



NOTICE

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A NOTE FROM THE GRADUATE EDITORS

Greetings and welcome to the fourth issue of the *Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review*. Since its inception in 2011, the *Review* has provided a publishing outlet for undergraduates at Virginia Tech. This year, for the first time, we were thrilled to be able to expand our scope to embrace fine undergraduate work from any four-year college or university in Virginia. As editors, we seek to help students develop their historical research in order to take part in ongoing scholarly conversations about the past and to gain the experience of having their work published through a peer-review process.

The *Review* offers students a chance to develop their skills outside of the classroom. Our editorial staff takes pride in the review process. The quality of this publication is a testament to the labor and dedication of our faculty editor, Dr. Heather Gumbert, and our seven undergraduate editors. Our undergraduate editors work for no credit aside from the satisfaction of a job well done and a product worthy to be shared.

This year we have selected seven articles for publication. Virginia Tech alumna Andrea Ledesma opens the issue with an article on the interwar feminism of Eudora Ramsay Richardson. Using Richardson's literary and political activities to craft an argument, Andrea reveals the surprisingly dynamic nature of feminist activism in the 1920s and 1930s. Next, Danielle Ingalls examines the background of and reaction to female bread rioters in the Confederacy during the Civil War, arguing that discontented Southern women defied the strict gender roles of their time. Our third article, by Anna Pope, examines the coalition of white and African American women who stood up to Massive Resistance

during the crisis of desegregation in the Norfolk, Virginia, public school system. A fascinating and intimate look at the beginnings of the Virginia community college system, written by Earl Cherry, the son of one of the key players in the story, follows. Our first published article written by a student outside of Virginia Tech comes next as Abigail Gomulkiewicz of the College of William & Mary explores Victorian-era Protestant hymns in relation to the scientific advancements and imperial incursions of nineteenth-century Britain. Morgan Sykes then provides a detailed analysis of the rise of the artificial sweetener aspartame in the food industry. Rachel Goatley, another recent Virginia Tech alumna, rounds out the issue with her article on the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1919, focusing on the disease's impact in the rural communities of Southwest Virginia.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review*. We would like to thank Virginia Tech's History Department, faculty editor and adviser Dr. Heather Gumbert, the VTUHR's founder Dr. Robert Stephens, the undergraduate editorial board, and all the authors who submitted their papers for publication. Our two undergraduate design editors, Nick Swedberg and Courtney Howell, have been tireless in making this year's issue shine. Finally, we would like to thank you for picking up this journal and supporting undergraduate historical research. Enjoy your journey back in time!

THOMAS R. SEABROOK AND FAITH SKILES

April 2, 2015



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KEEP UP THE FIGHT

Eudora Ramsay Richardson and the Evolution of Feminism After Suffrage

Andrea Ledesma

"Maybe you have a mental picture of a woman writer and lecturer as an unrouged, stringy haired creature. If you do you are in for a big surprise when you meet Mrs. Eudora Ramsay Richardson. For she is good-looking."

~New Sentinel, March 31, 1932

Feminists of the interwar period stood at a crossroads. The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 promised a flowering of women's social and political ambitions, yet the cultural backlash of the 1920s, coupled with the economic instability of the 1930s, interrupted this pursuit. In the midst of the Great Depression, the once outspoken women's movement suddenly found itself without a coherent voice. Many women were the "first orphans in the storm" that forced them out of the public sphere of politics and work and back into the home.¹ Those who continued to lobby

1 For a brief introduction to women's economic setbacks in the Great Depression, see: Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Robert McElvaine provides a more detailed account of the psychological effects of market failure in *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984). Those interested in gender discrimination present in New Deal Reform should refer to Alice Kessler-Harris's chapter "Designing Women and Old Fools: Writing Gender into Social Security Law," published in Linda Kerber, ed., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

for female independence and power attracted harsh criticism. The nation no longer viewed feminism as a movement of sociopolitical progress, but as the radical agenda of troublesome, unkempt women. Both men and women avoided the campaign. Yet some feminists, like Eudora Ramsay Richardson, a well-known writer and activist of the interwar years, escaped these constructs and constraints. In this article, I explore how Eudora Richardson's political and literary work created and promoted a style of feminism that was fitting of the sociopolitical landscape of the interwar period and ultimately the bridge between the political themes of the suffrage movement and the cultural theories championed by flappers and "new-style" feminists. Using Richardson as a case study, I argue that the 1930s was not characterized by a lull in or absence of American feminism, but was actually a formative period for it.

Many historians have worked to make sense of the American women's movement of the twentieth century. Much of the literature has divided feminism between the suffragists of the 1900s, otherwise known as first-wave feminists, and the socially minded, second-wave feminists of the 1960s, with little development in between. Yet feminism and women's activism did not disappear between the two waves. Instead, the movements changed in appearance, method, and motivation after suffrage. By uncovering these transformations, recent scholarship has restructured the feminist narrative.

The literature on liberal feminism of the post-suffrage era emphasizes the role of exceptional women in collective uplift as the link between first- and second-wave feminism. Because the sociopolitical climate of the interwar period made it difficult—if not impossible—for a new women's movement to form, researchers argue that the work of prominent individuals such as first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and aviatrix Amelia Earhart proved essential in inspiring females. Women who doubted their own strength and skill in the 1920s and 1930s looked to these role models for support and inspiration. Nonetheless, most analyses of liberal feminism overstate the influence of public figures: the exceptional work of a few does not define a national movement.² Worse yet, most existing scholarship ignores the significance of the average woman. Placing liberal feminism

² The definition of a social movement in US history can be quite abstract. Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor provide a helpful frame in which to evaluate the influence, work, and figures of a movement (especially the women's movement) in their book *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press).

at the center of analysis helps to contextualize the experiences of the period's most visible female figures at best.³

Other historians have noted how the reform culture of the 1920s and 1930s moved forward without an explicitly gendered focus, and, in some instances, continued to discriminate against women. Reformers lobbied for a handful of measures originally associated with the women's movement, and women worked to advance so-called maternalist goals in federal, state, and municipal governments. But the far-reaching effects of the Great Depression and the New Deal pressed the nation to look beyond the interests of a single, female demographic. National relief efforts aimed to help all US citizens, men and women alike, though the latter often received sub-par benefits. Federal laws and social customs continued to regard women in a subordinate category separate from men. Interwar period reform became feminist in retrospect as contemporary historians reviewed the era to find the feminist themes and figures that inconspicuously supported public works. As historians such as Susan Ware argue, the era—and especially the New Deal—did the “same thing for [women] as it [had] for men. There [was] nothing feminist or antifeminist about it.”⁴

Finally, historians of interwar-period feminism looking for evidence of progress consistently segregate the personal from the political. In these studies, flappers and other supporters of the “feminist—new style” redefined work, love, sex, and beauty for the 1920s woman.⁵ Examinations of the 1930s, however, describe feminism

3 Two historians lead the discussion on liberal feminism. The first is Susan Ware, whose works include *Beyond Suffrage: Women and the New Deal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) and *Partner and I: Molly Dewson and New Deal Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Second, Lois Scharf analyzes the relationship between feminism and economics to gauge the state of the women's movement in the 1930s. Her most notable work is *To Work and to Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980).

4 Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*. As much as this study discusses the female political opportunities in the 1930s, it also adds to the discussion of feminism in reform culture. Those interested in learning more about how women directly and indirectly related to the New Deal should also read Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991). Melosh explores both the cooperative relationship between men and women at work and the portrayal and power of female citizens in the 1930s through the performing and visual arts.

5 This phrase is taken from Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, “Feminist-New Style,” in *Modern American Women: A Documentary History*, ed. Susan Ware (New York:

in primarily political terms, emphasizing how the “experimental, reformist atmosphere of the New Deal encouraged and facilitated progress for women.”⁶ In the 1930s, federal offices, it seemed, proved more efficient than the speakeasy for effecting change. Through these characterizations, historians have thus established a confusing dichotomy. Political progress and social progress were not mutually exclusive, even though the scholarship casts them as separate and opposing forces. They must be read together in order to understand the whole character and full effects of feminism.

No woman can better challenge these narratives of interwar feminism than Eudora Ramsay Richardson. Born in Virginia in 1891, Richardson graduated from Hollins University. She went on to work for the National American Women’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in the 1910s, and during the 1920s and 1930s continued to actively promote women’s rights and female independence. Richardson was also an accomplished author. The public consistently praised her articles, editorials, and books that tackled both the politics inherent to women’s issues, and changing gender expectations and norms in American culture. On the podium or in print, Richardson was a feminist unique to her time.⁷

“Striving Toward a Better Way of Life”

Politics contributed heavily to Eudora Ramsay Richardson’s feminist legacy. A majority of American women refrained from filling “their lives with public activity” at the turn of the century, but, “charged with the enthusiasm of Progressivism,” Richardson and other politically-active women in the 1910s injected “life [back] into the suffrage movement.”⁸ Specifically, Richardson worked on the

McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997). In Bromley’s article, originally published in 1927, she describes the “Feminist--New Style” of the 1920s that encouraged women to seek professional opportunities, financial independence, and social networks. In a way, “Feminist-New Style” is not unlike liberal feminism as both emphasized an individualistic approach to female empowerment.

6 Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*. Here, Ware argues that the opportunities inherent in President Roosevelt’s national reform programs allowed the women’s movement to succeed in the political sphere.

7 “Mrs. Eudora Ramsay Richardson, Writer, Feminist, Dies,” *The Washington Post*, October 9, 1973.

8 Karen Manners Smith, “New Paths to Power: 1890-1920,” in *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*, ed. Nancy F. Cott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 364 & 395.

ground with NAWSA to campaign for the women's vote. Her foray into politics did not end, however, with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. In the 1930s, with the election of President Roosevelt and resurgence of the Democratic Party, Richardson witnessed firsthand both the incorporation of women's issues into national politics and the extent and consequences of New Deal reforms. As part of a grassroots organization and national party, Richardson honed the political dimensions of her feminist identity. Her varied career shaped and expressed her distinguished interpretation of women's rights, femininity, and gender relations.

The suffrage movement served as an opportunity for Richardson to refine her public persona. In 1914, she left her job as the head of the English Department at South Carolina's Greenville Women's College to join NAWSA. Working as a paid field director, she spoke to crowds across the US about women's suffrage, perfecting her public speaking skills in the process. In "Suffragist Defies Rain," for example, one reporter noted that:

Miss Ramsay speaks clearly and pleasantly and appeals both to the hearts and minds of her hearers. Her arguments are logical and she shows no fear in taking up the various objects put forth by those who opposed suffrage, and consistently did she show that they were one and all far aside from the issue when studied by fair minded men absolutely useless in proving that women should not vote.⁹

NAWSA effectively reaffirmed for Richardson the importance of rhetoric. The controversy that surrounded suffrage demanded that she avoid phrases that could anger or confuse listeners. Good words would generate good press for the women's movement. Richardson even used her audiences' reservations to her advantage. Before the interwar period, much of the nation understood political women in domestic terms. Female activists adopted "municipal housekeeping" campaigns which attended to "a variety of urban, industrial problems" like a wife would her family.¹⁰ Echoing this metaphor, Richardson claimed that "women needed the ballot because [they were] a favor in the home and the home [was] subject to the influence and control

⁹ Suffrage Clippings, "Suffragist Defies the Rain" [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, The Papers of Eudora Ramsay Richardson, Small Special Collections at the University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville [hereafter cited as the Richardson Papers].

¹⁰ Smith, "New Paths to Power," 386.

of the government.”¹¹ The acceptance of Richardson’s political goals relied heavily on the manner in which she expressed them.

Furthermore, Richardson learned how to defend herself in these crowded lecture halls. For example, “Suffragist Squelches Man,” an article from the *Utica Daily Press*, reported how one “conscientious observer” interrupted Richardson’s speech and claimed that he would become a suffragist as soon as she “cut loose from the Mormons and the Socialists.”¹² Richardson then fired back, letting the man know that her cause was “not allied” with either group, but also emphasizing how the suffrage movement had been “endorsed by...a hundred other religious bodies...labor organizations...and all the political parties.”¹³ With the possibility of conflict at every stop on her NAWSA tour, Richardson acquired a thick skin. She did not fear hecklers in the crowd, but welcomed them as opportunities to articulate her well-formulated arguments. Over time, these confrontations only added to Richardson’s reputation as an eloquent and aggressive activist. Her well-documented retort proved that she was “deserving of the fame that heralded her coming.”¹⁴ From podium to podium, she stood her ground.

