "moral, educational, and property qualifications be instituted for white voters" in order to elevate the right of voting.<sup>37</sup> Under this policy, many African Americans were not able to vote even though the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed them rights as citizens. While Johnson did not take any actions to enact this type of policy, he certainly acted to make sure that Congress could not pass any significant legislation protecting the rights of freedmen.

The subsequent Presidents—Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland and Harrison—acted neither for nor against the interests of the

African American population. Grant, elected in 1868, was unwilling to act in favor of the African Americans, but he did not act against Congress's attempts to do so. He signed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, the pet project of Charles Sumner, into law.<sup>38</sup> However, Grant did not have a significant role in passing the legislation, so his approval of that law does not necessarily hint at his interest in civil rights. Furthermore, after 1877, the majority of northerners agreed that Reconstruction was over, and that the rights of African Americans had been firmly established.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, for the majority of the late 1800s and early 1900s, civil rights for African Americans were not considered by a majority of the population, and as such, the Presidents did not take many actions to further the cause of racial equality.

The Fourteenth Amendment declared *de jure* equality, but in almost every southern state that declaration was ignored and blatantly violated. The northern states, though they did not pass legislation limiting the rights of African Americans, also ignored the amendment's instructions for the most part. *De facto* equality proved elusive for the next hundred years as African Americans waited for the men who would bring civil rights back into the forefront of the public consciousness. Hugo Black, one of the justices most responsible for the Supreme Court's broader interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment, did not join the court until 1937, nearly seventy years after the amendment was passed. Lyndon B. Johnson, one of the most active Presidents in passing civil rights legislation, was not elected until over ninety years after 1868. Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. did not arrive on the national stage until the early 1960s, bringing with them ideas that would change society's perceptions of African Americans. The Fourteenth Amendment brought with it the promise of hope, the expectation that in the future African Americans would attain the ever-elusive reality of civil rights.

In the beginning, however, the amendment was virtually ignored, allowing African Americans only the most basic legal rights. The Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* provides one example in which the court actively refused to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment. Likewise, President Johnson vetoed most of the legislation that could have helped the former slaves. The failure of the amendment to do its job points to a more fundamental problem. Congress, the court system, state governments, and the President

36. Eric Foner, "Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction: A British View," *The Journal of Southern History* (1975): 383.

37. Foner, "Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction," 382.

38. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Civil Rights Act of 1875," *The Western Political Quarterly* (1965): 763-775.

39. Harris, *The Making of the American South*, 245.

actively tried to undermine the objectives of the amendment. Even without the support of the people or the state governments, the Supreme Court and the President should have enforced the Constitution. However, the court would not expand the protections of the Bill of Rights to include African Americans until after the World Wars. Until society had changed the men in charge of interpreting and enforcing the Constitution, blacks continued to be mistreated by their own governments and neighbors.

*Plessy* revealed that the legal prohibition of discrimination by the Fourteenth Amendment was ignored by the states because of late nineteenth-century society. Though the Fourteenth Amendment declared that African Americans were not to be treated differently by the state governments, the Jim Crow Laws flagrantly disregarded that intention in favor of the interests of former slave-holders in southern states who suddenly found themselves without a captive workforce. In fact, the courts, the state governments, and the President all actively undermined the efforts of the reconstructed Congress to protect the population of freedmen.

## IMAGE CITATIONS

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**PAGE 8.** al-Sharif, Manal. *Manal al-Sharif Portrait*. 26 October 2011. Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.

**PAGE 23.** *Battle of Lepanto in 1571*. Late 16th century. Oil on Canvas, 1207 x 2324 mm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich London.

**PAGE 30.** The Union News Company. *Federal Reserve Building, Washington D.C.* 1930. Courtesy of the Boston Public Library.

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