The suffrage movement also prompted Richardson to face the ideological and political diversity that defined the nation’s feminist activists. Two groups in particular represented the opposing ends of this spectrum. Richardson herself was a member of NAWSA. Established in 1890, the organization drew inspiration from the women of the Progressive era and led “the battle for the vote into the twentieth century” by working within the established political system.¹⁵ Offices formed across the US and members worked toward state-by-state enfranchisement. However, some disagreed with this method. In 1914, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns left NAWSA to form the National Women’s Party (NWP), which lobbied for the passage and ratification of a federal suffrage amendment. While women’s

11 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffragist Defies the Rain,” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

12 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffragist Defies the Rain,” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

13 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffragist Defies the Rain,” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

14 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffragist Defies the Rain,” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

15 Smith, “New Paths to Power,” 363.

groups across the US—NAWSA included—eventually adopted this same platform, the NWP still distinguished itself with its often radical political tactics. Members were unafraid of large, public demonstrations or of challenging the established political order. The infamous Silent Sentinel campaign of 1917, as an example, stationed NWP members outside of the White House with signs asking “Mr. President, What Will You Do For Women Suffrage?” This activity led to numerous arrests.¹⁶ The singular goal of suffrage gave birth to multiple campaigns.

Richardson approached the schism between the NWP and NAWSA with reserved optimism. Speaking candidly with one reporter, she admitted that she “regretted that the suffrage movement should be hampered by its radical wing.”¹⁷ NWP demonstrations, she argued, were the ineffective and distracting tactics of militants. Some historians may criticize her for exacerbating cracks in an already fragmented movement; but, in actuality, her comments were more analytical than contentious. As much as she disagreed with the strategy and tactics of the NWP, it is clear that she still appreciated its members’ motives. Ultimately, she believed women’s political power was stronger than the strategies that divided the movement. Richardson even valued the dissent. As she stated at the time, “there [has] never been a great reform moment that [has] not been thus hampered [by disagreement].”¹⁸ Richardson thus viewed the spectrum of opinion as a hallmark of growth for American feminists, and continued to portray female solidarity in her political agenda.

Arguably, the greatest benefit of Richardson’s suffragist work was the national following that she gained. The public knew Richardson for her “attractive personality and...voice [that rang] out to the fringe of the crowd.”¹⁹ Following her “headline-making” stop in Utica, NY, a reporter from the nearby town of Clinton hailed her as an “apostle of optimism.”²⁰ The sense and spirit with which she

16 Smith, “New Paths to Power,” 409.

17 Suffrage Clippings, “Repudiate the Militants” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

18 Suffrage Clippings, “Repudiate the Militants” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

19 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffragist Squelches Man” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

20 Suffrage Clippings, “Inspires Clinton Women” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

expressed her feminist goals proved infectious, turning attendees into supporters. Another newspaper praised Richardson with nothing but superlatives, calling her “one of the most charming... [and] capable advocates of equal suffrage for women.”²¹ All public speakers relied on charm, but by combining her knowledge of women’s issues with a witty character, Richardson made the profession her own and established a brand of feminism that “[disarmed] foes and [won] friends closer.”²² Crowds gathered to see Richardson herself as much as they did to learn about the issue at hand. The following she cultivated as a NAWSA speaker provided her with a guaranteed audience for her later political work.

Ironically, the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, ushered in a decade in which American women sought empowerment through other apolitical means. The “rapid evolution and tremendous growth of the white-collar sector” allowed a woman to financially claim her independence.²³ She did not need a man to cast her vote or buy her a dress. At the same time, the flapper lifestyle of the “Roaring Twenties” allowed women to revel in leisure time as much as men. Women were not completely apathetic toward politics. Yet in the 1920s, “exhausted and elated suffragists [found that] there would be no permanent unity in the women’s movement.”²⁴ Journalist Dorothy Dunbar Bromley ultimately found that the 1920s gave way to a “new style” of feminism wherein women reaped the independence that followed suffragists’ political work but “did not want to wear their mantle [in the public sector].”²⁵ Feminism was now a term of “opprobrium” that aggravated tensions between the sexes.²⁶ Women instead wanted professional development and social liberalism. The 1920s celebrated women, not feminists.

Richardson thus reimagined her political platform for the post-suffrage era. NAWSA became the League of Women Voters (LWV) in 1920. As the “organizational heir to the suffrage movement,” the

21 Suffrage Clippings, “Suffrage Party Beings Organized” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

22 Suffrage Clippings, “Inspires Clinton Women” [c.a. 1910s], box 4, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

23 Smith, “New Paths to Power,” 384.

24 Smith, “New Paths to Power.” Bromley, “Feminist-New Style,” 146.

25 Smith, “New Paths to Power.” Bromley, “Feminist-New Style,” 146.

26 Susan Ware, *Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 126.

LWV championed a “new-style [of] feminism” that valued “women [who made] good in positions of responsibility.”²⁷ In that same vein, Richardson asserted that “women’s voice in public life [would be] a weak one until [they united] to show large voting strength.”²⁸ The campaign for suffrage had ended—women now had to learn to use their ballots wisely. Failing to do would leave women unprepared for the new opportunities and challenges of the 1930s.

Women across the US encountered new and greater obstacles throughout the 1930s. In the home, for example, women had to make do. While the “Roaring Twenties” celebrated convenience and luxury, the Great Depression reasserted the need for resourcefulness and thrift. Leaner household budgets left women in the home with a heavier burden, and unfortunately, these daughters, wives, and mothers could not help but feel personally responsible for the misfortunes that plagued their loved ones. In the workplace, the “deleterious effect of Depression-related pressure...was duplicated.”²⁹ Employers cut a majority, if not all, of their female workers to reduce payroll as well as to “maintain...gender roles.”³⁰ To cope with the uncertainty and fear of the Great Depression, the public turned to traditional ideas of home and family for support, forcing women back into the private sphere as men looked for work. Women, however, returned to the public sector with the advent of the New Deal as federal programs created new avenues for income and self-fulfillment. However, offices still discriminated against women and national icons of female strength, like Amelia Earhart, ultimately “did little to inspire women collectively.”³¹ “Raised in the belief that nothing was impossible for which they were willing to work,” women of the Great Depression found themselves at an impasse.³²

Nonetheless, Richardson lobbied for a new type of feminist activist. She needed to be, in her own words, “militant inside and

27 Sarah Jane Deutsch, “From Ballots to Breadlines: 1920-1940,” in *No Small Courage*, ed. Nancy F. Cott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 464.

28 “Woman Urged to Show Their Power at Polls,” *The Washington Post*, June 18, 1936.

29 Lois Scharf, *To Work and to Wed: Female Employment and the Search for Modern Feminism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), x.

30 McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 181.

31 Ware, *Still Missing*, 118.

32 Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 96.

feminine, compromising, and comradely outside.”³³ Richardson did not view this need for reinvention as a sign of weakness. Rather, she believed that women’s nascent political identity worked to their advantage. She argued that female activists, raised in and tested by the suffrage era, could reinvent themselves without the “trite terms and flowery phrases that characterized the old-fashioned.”³⁴ Under Richardson’s guidance, feminists would flourish as modern activists in the New Deal.

By joining the Democratic Party in the 1930s, Richardson took her own words about the importance of electoral politics to heart and put them to work within the New Deal political order. For the election of 1936, the Women’s Division of the Democratic State Central Committee in Virginia appointed her chairman for Chesterfield County. Under the supervision of director F. Cleveland Davis, Richardson sought out “at least one woman in each [state] precinct... whose business it [would] be to get all those who are eligible to register [to vote].”³⁵ Clearly both the LWV and national parties prioritized increasing women’s involvement in politics. Richardson’s work paid off at the Democratic National Convention of 1936. She reported that women were now “present at all sessions of the important committee and may vote whenever anything [happens] to members.”³⁶ Local, state, and national issues could no longer ignore women’s interests.

Richardson’s interpretation of feminism also stressed how political progress could not be accomplished alone. She worked continuously so that all women—beyond the ranks of the Democratic Party—would appreciate and utilize the rights set before them by the Nineteenth Amendment. She believed that a strong female voice in national politics relied on the concerted efforts of the majority, not a handful of outspoken activists. Richardson and her peers succeeded not only in bringing more women to the public sector, but also in winning them the recognition they deserved. Following President Roosevelt’s reelection in 1936 by an “unprecedented majority,” Democratic state campaign director Horace H. Edwards extended a

33 “Woman Urged to Show Their Power at Polls,” *The Washington Post*, June 18, 1936.

34 “Woman Urged to Show Their Power at Polls,” *The Washington Post*, June 18, 1936.

35 F. Cleveland Davis to Eudora Ramsay Richardson, September 23, 1936, box 1, folder 3, Richardson Papers.

36 Personal Scrapbook, Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Finds Woman at Convention Getting on Political Map” [c.a. 1930s], box 3, Richardson Papers.

“hearty congratulations” to Richardson and the “splendid women of Virginia.”³⁷ They impressed everyone at “headquarters” and were “entitled to a large portion of the credit [for the victory].”³⁸ The political endeavors of women in the 1930s nurtured the seeds planted in the suffrage era. Whether Democrat or Republican, women across the U.S. came together and expressed themselves with the ballot.

At the same time, the New Deal allowed Richardson to promote women’s professional interests. Federal reform projects provided new opportunities for female leadership and advancement. The Federal Writer’s Project, for example, hired Richardson in 1937 to supervise its Virginia office, and there “perhaps...was no one in Virginia so well [qualified]” to take the job.³⁹ Her work there was rooted in her literary background, and she “accepted the position...[as] part of her obligation as a writer.”⁴⁰ Despite being unable to staff her offices with experienced personnel, Richardson still took pride in her responsibilities as a manager and mentor. She worked closely with her staff as they produced novels, scripts, and articles celebrating Virginia history and culture.⁴¹ With the New Deal, women such as Richardson could expand their professional aspirations beyond rank-and-file positions.

Richardson concurrently maintained a feminist profile in the workplace. Her exceptional writing and managerial skills proved that women could compete with men in the professional sector. After all, it was under her authority that Virginia produced some of the Federal Writers Project’s most acclaimed publications, namely *Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion* (1940) and *The Negro in Virginia* (1940). One could argue that Richardson’s success bolstered liberal feminism. Could her privileged position truly impact the average woman? Richardson thought so and appreciated the role she played in helping the “many fine writers [male and female] who found

37 Horace H. Edwards to Eudora Ramsay Richardson, November 9, 1936, box 1, folder 7, Richardson Papers.

38 Horace H. Edwards to Eudora Ramsay Richardson, November 9, 1936, box 1, folder 7, Richardson Papers.

39 Eleanor Barton, “Important Book, Virginia, Supervised by Former Greenville,” *The Greenville Piedmont*, June 19, 1940.

40 Eleanor Barton, “Important Book, Virginia, Supervised by Former Greenville,” *The Greenville Piedmont*, June 19, 1940.

41 Account of the Federal Writers Project to Harold W. Landin of the American Council of Learned Societies, August 31, 1943, box 1, folder 11, Richardson Papers.

themselves without employment on account of the depression.”⁴² With Richardson at the helm of the Virginia office, women could rest assured that their ability, not gender, would be the distinguishing factor in their applications. Feminists in professional workplaces needed to be both inspirational and accessible.

Unsurprisingly, Richardson challenged the public’s definition of women in the public sector. Popular writer Uthal Vincent Wilcox outlined five classes of women in the 1930s. According to this categorization, Congressional women worked with Congress, “epitomizing the advance guard of women’s future role over national affairs,” but pushed themselves to the “breaking point when balancing political and personal ideas of femininity.”⁴³ Intellectuals “achieved great dominance” in federal bureaus advocating for reform based on hard, scientific data.⁴⁴ Executives were known for their “nasty, quick-tempered, and hard-boiled” personalities, yet worked well with men in the office.⁴⁵ Secretarial women, the largest and most distinct class, managed offices and communicated with the press, as long as they learned to “dress well [and] look fresh.”⁴⁶ Emotional women, known derisively as “sob sisters,” published articles saturated with “light, sweetness, and purity.”⁴⁷ Wilcox’s five classes evaluated a woman’s strengths and weaknesses based on an indirect relationship between professional development and personal fulfillment. Success and femininity did not move together. Richardson, however, failed to fit into any of Wilcox’s classes. Her reputation and her résumé reflected the characteristics of the Congressional and Intellectual woman, respectively, while her productive relationships with men and her experience with office management and public communication combined features of the Executive, Secretarial, and Emotional woman. By flouting both this unfair dichotomy and Wilcox’s classification, Richardson embodied an interpretation of feminism that forced the public to reassess its definition of female empowerment.

Sexism, however, still persisted in the 1930s. Writer Helena

42 Eleanor Barton, “Important Book, Virginia, Supervised by Former Greenville,” *The Greenville Piedmont*, June 19, 1940.

43 Uthal Vincent Wilcox, “New Deal Females,” *American Mercury* 38 (1936), 417.

44 Wilcox, “New Deal Females,” 419.

45 Wilcox, “New Deal Females,” 420.

46 Wilcox, “New Deal Females,” 421.

47 Wilcox, “New Deal Females,” 422.

Hil Wilcox even went so far as to claim in 1934 that “federal relief itself [had] been characterized by sex discrimination.”⁴⁸ Government programs often placed women in the service industry as opposed to white-collar offices, and the New Deal milestone of social security also differentiated between male and female workers. Historian Alice Kessler-Harris notes that policy makers did not believe that a woman “fit the profile of the stable industrial worker.”⁴⁹ Consequently, they included women in the social welfare program “as a matter of peace of mind for the husband.”⁵⁰ Traditional notions of work and family devalued women’s stake in the economy. Given the dire straits of the Great Depression, the nation expected its women to once again rely on—or rather, submit to—the male breadwinner. A woman’s work would do more good in the home than the in workplace. The New Deal and its hopes for national relief merely accommodated women workers. So, with their political and professional gains at stake, feminists in the interwar period reasserted women’s rights as citizens and workers.

Richardson joined this effort with her protest of Section 213-A of the National Economy Act, which allowed for “married women whose husbands [were] gainfully employed [to be] either... furloughed or displaced...[when] necessary.”⁵¹ Her petition, signed by thirty-nine women and sent to J. B. Perrish, assistant vice president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Clerks’ Association, attacked the Act on multiple fronts. First, Richardson stressed the hypocrisy inherent to Section 213-A. How could the New Deal bureaus created for the benefit of the American public deny benefits to women blatantly in need of aid? She wrote:

Women have borne their share of suffering during the depression and have risen to emergencies with courage...It seems exceedingly hard that a woman with ability who has by years of work created a place for herself should lose what she

48 Helena Hil Wilcox, “New Deal that Women Want,” *Current History* 41 (1934): 182.

49 Alice Kessler-Harris, “Designing Women and Old Fools: Writing Gender into Social Security Law,” in *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, Linda Kerber, Jane Sherron DeHart, and Cornelia Hughes Dayton, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 527.

50 Kessler-Harris, “Designing Women and Old Fools,” 522.

51 Letter Regarding the Furlough of Female Workers, February 21, 1933, box 1, folder 5, Richardson Papers.

has achieved...The sort of discrimination that sort of ruling [involves] strikes at [the] very heart of efficiency and thwarts women in her attempt to achieve success.⁵²

Richardson argued that national recovery relied on women's economic autonomy. Acknowledging women's contributions to markets and labor would only help the nation lift itself out of the Depression.

Second, Richardson emphasized the legislation's combative potential. Section 213-A raised "antagonism between the sexes" that was equally "unjust" and "dangerous."⁵³ From her perspective, the 1930s made it apparent that cooperation, not competition, would turn progressive ideas into legitimate reform. Neither Richardson's feminism nor other social movements could stand to lose male or female supporters. Thus far, the Democratic Party's reform efforts united both sexes in "striving for a better way of life."⁵⁴ By holding women in a separate, subordinate labor category, Richardson argued that the clause put the cooperation that allowed the New Deal to flourish at risk.

Third, according to Richardson, the framers of Section 213-A, who ignored the needs of their female constituents, were woefully misguided. What was drafted as a means to protect families by securing work for traditional (i.e. male) heads-of-households actually lengthened "breadlines...for many miles."⁵⁵ Instead of fulfilling the responsibilities of true public servants, Richardson argued, legislators played into the "form of depression [and] hysteria" inherent to discrimination.⁵⁶ Reform only went so far if it ignored women's issues. Writer Anita L. Pollitzer comparably noted this tension. Only by taking into account female interests would the Roosevelt Administration "bring about [greater] industrial conditions," and until then the New Deal merely crystallized "inequality and...[placed]

52 Letter Regarding the Furlough of Female Workers, February 21, 1933, box 1, folder 5, Richardson Papers.

53 Letter Regarding the Furlough of Female Workers, February 21, 1933, box 1, folder 5, Richardson Papers.

54 Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, "Democracy Must Be Saved State Women Told" [c.a. 1930s], box 4, folder 6, Richardson Papers.

55 Letter Regarding the Furlough of Female Workers, February 21, 1933, box 1, folder 5, Richardson Papers.

56 Letter Regarding the Furlough of Female Workers, February 21, 1933, box 1, folder 5, Richardson Papers.

women under new and greater handicaps.”⁵⁷ Richardson and her peers relished New Deal opportunities, but sex discrimination hampered their ambition.

One of the greatest obstacles to feminism in the 1930s, however, was what Richardson characterized as women’s misuse of their own political power. Richardson specifically criticized American women’s “failure” to live up to promises of the suffrage era.⁵⁸ Women in the 1930s, who she imagined in the 1910s would be meaningful participants in political discourse, now merely populated the Capitol as successors to “their dead husbands or in whose veins [flowed] the blood of kinsmen illustrious in the halls of lawmakers.”⁵⁹ Many women also “employed methods [so] exasperatingly womanish and calculating [that they bred] in men distrust of the women who [dabble] in public affairs.”⁶⁰ As much as Richardson believed in a strong female voice, she also understood that some women’s ways and beliefs ultimately damaged her gender’s reputation in public affairs. All women could be political, but not all women were meant to be politicians.

Even worse, Richardson found that her peers lacked direction and consensus. The NWP and LWV continued to organize female activists in the 1930s, but neither organization was capable of leading a national movement. While the NWP “fiercely and without charm...[carried] their cause to its logical conclusion,” Richardson observed, the LWV relied on “feminists whose development [had] been arrested.”⁶¹ In Richardson’s view, interwar feminism had been reduced to a combination of unpopular radicalism and ineffective conservatism. The remainder of women who considered themselves feminists in America lacked the necessary resources and guidance for undertaking meaningful work.

Still, the pointed realism with which Richardson approached her former suffragist allies left her surprisingly optimistic in the 1930s. She revealed in 1937:

It [was] certainly true that the enfranchisement of women
[had] not brought about the millennium promised.... Now

57 Anita L. Pollitzer, “The New Deal for Women,” *Equal Rights* 33 (1933), 261.

58 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Ladies of the Lobby,” *North American Review* 227 (1929), 648.

59 Richardson, “Ladies of the Lobby,” 649.

60 Published Quotations of Eudora Ramsay Richardson, box 2, folder 2, Richardson Papers.

61 Richardson, “Ladies of the Lobby,” 654.

that many years [have] passed, I don't mind divulging a secret. Suffragists never really thought that women equipped with the ballot could work miracles over night. ...But rather they tended to agree with Mrs. Poysner who said... 'I'm not denying that women are foolish. God almighty made 'em to match the men.'⁶²

Clearly, feminism in Richardson's hands never meant to use voting rights as a panacea for social ills. It was simply a milestone in a decades-long pursuit for equality. To "achieve the attitude toward women as individuals...[someone capable of pulling] herself up by her own bootstraps," American women needed to stop depending on patriarchal relationships, work amicably yet resolutely through political campaigns, and find a means to heal the splinters in women's organizations. For Richardson, critiquing her peers was essential to progress.

Altogether, Richardson's political work through the interwar period enabled her to advance the feminist principles she honed in the pre-suffrage era. As a suffragist, she undoubtedly viewed women's political rights as catalysts to their own personal and professional development. By actively participating in the NAWSA campaign, she learned how to articulate and defend these ideas in public. In fact, this work later benefited her as the boldness with which she expressed her feminist ideals earned her a national following. The 1920s, however, interrupted her work. The decade fostered political apathy among women. Luckily, the 1930s brought drastic changes to the federal government and women's political organizations alike, and incited Richardson adjusted her platform. She insisted that woman be vocal, intelligent, and authentic when seeking professional opportunities, combating discrimination in federal institutions, and working with their peers in and out of the public sector. Between the suffrage movement and the New Deal, the nation lived in flux. Yet, under this pressure, Richardson realized a style of feminism not only exclusive to the interwar period, but also influential to the American women's movement as a whole.

Liberating Literature

Despite her political accomplishments, history remembers Richardson as an author rather than an activist. She carried

⁶² Eudora Ramsay Richardson, "Women's Rise to Power," *Forum and Century* 67 (1937), 29-30.

several highly-acclaimed novels in her portfolio—her obituary in *The Washington Post* even describes her first as a “writer,” then as a “feminist.”⁶³ As with her political work, Richardson’s writings defined and disseminated her feminist beliefs. With rich, yet fictional narratives, in-depth, non-fiction articles, and a widely read *magnum opus* that incited a public battle of the sexes, Richardson’s career as a writer provided her with an essential medium for shaping and sharing her views on the contemporary woman.

Richardson used her female protagonists to both embody and promote women’s professionalism. For example, “Men Are Like That” tells the story of bank worker Emma Morrison. In this tale, Morrison “made herself indispensable...[and] was...depended on by the officers of the bank.”⁶⁴ But her success comes at a price. Emma is underpaid and overworked and has difficulty relating to other women, whom she regards as “silly children who in their ranking were as far removed from [her] as the president was from the office boy.”⁶⁵ Fortunately, her work does not go unrewarded. After Emma stops a co-worker from botching a high profile account, her boss promotes her to the position of “efficiency expert...[with] a bit more salary.”⁶⁶ Still, “Men Are Like That” harshly critiqued women’s opportunities during the interwar period. Richardson used the short story to empathize with female readers who shared Emma’s frustration. After all, the market crash that struck only a year after the story’s publication left a majority of women without work and suffering from anxiety and fatigue. Emma may have finally gotten her promotion, but her greatest achievement was bringing attention to the specific issues concerning professional women.

Nonetheless, Richardson’s writing did not restrict its interpretation of a woman’s strength to her professional opportunities. “The Hundredth Girl,” for example, tells the story of Kirk and Charlotte—two childhood friends whose relationship slowly blossoms into romance. Typical of Richardson’s feminist fiction, Charlotte proves to be a charismatic hero—even though Richardson never describes her at work. Instead, Charlotte is an intelligent flirt. While

63 “Mrs. Eudora Ramsay Richardson, Writer Feminist, Dies,” *The Washington Post*, October 9, 1973.

64 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Men Are Like that,” *Ladies Home Journal* 45, no. 5 (May 1928), 156.

65 Richardson, “Men Are Like That.”

66 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Men Are Like That.”

Kirk struggles to find his romantic footing, she knew “what [she wanted] and how to go after it.”⁶⁷ The confidence Richardson wished upon women of the public sector thus carried over into personal affairs. As historian Susan Ware notes, though women of the interwar period put a high “priority on self-expression and independence,” they were not totally “averse to love.”⁶⁸ Readers did not have to be the “hundredth girl” to realize that by approaching romance with the same determination, they too could find meaningful relationships in the interwar period.

“Air Madness” similarly intertwines women’s personal and professional interests. “Making a hundred a month...with the prospect of steady raises,” Jane, the flight attendant at the center of the short story, is the envy of any 1930s career woman.⁶⁹ Yet a cross-country flight tests her wits. Turbulent skies turn the routine trip into chaos as the pilot goes “stark mad” in the cockpit.⁷⁰ Jane heroically rises to the occasion, helping the distressed passengers and crew through the ordeal. “Air Madness” is interesting because of what it reveals about personal relationships. The driven career woman does not need to sacrifice love for success. In fact, it is Jane’s quick thinking that wins her the affections of Kent Hudgens, the first mate who looks “as though he might have stepped out of the cover of a sports magazine.”⁷¹ He admits: “Jane darling you’re a brick...and I love you.”⁷²

Together, “The Hundredth Girl” and “Air Madness” showcase what exactly made Richardson’s interpretation of feminism so unique. Richardson was not the only female activist to champion political goals and professional ambitions, but by pairing them with ideas that reassessed how women approached love and friendship, she became decidedly contemporary. Her breed of feminists could have it all. They no longer had to segregate their professional and personal selves, as the simultaneous expression of both would comfort and empower women in the interwar period.

Yet, much like her political endeavors, Richardson’s fiction

67 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “The Hundredth Girl,” *The Washington Post*, August 27 1933, SM6.

68 Susan Ware, *Modern American Women: A Documentary History* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997), 155.

69 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Air Madness,” *Pictorial Review* 35 (1934), 17.

70 Richardson, “Air Madness.”

71 Richardson, “Air Madness.”

72 Richardson, “Air Madness,” 37.

did not exclude male characters from its feminist narratives. In “The Hundredth Girl,” Kirk is the clumsy bachelor burning the “candle at both ends in his pursuit of a glamorous girl.”⁷³ He is also stubborn, initially preferring the passive Germane to the outspoken Charlotte since the former “listened admiringly to everything he said and never started an argument.”⁷⁴ Unsurprisingly, his bachelor tendencies eventually get the better of him. Faced with spending the last of his money on courting Germane, he begs her to tell him “I love you” since he can no longer “keep the [financial] pace [he had] started.”⁷⁵ Kirk is Charlotte’s literary foil. His gaffes accentuate her sensible demeanor and ultimately provide for a more accurate characterization of gender relations. Just as women are fully capable of success, so too are men vulnerable to emotion. Richardson’s work promoted diverse and realistic characterizations of men and women to encourage readers come to terms with their potential for failure *and* success and thus become more effective partners.

Arguably, the way in which Richardson associates femininity and feminism is the most remarkable feature of her short fiction. By the 1930s, much of the American public regarded feminists as “unrouged, stringy haired” creatures.⁷⁶ Charlotte is both a “naughty vixen” and “imp incarnate,”⁷⁷ Jane loves fashion, so she splits her checks between her mother and buying “pretty clothes for evenings off duty.”⁷⁸ Even Richardson herself was both distinguished by and lauded for being a “good looking” feminist.⁷⁹ Feminists could still be feminine. Much like her approach to women’s professional and personal ambitions, Richardson wrote to erase the line that separated beauty and strength. From Richardson’s perspective, the negative mischaracterization of feminists as unfeminine was as detrimental to her gender as Section 213-A. Men and women needed to move past clichés in order to fully appreciate women’s advancement.

With nonfiction pieces, Richardson further explored the relationship between love and feminism, emphasizing the need for

73 Richardson, “The Hundredth Girl.”

74 Richardson, “The Hundredth Girl.”

75 Richardson, “The Hundredth Girl.”

76 “Advises Women to Use Sex Appeal in Business,” *News Sentinel*, March 31, 1932.

77 Richardson, “The Hundredth Girl.”

78 Richardson, “Air Madness,” 16.

79 “Advises Women to Use Sex Appeal,” *News Sentinel*, March 31, 1932.

respect in romance. “Intelligent Husbands Wanted” tackles this issue straight on, with Richardson lamenting the fact that women looking for partners “neglected the task of being themselves.”⁸⁰ In her eyes, dating and marriage had become less a personal journey for romantic fulfillment and more a public submission to men’s interpretation of gender norms. For example, men’s infatuation with youth meant that a “young woman...[was] more likely to be [the older man’s] slave than his darling.”⁸¹ Richardson demanded that women “marry [their] intellectual equal.”⁸² Eternal love needed to be “handled in a manner satisfying to the two people whose happiness is involved.”⁸³ The opening of women’s public networks predicated the need to update cultural norms. “Intelligent Husbands Wanted” was even more forward-thinking with the inclusion of one topic: sex. Richardson affirmed its value as essential to a successful marriage: sex is not “something that a man [or woman] must get out of [his/her] system... [he/she] must let love become a part of [his/her] ambitions.”⁸⁴ Those who refused doomed themselves to be “the loneliest [creatures] on earth.”⁸⁵ Feminism in Richardson’s view was an ideology establishing equality for women’s minds and bodies.

At the same time, Richardson advocated for femininity in the workplace. With the various opportunities and challenges available during the interwar period, Richardson expected a woman to “use all legitimate and respectable methods to achieve her aim.”⁸⁶ Beauty and charm, she argued, were just as useful as intelligence and skill. Unfortunately, Richardson found that too many of her peers failed to appreciate the relationship between sex appeal and business, making women “too shy to be successful...[or] too arrogant [since] they... forward too much.”⁸⁷ Richardson’s feminism thus sought a balance. Women should neither let their gender hinder their work, nor forget

80 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Intelligent Husbands Wanted,” *Forum & Century* 98 (October 1937), 152.

81 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Young Man’s Darling,” *Forum & Century* 99 (January 1938), 19.

82 Richardson, “Intelligent Husbands Wanted,” 157.

83 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Recognizing the Homemaker,” *The North American Review* (1928), 695.

84 Richardson, “Intelligent Husbands Wanted,” 155.

85 Richardson, “Intelligent Husbands Wanted,” 157.

86 “Advises Women to Use Sex Appeal in Business,” *News Sentinel*, March 31, 1932.

87 “Advises Women to Use Sex Appeal in Business,” *News Sentinel*, March 31, 1932.

the advantages inherent in being female.

That being said, Richardson wrote profusely on the need for gender cooperation. Not all feminists were women. As the interwar period wore on, it became more apparent that a woman's success in the public sector rested on the collective efforts of her gender as well as the support of her male peers. Richardson insisted that the increased power of women post-suffrage was "the direct result of a new awareness on the part of both men and women."⁸⁸ For Richardson, defining feminism as a solely female pursuit discredited the appeal and effectiveness of the entire movement. The public needed to think of feminism not as the work of man-hating radicals, but as a legitimate reform effort in which both men and women held stakes. Extending these political views into the home, Richardson highlighted the "arrogance" of the belief "that woman is the homemaker."⁸⁹ Women influenced politics as much as men influenced the home. Both were "institutions built by love and mutual needs, created to protect and comfort the family...Whatever...title there is must be conferred jointly upon husband and wife."⁹⁰ Social or political efforts rarely succeeded by only appealing to one demographic. Feminism in the modern era would only thrive so long as men and women worked together.

Though domesticity and other factors of gendered tradition still shaped Richardson's feminist writings, her treatment of these issues was not entirely radical. In her essays, home and motherhood were not relics of a sexist society, but institutions that needed reconstruction in the wake of the Great Depression and New Deal. According to a 1930 Women's Bureau census, a third of the eleven million working women of the 1930s juggled home and work, and in as many as 450,000 of these homes, women were the sole wage earners for their family.⁹¹ Richardson reached out to her domestic readers, especially the "American housewife of the upper middle-class...the principal victim of the situation about which there is so much prating...[but no] passing word or compassionate glance."⁹² Balancing unstable finances with social expectations resulted in widespread anxiety and fatigue. The psychological issue demanded

88 Richardson, "Women's Rise to Power," 33.

89 Richardson, "Recognizing the Homemaker," 701.

90 Richardson, "Recognizing the Homemaker."

91 "Women Work and Run Homes Too," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1937.

92 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, "Lady and the Peddler," *North American Review* 232 (1931), 466.

public attention and, concurrently, elevated work in the home. The housewife bore the weight of her “daily tasks” and the “concept of a lady [emphasis original]” to persevere through a life arguably more difficult than the forgotten man. In the same fashion, Richardson, herself a doting wife and mother, reassessed family dynamics. Mothers “felt the strain of carrying two jobs at once” and had to deal with a cacophony of opinions dictating what was best.⁹³ Richardson urged her readers to believe in their maternal instincts. “If unhampered by the jargon of [child psychology] cults,” a mother and her family could “develop...self-confidence and serenity.”⁹⁴ Feminism under Richardson’s influence empowered the wives and mothers of the 1930s.

Richardson’s career as a feminist author culminated in the writing of *The Influence of Men—Incurable*. In 1936, author John Erskine published *The Influence of Women and Its Cure*, which offered men, allegedly the victims of the pernicious efforts of organized women, a new defense strategy. He argued that the public should not be fooled by the claim that women “have it harder than man.”⁹⁵ Organized women “softened and spoiled” institutions of the modern world, so the “meanest thing [society] could do to the women of America would be to give them...equality with men.”⁹⁶ Erskine caught Richardson’s attention, and she published *The Influence of Men—Incurable* in response. A mix of satire, historical research, gender studies, and political theory, the book was Richardson’s *magnum opus*, articulating her beliefs in modern womanhood. The brand of feminism featured in *The Influence of Men—Incurable* revolved around three themes.

First, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* revealed the manipulative systems that supported patriarchal societies. According to Richardson, the research allegedly proving women to be subordinate workers and thinkers was itself the product of devious men. She explained how men “stole [female] work...[and] rights” and “kept women out of the powerful inner circles...[so that they did not] initiate something new and dangerous—to men.”⁹⁷ Even spaces as mundane

93 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Every Wife To Her Last,” *Women’s Journal* 14 (1929).

94 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, “Little Learning,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 82 (1927), 157.

95 John Erskine, *The Influence of Women and Its Cure* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 16.

96 Erskine, *The Influence of Women and Its Cure*, 69, 127.

97 Eudora Ramsay Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 55, 64.

as a hotel room treated women “as though [they were] all cloistered in homes.”⁹⁸ Everything from the coat hangers to the bathroom outlets had been engineered to push traveling woman closer “toward oblivion.”⁹⁹ Richardson added a new dimension to previous feminist arguments about women’s mental and physical skills. It was one thing to recognize her gender’s wasted potential as submissive homemakers without a ballot, and another to trace the deeper roots of that oppression. Drawing from historical data, social customs, and everyday life, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* revealed to readers the multiple dimensions shaping and obstructing the experiences of women in the interwar period. Consequently, women’s equality relied as much on recognizing the structures that determined gender norms in every society as it did on critiquing current events (e.g., the treatment of women in New Deal reform programs).

Second, the book approached feminism realistically by refraining from defining it as a uniformly united and successful movement. Instead, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* agreed to one of Erskine’s main arguments. Idle women did threaten society—but not alone. They operated as the “tools of men who seek to take women out of fields in which competition exists.”¹⁰⁰ Most explicitly, Richardson insisted that the idle woman’s cause of protective legislation, the primary political focus of many post-suffrage feminists, retarded “women’s development and [increased their] parasitism and economic slavery.”¹⁰¹ Once again, she gave depth to the interwar period interpretation of feminism. She was unafraid to hold both men and women responsible for creating a society that was critical and oppressive of its female members. Feminism needed to move forward not as an ignorant sisterhood or a stubbornly anti-male organization, but as a movement authentically committed to the best interests and equality of women.

Third, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* fostered the concept of reconciliation between the sexes. Richardson admits at the outset that the “man who fought for the rights of women [remained] not only unhonored and unsung, but also uncarved.”¹⁰² It was not man that Richardson took offense to, but *men*. When together, she asserted,

98 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 27.

99 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*.

100 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 85.

101 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 87.

102 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 17.

their egotism, fear, and ignorance mixed to form a discriminatory and destructive system. Once more, Richardson espoused the need for gender cooperation. Feminists of her teaching believed that “the influence of men should not be cured. Unto it, however, must be added the influence of women.”¹⁰³ Men and women fighting for dominance served no purpose. It was ultimately a “man-and-woman’s world.”¹⁰⁴

Despite the potentially contentious nature of her writing, Richardson had a strong following in interwar-period America. Publishers and readers wrote to Richardson praising the style and content of her work, as well as the feminist perspectives woven into it. For example, Mabel Raef Putnam regarded “Intelligent Husbands Wanted” as “a most excellent article, covering many points, which have long needed discussion.”¹⁰⁵ Phyllis Moir, assistant editor of *The Forum*, found “A Young Man’s Darling” compelling because it started a “fascinating debate [on marriage and age] and [could] help clear... some of the confused and silly thinking that attaches to it.”¹⁰⁶ Arnold Gingrich, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, followed Richardson’s writing intently. Upon the submission of two of her manuscripts, Gingrich “saw [her] name...[and] pounced upon it and read both papers with great interest.”¹⁰⁷ He said they were “genuine and moving [bits] of personal experience.”¹⁰⁸ Even the White House lauded Richardson. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt admired Richardson’s *The Woman Speaker* as a “book which [she hoped would] be published before long so that women in general [could] obtain it.”¹⁰⁹ Evidently, Richardson’s feminist prose appealed to readers of many backgrounds.

Her celebrity unfortunately did not spare her from discrimination. At *Esquire* magazine, Edward C. Aswell refused to publish Richardson’s work. He respected her portfolio, but maintained

103 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 156.

104 Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, 155.

105 Letter from Mabel Raef Putnam, October 3 1937, box 1, folder 2, Richardson Papers.

106 Letter from Phyllis Moir, May 19, 1937, box 1, folder 3, Richardson Papers.

107 Letter from Arnold Gingrich, October 11, 1933, box 1, folder 3, Richardson Papers.

108 Letter from Arnold Gingrich, October 11, 1933, box 1, folder 3, Richardson Papers.

109 Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day: By Mrs Roosevelt,” *Cincinnati Ohio Post*, February 1, 1936.

that *Esquire* was a publication “of and for males.”¹¹⁰ A review of Richardson’s biography of Alexander Stephens, *Little Aleck*, even referred to her as “Mr. Richardson,” an author who “marshaled his [sic] skill with his [sic] truly enormous array of facts.”¹¹¹ John L. Porter, speaking on her writings for the War Department in the 1940s, mentioned that she wrote with “all the qualities which [he] rather doubted would be found in one of [her] sex.”¹¹² Nevertheless, the sexism that marred some interpretations of Richardson’s work only heightened its value and necessity. Her articles and books prompted their audiences to rethink their views on women. Sex discrimination had no place in literature or society.

The reactions to *The Influence of Men—Incurable* demonstrated just how much Richardson’s feminist perspective could engage the public. One reporter in 1936 raved about how “earnest...powerful restrained comment...and [a lack of] dogmatism” distinguished *The Influence of Men—Incurable*, so much so that “to Eudora Ramsay Richardson the advancing of freedom of women is greatly indebted.”¹¹³ It seemed that women activists of the interwar period needed the novel to both speak for and organize them. *The Influence of Men—Incurable* mediated between radical and conservative feminism in a fashion that was both compelling and comprehensible.

At the same time, reviews for *The Influence of Men—Incurable* intensified the rivalry between Erskine and Richardson. Poet laureate Carter Wormley stood by Richardson in verse:

The guileless Erskine who views
The radiant aurora
Has witnessed but a poor excuse
To the glamorous Eudora¹¹⁴

Richardson’s book resonated with individuals beyond the feminist movement and women’s organizations. Margaret Ford of the *Boston Globe* astutely described this battle of the sexes in which the “referee’s

110 Letter from Edward C. Aswell, October 11, 1933, box 1, folder 3, Richardson Papers.

111 Comments on *Little Aleck* from Various Publications [c.a. 1932], box 1, folder 4, Richardson Papers.

112 Letter from John L. Porter, February 1, 1946, box 1, folder 13, Richardson Papers.

113 Henry Brantly Handy, “Clarity and Brilliance Mark Mrs. Richardson’s Challenge,” *See Who’s Who in America*, December 27, 1936.

114 Carter Wormley, “The Glamorous Eudora,” March 11, 1937, box 2, folder 2, Richardson Papers.

whistle might just as well sound.”¹¹⁵ As Ford explained, both writers claimed a corner and threw words “back and forth...[in] violent disagreement.”¹¹⁶ Erskine patronized Richardson when he claimed that “if a woman [was] really beautiful—she [was] useful enough.”¹¹⁷ Richardson was unfazed, maintaining her conviction that women were the “producers and conservers of humanity.”¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, the two authors were the first to admit that they were nothing but “friendly opponents.”¹¹⁹ Richardson did not dismiss Erskine as a misogynist. Erskine kept from repudiating Richardson as a bitter feminist. Each responded carefully to one another’s arguments, thereby proving that in academics, rhetoric, and diplomacy, men and women could be equally matched.

Richardson’s writing portfolio articulated a brand of feminism that was as forceful as it was unique. Her short fiction shed light on women’s complicated yet rewarding experiences at work and with others. Feminists of the 1920s and 1930s who took Richardson’s writing to heart would not have to choose between professional and personal fulfillment. Correspondingly, Richardson’s nonfiction pieces analyzed society and gender relationships. Her books and articles maintained that women could remain active in the public sector without sacrificing their needs as mothers, wives, or daughters. Her literary portfolio, and the feminist perspective that supported it, proved widely popular among readers, publishers, and journalists alike. From allegorical short stories to cutting op-eds, Richardson’s literature is essential to her legacy as an icon of contemporary feminism.

Conclusion

In the 1960s, feminism returned to the forefront of American politics. Groups like the National Organization of Women (NOW) and its members championed women’s liberation and looked to their predecessors in the suffrage movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for inspiration. Unfortunately, these

115 Margaret Ford, “Whose World Is It Anyways,” *Boston Globe*, November 1, 1936.

116 Margaret Ford, “Whose World Is It Anyways,” *Boston Globe*, November 1, 1936.

117 “John Erskine Declares Idle Women To Blame,” *Richmond News*, October 26, 1937.

118 “Egotism, Inferiority of Man Blamed for Woman’s Plight,” *Washington Post*, February 10, 1937.

119 “John Erskine Declares Idle Women To Blame,” *Richmond News*, October 26, 1937.

second-wave feminists—and contemporary historians—overlooked the contributions of an entire era. Interwar period feminists, such as Richardson, influenced the course of feminism through American history. Women who continued to lobby for their gender’s political, professional, and personal empowerment through the interwar years contributed to the establishment and success of second-wave feminism.

Eudora Ramsay Richardson distinguished herself as a feminist force in the 1920s and 1930s. As a field director for NAWSA in the 1910s she lobbied for women’s political rights and representation. During the 1930s, she worked with the Democratic Party to promote women’s active participation in state and national politics. She frequently critiqued the nature of women’s organizations in the hopes of advancing female solidarity across the United States. Richardson’s feminist theory proved just as tenacious in her writing. She crafted fictional characters and storylines that showcased the full spectrum of the interwar female experience. Whether rewarding the committed-yet-frustrating work of the office secretary or matchmaking a bachelor with his beautiful and flirtatious childhood friend, Richardson’s stories embraced the concept of female empowerment on all fronts. Nonfiction pieces also promoted these ideals. After studying the issues concerning wives, mothers, girlfriends, and career women, Richardson published works focused on establishing equality both in the public and private sector. Richardson eschewed the “unrouged, stringy haired” caricature of the 1930s feminist to surprise her peers and contemporary readers alike. Though a veteran of the suffrage era and an active patron of New Deal sociopolitical reforms, she and her interpretation of feminism clearly transcended the interwar period. She instilled within every woman—of the first wave, second wave, and in between—the “independent spirit [that would help] her earn [her] own living and her own glory.”¹²⁰

Richardson’s story recasts the place of the interwar period in the historical narrative of the American woman. The 1920s and 1930s challenged the nation’s political, economic, and cultural institutions, and in the case of feminism, redefined it entirely. Feminism did more than just survive in these years. Under the auspices of Richardson and her ilk, the movement bridged the gap between the first and second wave. American women no longer lived a life divided. Success could be achieved either as a mother, wife, worker, student, or flirt. To a

¹²⁰ Eudora Ramsay Richardson, *The Influence of Men—Incurable* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 153.

degree, this politically driven yet socially grounded expression of feminism was radical. But, ultimately, the beliefs Richardson held and the lessons she taught resonate even in the sociopolitical landscape navigated by the twenty-first-century woman.

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LETTERS OF AUDACITY

North Carolinian Women and Their Desperate Plea for State Support During the Civil War

Danielle Ingalls

Chop, chop, chop...the sound of hatchets severing the storehouse doors echoed through the town of Salisbury, North Carolina. By the early spring of 1863, the wives of Confederate soldiers had finally had enough. After petitioning Governor Zebulon B. Vance for help from the state government to no avail, and after local storeowner Michael Brown had refused to lower food prices, the women of Salisbury decided to take action. A group of about fifty women, hatchets in hand, went to the Brown's storehouse on March 18 to demand food for their starving families. When Brown refused to help them, the women began to chop down the storehouse door and proceeded to take what they thought belonged rightfully to them. In this incident, later known as the Salisbury Bread Riot, the women obtained "twenty-three barrels of flour, two sacks of salt, about half a barrel of molasses and twenty dollars in money."¹ They also attacked Brown for his earlier refusal to assist them: they "rushed him and left him sitting on a log, blowing like a March wind."² After the women raided Brown's storehouse, they did the same to at least six other local merchants.

During the American Civil War, the people of the Confederate

¹ Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 175-176.

² Victoria Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 1992), 134.

States of America, especially those in the lower socioeconomic classes, suffered unyielding devastation. Poverty and hunger ran rampant throughout the South. Food production decreased significantly due to the many yeoman farmers who were now soldiers fighting the war. Most wives who were left behind could not grow crops as well as their farmer husbands had. Juggling farm maintenance, caring for the family, and protecting the household was difficult task for these women. Drought, disease, and an early frost also added to the failure of crops. Severe inflation caused the price of food to drastically increase, to the point where a soldier's meager monthly salary of eleven dollars would not cover increased food prices. Wives accused local merchants of extortion and withholding necessary food and supplies from them. These circumstances forced many women on the home front to take action.

While many scholars have written about the numerous food riots that occurred during the Civil War, few have fully analyzed the events leading up to the riots or the emotional turmoil that sparked them. Some historical works do delve into the riots themselves and their long term impact, such as Victoria Bynum's *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South*.³ Bynum argues that the violent riots and other "unruly" actions were the women's way of vying for limited control in the male-dominated nineteenth-century South. Other authors illustrate the struggles women had to endure on the home front, such as Gordon B. McKinney and Larry G. Eggleston.⁴ McKinney argues that while some women in Western North Carolina supported the war, others acted to undermine the Confederate cause. Eggleston compiled many personal stories of Southern women during the Civil War, which demonstrate how they were emotionally affected by the war. While these works provide only a glimpse into the decisions and emotions leading up to the violent food riots, they do establish context for the riots themselves, revealing the emotional toll that the Civil War had on the wives of soldiers.

Building from this secondary source material and the analysis of key primary sources, this article will examine the diligent attempts of North Carolinian women to get aid from the state government during the Civil War. Over nearly five years, Confederate women

3 Bynum, *Unruly Women*.

4 Gordon B. McKinney, "Women's Role in Civil War Western North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 69 (1992): 37-56; Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003).

made many repeated appeals for aid in deeply emotional letters to Governor Vance of North Carolina. These desperate pleas to lower food prices eventually escalated into bold threats to initiate riots if nothing was done. I argue that this threat of violent behavior greatly conflicted with the Southern ideal of women's perceived role of subservience to men during the nineteenth century. As time went on, these threats became a reality when women engaged in violent riots across not only North Carolina, but also throughout much of the Confederate States of America.

The American Civil War began in 1861 after several Southern slave states seceded from the Union to form their own government. Although there was a plethora of reasons behind the Civil War, the dispute over slavery was central. Throughout the 1850s the nation's politics had been in a state of near constant turmoil over this issue. In 1860, Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. Many southerners feared that he would abolish slavery. In order to protect their citizenry's investment in un-free labor, in February 1861 seven Southern states seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America. Fighting began in earnest on April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces attacked Union-held Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

The war raged on for four years, destroying many homes, crop fields, and infrastructure in the South. Not only was the Civil War physically destructive, it also remains the deadliest war in American history, resulting in over 620,000 military casualties and an unknown number of civilian deaths.⁵ During a fundraising address Lincoln once said "War, at the best, is terrible, and this war of ours, in its magnitude and duration, is one of the most terrible.... It has destroyed property, and ruined homes.... It has carried mourning to almost every home, until it can almost be said that the heavens are hung in black."⁶ This war had far-reaching consequences for the American South for decades to come.

Although the Civil War brought devastation to states on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, the sheer magnitude of the war's destructive power was most evident in the South, where almost every aspect of society was dismembered. In the words of author Susan Sontag: "War rends. War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War

5 Drew Gilpin Faust, "Death and Dying," *National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior*, http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/death.html.

6 National Park Service, "Overview," *The Civil War*, <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/overview.htm>.

dismembers. War ruins.”⁷ Countless homes were burned to the ground and even crop fields fell victim to the annihilation of war, typified by Sherman’s March to the Sea. In addition, the Union blockade of Southern ports, which began in 1861, devastated the Confederate economy.

Soldiers on both sides exploited the circumstances and fundamental inequities caused by the war. Some Northern soldiers offered food and supplies to women and their starving families in return for sex.⁸ A Confederate woman from Atlanta wrote to her husband about such events: Union soldiers told her, “if I wud comedate them I never shold suffe[r] for . . . the[y] wud [fe[tc]h] me anything to eat I wanted.”⁹ Many, like this woman, were steadfast and remained loyal to their husbands and country. But after weeks of little food, some women fell victim to soldiers’ immoral deals in exchange for flour, meat, and sugar to end their hunger. The emotional toll was more than some Confederate women could bear.

Not only did sexual violation devastate the lives of many women, they also faced destruction of personal property. This damage of property included valuable food supplies for both Confederate soldiers and their families on the home front. With the supply of food limited by the war, inflation set in. The normal price of one dollar for a bushel of grain doubled to two dollars during the war and the price of bacon increased from fifteen cents to fifty cents per pound.¹⁰ The Confederate Congress also collected ten percent of particular crops such as corn, cotton, and beans as taxes. Any extra food or supplies were being sent to the Confederate Army, which only made the problem worse for those on the home front.¹¹

Many Confederate soldiers received frantic letters from their wives and family members back home. The knowledge that their loved ones were starving without them degraded the morale of the soldiers

7 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 5.

8 Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 197.

9 Stollenmaier, Jessica. “Rebellion Against the Rebels: An Exploration of White Southern Women’s Patriotism.” *Journal Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research* (2013): 4, <http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=jiur>.

10 Bynum, *Unruly Women*, 134.

11 Nina Silbur, “A Woman’s War: Gender and Civil War Studies.” *OAH Magazine of History* 8 (1993): 11-13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25162919>.

as the war raged on and Confederate losses mounted. The Clerk of Green County, North Carolina, wrote to Governor Vance, saying, “How can our Soldiers fight when they know their wives are destitute even of a piece of bread?”¹² Many soldiers deserted the Confederate Army to return to their family farms. No doubt they felt that the need at home was greater than the need on the battlefield. Mary Windsor, the wife of a Confederate soldier, wrote, “He would be great deal more service to his country at home on his farm than he would be on the field. Now you have heard some of my sad condition.”¹³ Life was arguably worse for Confederate soldiers. Surviving on “short rations” of corn meal mush, rice, and worm-infested bacon added to their longing for home and created impetus for desertion.¹⁴

While some women hysterically begged to have their husbands back, others took matters into their own hands. A group of women from Bladen, North Carolina, became infuriated with the high prices of essential food products. In 1862, they created a group known as the “Regulators”. These women sent an anonymous letter to Vance six weeks before the Salisbury food riots, a letter that began with a bold declaration: “The time has come that we the com[m]on people has to hav[e] bread or blood and we are bound boath men and women to hav[e] it or die in the attempt.”¹⁵ Their letter foreshadowed the events of the Salisbury Bread Riot.

Similar acts of desperation occurred in other parts of North Carolina. In March 1863, a group of women in Johnston County broke into a local corncrib and took large amounts of corn home to their starving children.¹⁶ A month later, five women in Bladensboro County raided a grain depot and stole one sack of rice as well as six sacks of corn.¹⁷ A North Carolinian woman named Mary Canaday stole and

12 McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 175.

13 Mary A. Windsor, “Letter from Mary A. Windsor to Zebulon Baird Vance, February 1, 1865,” *Civil War Era NC*, accessed September, 2014, <http://history.ncsu.edu/projects/cwnc/items/show/661>.

14 Richard E. Yates, *The Confederacy and Zeb Vance* (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc, 1958), 42.

15 North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, “Letter: Salisbury Women to Zebulon B. Vance, March 21, 1863,” *North Carolina Digital Collections*, accessed September 2014, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p15012coll8/id/11531>.

16 Gordon B. McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina's Civil War Governor, Gilded Age Political Leader* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 163.

17 Bynum, *Unruly Women*, 134.

butchered a cow that was owned by another poor woman.¹⁸ As in all circumstances born of the necessity of war, the issue of morality and legality arose, yet these women were not idle in their time of need.

The actions taken by North Carolinian women were especially bold during this period. In nineteenth century American society, women were expected to be quiet homemakers, child bearers, and obedient wives. Southern women especially were portrayed as strong during adversity yet always poised with grace. The unruly women of Salisbury and elsewhere proved this perception wrong.¹⁹ Making threats to government officials was decidedly not “graceful.” The Civil War created desperate situations for those on the home front, and the women who now found themselves as heads of households were forced to take action.

Rioters and thieves were usually women of the lower classes. More affluent women looked down upon these rioters as despicable due to their public defiance. Although well-to-do women generally did not agree with the methods of their poorer counterparts, as the war dragged on, they too began to question it. Instead of acts of violence and threat-infested letters, however, these women privately worried over the fate of their dear young nation. Many of these high-society women were a part of aid societies, organizations that worked to support the cause through fundraisers. As the war raged on, women began to abandon these groups. By 1864 one woman described them as “died away; they are name and nothing more.”²⁰

The Civil War transformed the roles of women in American society. In the face of war, women were now expected not only to care for their homes, but to guard them as well. Protecting their family and crops from destruction presented yet another challenge. While dealing with these issues, the overwhelming dread of possible starvation lingered in the minds of many Southern women. Breaking from their accepted roles as subservient wives women did whatever was necessary to avoid starvation for themselves and their families. Many men were outraged by the behavior of female bread rioters. A Southern judge stated during the war that rioters “ceased to be women.”²¹

18 Stollenmaier, Jessica. “Rebellion”.

19 Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South*, 3.

20 Stollenmaier, Jessica. “Rebellion”.

21 Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 243.

Governor Vance received dozens of letters from these rioters as well as other women from across the state. Although the authors behind the letters varied, the requests remained largely the same. The women begged for state government intervention to set affordable food prices. Either the state government could regulate the price of food or send their husbands, sons, and brothers home. A group of women from Warren County, North Carolina, wrote, “If you don[']t provide some way for us to live we will be compelled to take our little children to our husband or they must come home to us.”²² Many Confederate soldiers responded to the desperate plight of their families by deserting to return home.

Some women objected to the reasons behind the war, feeling that it had been initiated without the consent of the people. Some held staunch, religiously-informed beliefs against the institution of slavery, stating that “Slavery is doomed to dy out; god is agoing to liberate neggars and fighting any longer is against God.”²³ They believed that the war was not worth the internal deterioration of the states that made up the Confederacy and their people. For others who, at the beginning, embodied passionate patriotism for the cause, conviction dwindled after dealing with the hardships of war. Some felt that their government and the Confederacy as a whole had failed them when no aid came to them, their impoverished families, and their destroyed homes.²⁴

At first, Governor Vance refused to help in any way, despite the repeated efforts of North Carolina’s women. While other Southern governors sprang into action, Vance and Confederate president Jefferson Davis did not see these women who could not vote as a high priority in contrast to the war effort. Vance failed to send aid to the soldiers’ wives, to regulate inflated food prices, or to give soldiers leave to return home. Instead, he reaffirmed North Carolina’s commitment to the faltering war effort by issuing a proclamation, on May 5, 1863, banning desertion. The consequence of desertion would be death by firing squad, even for those who simply aided the deserter. Vance’s proclamation stated:

Now therefore, I Zebulon B. Vance, Governor of the

22 McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 173.

23 Bynum, *Unruly Women*, 134.

24 North Carolina State University, “Protect Us!': White Female Protection on the Home Front.” *Civil War Era NC*, accessed September, 2014, <http://history.ncsu.edu/projects/cwnc/exhibits/show/protect/intro>.

State of North-Carolina, do issue this my proclamation, commanding all such evil disposed persons to desist from such base, cowardly and treasonable conduct, and warning them that they will subject themselves to indictment and punishment in the civil courts of the Confederacy, as well as to the everlasting contempt and detestation of all good and honorable men.²⁵

The severity of this proclamation attempted to prevent further desertion, but was wildly unsuccessful, as desertion escalated to an all-time high. Vance hoped for peace in North Carolina. On April 9, 1863, a month before, Vance had issued a heated warning to the female rioters to “[a]void, above all, mob violence. Broken laws will give you no bread, but much sorrow.”²⁶

As time progressed, the effects of starvation on the home front became increasingly evident. Later in 1863, a white woman and her child starved to death in the county of Wilmington, North Carolina.²⁷ These harsh realities were the main reasons Vance and the government of North Carolina finally decided to offer some form of aid to soldier’s wives. Vance demanded that farmers stop growing cash crops such as cotton, and instead grow abundantly-producing food crops such as wheat and corn.²⁸

Though Vance may have personally sympathized with the tragedies that the lower class had to endure, politically he remained firm in his refusal to help hungry women. As time went on and conditions continued to deteriorate on the home front, however, Vance decided to change his political position on the matter. In a letter to a North Carolinian woman Vance said that he “will see that they [the “wimmin”] do not starve in the absence of their husbands.”²⁹ After a year of harsh public scrutiny, Vance ordered county officials

25 North Carolina State University, “Zebulon Vance, ‘Vance’s Proclamation Against Deserters’ (1863),” *Civil War Era NC*, accessed September, 2014, <http://history.ncsu.edu/projects/cwnc/items/show/224>.

26 McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina’s Civil War Governor, Gilded Age Political Leader*, 163.

27 North Carolina State University, “‘Protect Us!’: White Female Protection on the Home Front,” *Civil War Era NC*, <http://history.ncsu.edu/projects/cwnc/exhibits/show/protect/intro>.

28 McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina’s Civil War Governor, Gilded Age Political Leader*, 163.

29 McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 197.

to put soldiers' wives on the relief rolls and the government of North Carolina offered limited aid to women in certain counties, but this inadequate aid did little to combat the ever-growing issue of starvation.

Although the bread riots had a few positive outcomes, some women still felt the hunger caused by the war. Five Regulators were tried and convicted for their involvement in stealing food from a Bladensboro, North Carolina, warehouse.³⁰ They were sentenced to jail, though they were later pardoned. The Confederate government's inability to control these disobedient women on the home front foreshadowed the demise of the young nation. The high rate of desertion only magnified this failure.

While some Southern women were disobedient, others were adamant in their support of the Confederacy. People living in the South made daily sacrifices for the cause, especially the wives of yeoman farmers. From weaving their own clothing to rationing their food and supplies, these women fervently fought for the Confederate cause in all the ways they could. Some wives worked in the Confederate Clothing Bureau sewing uniforms for their Rebel soldiers. Others worked directly at the front as field nurses, caring for the injured, maimed, and sick.³¹ They only disobeyed their government officials when starvation was near.

The Civil War brought many sorrows to the American people. Division across ideological lines tore society apart. Although tragedy was the main consequence of this devastating war, women's roles arguably changed for the better. Not only were women placed in the position to lead and take care of a household by the war, but they also proved themselves equally capable in the workforce. Some women even worked government jobs during the Civil War. Before the war, this was largely unheard of for American feminists. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Gage wrote, "the social and political condition of women was largely changed by our Civil War. In large measure, [it] created a revolution in woman herself."³²

Inadvertently, the Civil War granted women many opportunities for independence and leadership. These experiences ignited a desire within many women for equal rights with their male

³⁰ McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 175.

³¹ Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 13.

³² Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Homefront," *National Park Service*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online.books/rthg/chap6.htm>.

counterparts. These same aspirations for social equality were the driving force behind the women's suffrage movement of the early-twentieth century. Without knowing it, the Salisbury rioters and their counterparts across the South were bravely paving the way to political and social equality with men for future generations of women.

The women of North Carolina were mothers, wives, and daughters who wanted to save their families from starvation. Their desperation is evident in every word of their letters. One woman even included descriptions of her frail children to her husband, writing, "Last night, I was aroused by little Eddie crying...he said 'O Mamma! I am so hungry!' And Lucy...she is growing thinner every day... unless you come home, we must die."³³ What began as polite requests quickly escalated into fierce threats, then violence. Governor Vance's indifference to the women's situation forced them to take action. Riots ensued throughout the countryside of North Carolina, where women attacked local warehouses for food and supplies for their families. These acts of violence were integral to the unraveling of the Confederacy.

Union victory only added to the woes of Southern women. Some lost their husbands, homes, and sense of hope. Confederate currency was worthless, and the economy of the South was shattered. Many women were forced to begin new lives and reject the cause that they had so passionately fought for. Despite continuous disasters, these women overcame all odds. Their emotional letters to Governor Vance and subsequent violent riots were only some of the tactics they used in their fight for survival during the Civil War.

Women in today's society are products of generations of strong, rebellious women who fought for survival and eventually equality. Men and women stand side by side in today's culture because of riots, letters, and many other bold declarations by American women. A male-dominated government did not stand in the way of providing for their families. Although they were seen as despicable and unruly at the time, North Carolinian women not only saved their families, but also helped to transform gender roles for years to come. As First Lady Abigail Adams once said, "remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be

33 Yates, *The Confederacy and Zeb Vance*, 43-44.

tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion.”³⁴ North Carolina’s female rioters proved her right.

³⁴ Abigail Adams and John Adams, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams: During the Revolution*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Harvard: Hurd and Houghton, 1875), 147.

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**WE PROTEST
SCHOOL
SEGREGATION**

St. Louis N.A.A.C.P.

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St. Louis NAACP

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GENDER, RACE, AND EDUCATION

Battling State Bigotry and Tyranny in Virginia, 1958

Anna Pope

While the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling called for desegregation with “all deliberate speed” in 1954, many states took drastic actions to prevent racial integration.¹ In Virginia, the movement of Massive Resistance, ignited by US Senator Harry Byrd, opposed federal legislation and continued to fiercely enforce segregation.² Five years after the reversal of the “separate but equal” standard set by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Norfolk School Board approved the admittance of seventeen African American students (called the “Norfolk 17”) into previously all-white schools. Refusing to allow this act of integration, Virginia governor James Almond assumed “all power and control over such schools.”³ In a letter to the superintendent of Norfolk City Schools, Almond declared Northside and Blair junior high schools, Maury and Granby high schools, and

1 Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. “HISTORY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION.” United States Courts. Accessed February 14, 2015. <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx>.

2 Virginia Historical Society. “Massive Resistance,” accessed February 14, 2015. <http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/civil-rights-movement-virginia/massive>.

3 “Letter to J.J. Brewbaker and the Norfolk School Board from J. Lindsey Almond,” September 28, 1958, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/1907/rec/14>.

Norview's middle and high school officially closed and removed from the public school system effective September 29, 1958.⁴ This move, following the policies of Massive Resistance, prevented "one-third of the entire white population" from attending public school.⁵ By blatantly disregarding the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, Governor Almond created a crisis in Norfolk that robbed thousands of students of public education.

In response to this disaster, which crippled the Norfolk community, women united on an interracial front in order to oppose state tyranny and lead the movement to reopen Norfolk public schools by fostering a shared sense of purpose and engaging in social networking, and political activity. In order to challenge the state, Norfolk women connected through social groups that shared the same interest of interracial relations and public education. Founded in 1945, the Women's Council for Interracial Cooperation (WCIC) began with a modest membership of nineteen women, eight black and eleven white, with the priorities of "education, health, and housing".⁶ By the end of that year, the group grew to eighty-six members.⁷ Vivian Carter Mason, a leader in the black community and chairperson of the WCIC, was inspired to organize the Council due to the vast inequalities between the black and white communities. In April 1945, Mason called upon a diverse group of women from various Norfolk civic organizations to join her in the fight for local causes.⁸ Member Edith White recalled in an interview that the Council was a "marvelous opportunity to know people that cross racial lines," as well as to know women with common experiences and interests, such as higher education, civic activism, and passion for the community.⁹

4 "Letter to J.J. Brewbaker," September 28, 1959.

5 Dykeman, Wilma, and Stokely, James, "Report on 'The Lost Class of '59'". Digital Scan. *The New York Times Magazine*, January 4, 29, Old Dominion University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.

6 Jan Halecki, "Women's for Interracial Cooperation Papers, 1951-1961/ Special Collections and University Archives", Old Dominion University Patricia W & J. Douglas Perry Library, 2012, accessed February 14, 2015, <http://www.lib.odu.edu/archon/?p=collections/findingaid&id=88&q=>.

7 *Summary of Women's Council's Work for Schools 1945-1959*, 1959, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sdinv/id/1665>.

8 Halecki, "Women's Council for Interracial Cooperation Papers".

9 Edith White, interview by Mary Pelham White, *Oral History Interview with*

A primary concern for the Women's Council for Interracial Cooperation was public education, and the women bonded over their shared investment in the needs of equality and improvement in the local education system. Black schools did not have updated technology, such as electric typewriters, that white schools used, and teachers at black schools were deprived of basic supplies and books.¹⁰ Despite their humanitarian purpose, the WCIC met many challenges as well as resistance throughout their existence. One of their earliest challenges proved to be as simple as finding a public meeting place to host the interracial congregation. Private homes were too small and intimate, but many restaurants and churches were unsupportive and unaccepting of their interracial make-up.¹¹ After a disheartening search for "a place where everybody was equally welcome," the WCIC was finally invited to meet at the Unitarian Church.¹² During their first few years of work together, the WCIC began an integrated nursery school, and in order to obtain information, visited and surveyed black schools. The Norfolk Baptist churches were inspired by the WCIC and later established a similar group. The Baptist churches founded an interracial committee "under its women's organization... [which] was sort of autonomous," but still sheltered by the church from social pressures.¹³ Representatives from both black and white Baptist churches would gather twice a year, forming a safe place to meet and address issues in the church and the community.

Once united in female coalitions, women's groups gained popularity and power in Norfolk by capitalizing on social connections to enlist more support. News of these recently-created interracial and social groups spread first by word of mouth. As women reached out to their friends and encouraged them to join, they motivated a previously dormant political base. When Edith White spoke of her work with the local organizations, one friend responded that she would "just love to

Edith White, November 6, 1982, accessed May 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/oralhistory/id/426/rec/2>.

¹⁰ Vivian Carter Mason, interview by Zelda Silverman, *Oral History Interview with Vivian Carter Mason*, Part 3, October 19, 1978, accessed May 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/oralhistory/id/510/rec/1>.

¹¹ Edith White, interview.

¹² Edith White, interview.

¹³ Ruth James, interview by Mary Pelham White, *Oral History Interview with Ruth James*, November 5, 1982, accessed May 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/oralhistory/id/191/rec/1>.

work on it, but [she was] just afraid [she] wouldn't have any friends," fearing she would be out of place in political groups.¹⁴ One woman said she had "let my husband do the voting" because it was not considered the feminine thing to do.¹⁵ Despite living in an era decades after the fight for suffrage, many women in Norfolk still failed to exercise their right to vote or even consider civic activism. Yet, when local Mary Thrasher ran for office in the late 1950s, many women became "politically awakened."¹⁶ In reaction to the 1958 closings, female coalitions resourcefully integrated the recently motivated women of Norfolk to broaden their voting base "so no one could control it," lessening the movement's dependence on the male vote.¹⁷ This female entrance into and interest in local affairs prepared women to take action at the time of the education crisis and defend Norfolk public schools from the state mandate.

After assuming leadership in the effort to reopen the Norfolk public schools, the women's groups continued to expand their base within the community, raise awareness of the detrimental effects of the school closings, and work towards gaining public support. Women on the Norfolk Committee for Public Schools (NCPS) generated a calling center in order to reach out to neighbors, local businessmen, pastors, and other leaders in the community. They discovered "that secretly there were a lot of people in the community" who supported their cause and rejected Governor Almond's authoritarian declaration.¹⁸ In the beginning of the movement, however, business leaders were hesitant to side with the activists, fearing retribution from the state.

While the groups supporting integration received empathy from parents sharing similar fears for their children's disrupted education and compromised futures, the women also faced no shortage of enemies. Edith White and her family were personally threatened, receiving "real hate calls...by the barrel" in response to her activism in the Women's Council for Interracial Cooperation and the Norfolk Committee for Public Schools.¹⁹ Others received discomfiting letters and became estranged from family members

¹⁴ Edith White, interview.

¹⁵ Edith White, interview.

¹⁶ Edith White, interview.

¹⁷ Edith White, interview.

¹⁸ Edith White, interview.

¹⁹ Edith White, interview.

because they did not share the same political ideals.²⁰ Groups like the WCIC and the NCPS struggled against the “staunch Virginia opinion...that things should stay exactly as they were if not moved backward.”²¹ This harsh, yet realistic, sentiment is illustrated in a letter to the editor of the *Virginian Pilot* in September 1959. Mrs. Mildred Kerley wrote zealously that children were learning from this experience, not losing from it, living out a lesson that “all the books in the world can’t teach them.”²² Mrs. Kerley and many others had the “back of [the governor] 100 per cent” and encouraged the drastic measures to prevent desegregation.²³

Whether or not families supported the closings, they were forced to cope with the shut down of the schools, which left 10,000 children without public education.²⁴ Some families moved out of state, arranged for their children to live with relatives, or enrolled them in private schools. Such private institutions included the Tidewater Educational Foundation, Inc. and the Charlottesville Education Foundation, segregated programs supporting Virginia’s Massive Resistance.²⁵ A popular alternative to segregated private schools were tutoring programs, largely established by women who were active in interracial and politically inclined social networks.

These programs were contingency plans drawn up to create a stable environment for children to continue their studies despite the deserted schools. Groups of parents worked together to form tutoring groups and hire teachers left unemployed by the sudden closures. For a small fee, students could join a group and enjoy “the School Board plans, the School Board curriculum, [and] the School Boards’ choice of books,” mimicking the same academic atmosphere

20 Ruth James, interview

21 Edith White, interview.

22 Mildred Kerley, “What Children Are Learning,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, September 17, 1958, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/1343/rec/10>.

23 Mildred Kerley, “What Children Are Learning.”

24 Dykeman and Stokely, “The Lost Class of ’59.”

25 “Rallying Point’ for Parents: Committee Is Formed to Keep Schools Open.” *The Virginian-Pilot*, September 19, 1959. in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection,, accessed May 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sdinv/id/4134/rec/1>; Nancy Mason, interview by George Gilliam, 2000. “The Ground Beneath Our Feet” project. Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia. Charlottesville, Virginia.

without the physical school building.²⁶ With some 4,000 students enrolled in these tutoring classes, the groups met wherever there was room—some in churches, others in family basements or attics.²⁷ Despite the availability of tutoring programs, the Norfolk 17 were tutored separately from the white students. Though the black students were invited to join white tutoring groups, they declined, likely in order to strengthen their case and emphasize the need for public integration.²⁸ On the other hand, many seniors of the so-called “Lost Class of ’59” gave up entirely on the idea of completing their academic year and graduating on time. Some married, and others took the GED, enlisted in the military, or moved away.²⁹ Due to civic activism and a high degree of organization, the women were able to provide tutoring groups as an alternative measure of instruction for thousands of students whose educations were abandoned by the state.

The severity of the crisis became more evident when the schools did not reopen in October. At this time, women took collective action through political groups, media coverage, and litigation to raise awareness of the dire situation, gaining national attention for their cause. Many members of the Women’s Council for Interracial Cooperation collaborated with the Norfolk Committee for Public Schools. Edith White, a member of both organizations, recalled in 1982 the “marvelous women who appeared and took leadership roles and responsibilities and helped raise the funds” in the NCPS.³⁰ Through their social connections and other organizations, women were vital in the effort to recruit members and funds for the NCPS, printing ads that called for public action against the state. Women’s reach in these political activities continued to expand, as they held certain influences and positions within the organizations. For example, almost half of the executive members of the NCPS were women: Mrs. Eugene D. Kidd was the second Vice President as well as Stuart School PTA president, and Mrs. Joseph Commander was on the NCPS executive committee and was the former head of the Women’s Division of Civil Defense in Norfolk.³¹ Moreover, Edith

26 Nancy Mason, interview.

27 Dykeman and Stokely, “The Lost Class of ’59.”

28 Nancy Mason, interview.

29 Dykeman and Stokely, “The Lost Class of ’59.”

30 Edith White, interview.

31 Forrest P. White, “‘YOU’ Can Do Something About Opening the Schools!” *The Ledger-Dispatch and Star*, September 30, 1958, in the Old Dominion University

Report on 'The Lost Class of '59'

Their high schools closed by Virginia's 'massive resistance' to integration, Norfolk seniors see their chances for diplomas and college going up in the smoke of controversy.

By WILMA DYKEMAN and JAMES STOKELY

NORFOLK, Va. "I'VE had it," a tall, 17-year-old boy said here one afternoon recently. "I've been waiting around since September for schools to open, and now I'm finished with them. I'm going to find me a job."

This boy, who is finished with schools before he has yet had a chance to finish high school, would have graduated next spring. Now, since Norfolk's high schools failed to open last fall, and have still not opened, he is one of the seniors who have become widely known as "The Lost Class of '59."

Unlike the "lost generation," the "lost class" did not come into being through any action or philosophy of its own. Its members are victims of a struggle between the force of Federal law and

Virginia's massive resistance to that law. As a result of that struggle, 10,000 white pupils in Norfolk have been locked out of six of their seven white junior and senior high schools.

What brought about this weird and wasteful situation? What happens to the people directly and indirectly involved—students, teachers, parents, the community as a whole—when a major part of a public school system fails to function? And what forces will influence the final resolution of this major crisis, a crisis under especially close scrutiny today by many Southerners, who may be confronted tomorrow with the same hard choice between public schools as they have always known them and segregation as they have always known it?

The situation in Virginia's largest city (population 291,000) grew from an action of its school board on Aug. 29. Under protest, but also under orders of a Federal District Court, the board assigned seventeen Negro pupils to six white junior and senior high schools. In September, by authority given him under state anti-integration laws enacted two years ago, Gov. J. Lindsay Almond Jr. proclaimed the six schools closed. Since the law covered only those schools "threatened" by integration, one white junior high and all the Negro secondary schools opened on schedule.

"The ironies in this situation!" one Norfolk resident says. "All the city's Negro schools are still running. And just down the street from one of our

big empty high schools is Catholic High, teaching every day, integrated several years ago, and no difficulties!"

When Governor Almond's announcement made it clear that six buildings serving almost one-third of the entire white school population would not open this fall, the high school students were incredulous. "We'd heard discussion about closing our schools," pretty, dark-haired Janie Whitehall says intently, "but we just didn't think public schools could stop! And when they were closed, we thought they'd reopen again in two or three weeks. We thought they'd have to!"

Many adults shared Janie's shock. "People here didn't believe the public schools could be closed," says Dr. Forrest White, a prominent pediatrician. "Anyone who pointed out that this calamity might come was accused of stirring up trouble. Even now I believe there are many people who won't realize they are closed. I guess these things have to hit personally and hard, through your children or pocketbook, before you'll take any real interest."

When it became apparent that 10,000 children would not be receiving any public education, substitute arrangements for some schooling for some pupils began to take shape. These included neighborhood tutoring groups, foundation of a private academy, attendance at the unaffected schools in and around Norfolk, and transfers to other districts and other states. Let us examine each of these accommodations.

(1) It is estimated that about 4,000 D. P.'s (displaced pupils) are in tutoring groups. These classes are frankly temporary. They make the most of meager resources. Each class is organized by a mother or group of mothers, who bring together from a half dozen to two dozen students to study the same subject. Then a teacher must be found, a classroom improvised, and arrangements made for such tuition as is necessary (\$5 per week for four courses is average, although the amount varies from group to group).

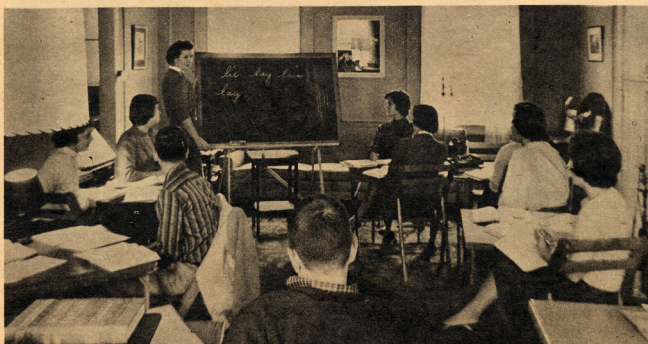
THE teachers for the tutoring classes are drawn from the staffs of the closed schools, who continue to receive their official salaries. A few receive a modest tutoring fee in addition.

These classes occupy a wide variety of buildings. One uses a vacant store. Another, composed of children of the faculty and staff at the Norfolk branch of the College of William and Mary, uses a dilapidated house near the college. ("It's very makeshift," explains College Froward Lewis W. Webb, "but it has a wonderful faculty.")

Still other groups meet in private homes—in basements, in rumpus rooms, in attics and in living rooms. ("I'm having fourteen for dinner tonight" one pleasant (Continued on Page 54)

WILMA DYKEMAN and JAMES STOKELY, a husband-wife writing team, live in Tennessee.

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE



SCHOOLING WITHOUT SCHOOLS—Most Norfolk white high school students have been kept from classes by a Virginia law closing the schools to forestall integration. The result is empty classrooms (top) and, for some, tutoring in private homes (bottom).

20

Figure 1: Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely. "Report on 'The Lost Class of '59.'" *The New York Times Magazine*, January 4, 1959, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.ou.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sdinv/id/1451/rec/29>.

White's husband was the president of the NCPS, which influenced and facilitated the Committee's support of the WCIC.³²

In a late September copy of the *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch and Star*, the Norfolk Committee for Public Schools printed a

Libraries Digital Collection, <http://dc.lib.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sdinv/id/4085>.

32 Edith White, interview.

VOTE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
VOTE FOR PETITIONING THE GOVERNOR
NORFOLK SCHOOLS MUST BE OPENED SOON OR

-- **OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM WILL BE CRIPPLED FOR A GENERATION.**
 Unless schools are opened by January, many of Norfolk's best teachers will leave the city. Most tutoring groups will close in January. Our schools must be open by then.

-- **OUR CHILDREN WILL LOSE THE AMERICAN BIRTHRIGHT OF A FREE EDUCATION.**
 Only the wealthy will be able to educate their children. Colleges will not accept students without high school diplomas.

-- **CITY'S ECONOMIC FUTURE WILL BE BLEAK.**
 Any chance of attracting industry will be lost.
 Business leaders say "The economic effect of closed schools is already being felt."

GUIDE BALLOT

City of Norfolk
SPECIAL INFORMATIVE ELECTION
 Tuesday, November 18, 1958

QUESTION—Shall the Council of the City of Norfolk, pursuant to State Law, Petition the Governor to return to the City Control of Schools, now closed, to be opened by the City on an Integrated Basis as Required by the Federal Court?

For Petitioning the Governor
 Against Petitioning the Governor

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

NORFOLK COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
 Composed of Parents, Educators, Business men, Clergymen, and Professional Men and Women who want to preserve our public school system.

Figure 2: VOTE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Norfolk, VA: Norfolk Committee for Public Schools, 1958, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed February 14, 2015. <http://dc.lib.ou.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/1354/rec/4>.

coupon for readers to cut and send to the Committee in order to petition the state government to reopen the schools. The advertisement urged the people of Norfolk to consider “not Massive Resistance, but Intelligence Insistence” as an efficient answer to the education crisis, pleading that the direction of the schools should be returned to the Norfolk School Board and out of state grasp.³³ The ad also invited readers to write to Norfolk’s Mayor Duckworth as well as Governor Almond, which the WCIC did fervently. Activists also wrote to both President Chambers on the Commission for Public Education and Governors Stanley and Almond about improving race relations in Norfolk.³⁴

Figure 3: Forrest P. White “YOU Can Do Something About Opening the Schools!” Norfolk, *The Ledger-Dispatch and Star*, September 30, 1958, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, February 14, 2015. <http://dc.lib.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sdinv/id/1426>.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

“YOU” CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT OPENING THE SCHOOLS!

The Norfolk Board of Education and the City Council can request the Governor to return the schools to the Norfolk School Board for administration.

Show the Governor and the City Council that you have full faith in the integrity and ability of the Norfolk School Board to operate the Norfolk School System.

Not Massive Resistance, but Intelligent Insistence! Fill out and mail the coupon immediately—or bring it to the Committee for Public Schools, Boush & Brambleton.

33 Edith White, interview.

34 Halecki, “Women’s Council for Interracial Cooperation Papers”..

Another effective form of political activity during the Norfolk school crisis involved media appearances, which helped the movement evolve from a grassroots effort to a national concern. The state's education injustices became known when a national television documentary, *The Lost Class of '59*, aired on CBS in January 1959.³⁵ In this primetime exclusive, Margaret White, a government teacher at the then-closed Granby High School, delivered a moving speech about the heartless neglect of the education of Norfolk's youth by the state as a result of Almond's actions. She addressed the innate equality of children of different races, describing how black and white students shared academic experiences, such as struggling with the same math problems.³⁶ Margaret was applauded for her stand against segregation across the country, receiving fan mail written the same night the documentary aired. One letter was written by Virginia Walls Jones, a woman who followed the Norfolk crisis through the *New York Times*, describing how "we cheered your speech."³⁷ Another admirer, Ester B., encouraged Margaret for her activism on such an important matter, expressing "what a good politician [she] would make!"³⁸ This media coverage helped propel the local Virginia women's cause onto the national stage.

In addition, the NCPS's efforts and funds also supported lawsuits brought against the state regarding the closures. Besides being the first female student of the Norfolk Division of the College of William & Mary (now Old Dominion University), Ruth James was an NCPS and WCIC member, and her family were the head litigants in a lawsuit to reopen the public schools.³⁹ While unable to bring the suit directly, the NCPS gave support to "these individuals who had the courage and conviction...to restore the rights" of children in public

35 NEA News. "Ed Murrow Airs 'Lost Class of '59.'" January 9, 1959, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection,, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/npsdp/id/1171>.

36 *The Other Face of Dixie*. 57 mm film. (CBS News 1959), accessed May 13, 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-other-face-of-dixie/>.

37 Virginia Wall Jones, *Virginia Wall Jones to Margaret White*, January 22, 1959, letter, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sdinv/id/1406>.

38 B. Ester, letter, Ester B. to Margaret White, January 21, 1959, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sdinv/id/1358>.

39 Ruth James, interview.

education, arguing that Governor Almond had violated the 14th Amendment.⁴⁰ Federal judges of the case *James v. Almond* found the school closings to be “unconstitutional and illegal” in January 1959.⁴¹ Moreover, the court ruled that the state “has the obligation to furnish such education...on an equal basis.”⁴² *James v. Almond* was the final effort in the six-month battle against Massive Resistance. A month after the court decision, in February 1959, the schools reopened and the Norfolk 17 were integrated into the public schools, bringing the city’s education crisis to an end.

Despite state and national support, integration was not necessarily the primary goal for all parties. In a 2009 interview with WHRO TV, a Hampton Roads station, surviving members of the Lost Class of 1959 explained that reopening the schools and desegregation were not the same case. They recalled that they were generally not concerned with the controversy of integration, but were instead preoccupied with the movement to return to school. These Norfolk seniors were more interested in graduating on time, regardless of the integrated state of the schools.⁴³

While both blacks and many whites fought to reopen Norfolk public schools, racial tensions existed throughout the process. The Norfolk 17 received nonviolent yet unequal treatment in their new integrated school environment. Patricia Turner, enrolled at Norview Junior High along with Skip Turner, her twelve-year-old brother, had a teacher who wore gloves to collect her papers or had the girl drop them in a basket.⁴⁴ Similarly, Betty Jean Reed, the only black student at Granby High School, was excluded from the prom in 1961, two

40 *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*. “Committee Hails Suit on Schools: Only Reopening Hope Rests in Today’s Move, Brewer Says,” October 27, 1958, in the Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collection, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/3472/rec/10>.

41 “School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia: Timeline,” Old Dominion University Libraries, accessed May 13, 2014, <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/timeline/collection/sdinv/>.

42 Walter E. Hoffman, “Three-Judge Federal Court - Text of Integration Case Opinion.” *The Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk, VA), January 20, 1959.

43 “What Matters—The Lost Class of 1959”, YouTube video, 26:45, posted by WHRO TV, February 10, 2009, file://localhost/. <https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv=LojPOdMXA68>.

44 Karen Vaughan, “The Norfolk 17: Patricia Turner”. School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia. Last modified 2008, accessed February, 2015. <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/4409/rec/23>.



Figure 4: “The Norfolk 17.” Old Dominion University Libraries Digital Collections. School Desegregation in Norfolk, VA. Accessed February 14, 2015. <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/norfolk17/collection/sdinv/>.

years after integration.⁴⁵ Dolores Johns commuted by car for her own safety after being stalked by six white men while walking to school. Furthermore, a cross was burned at the door of Patricia Godbolt’s home in an attempt to discourage her from attending Norview High school.⁴⁶ While the inequalities in treatment and quality of education in Norfolk public schools persisted, the 1959 integration was a major victory on the eve of the national civil rights movement.

A smooth implementation of integration in Norfolk was far from expected, but the courage and perseverance of the Norfolk 17 resulted in revolutionary advancement for the state of Virginia. Their success is largely due to the support of the unified women’s groups and their political activity, which was essential in mobilizing the community, gaining national media recognition, and funding the lawsuit against Governor Almond that neutralized his executive action to close the schools in September 1958. The unprecedented female empowerment and cooperation that surpassed racial boundaries shown by the women in Norfolk enabled historic progress in the fight to end segregation.

45 Karen Vaughan, “The Norfolk 17: Betty Jean Reed”. School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia. Last modified 2008, accessed February, 2015. <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/4411/rec/24>.

46 Karen Vaughan, “The Norfolk17: Patricia Godbolt”. School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia. Last modified 2008, accessed February 14, 2015. <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/sdinv/id/4636/rec/16>.

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TALES FROM FINCASTLE HALL

How a Community College Grew Up

Earl K. Cherry Jr.

Virginia has had a system of higher education in place since 1693. For the larger part of three centuries, only privileged white males were able to receive their higher education from a Virginia institution. Eventually, the traditionally rich, white, and male-dominated colleges allowed a token few non-white and non-male students to enroll. However, many of the non-rich remained unable to gain an education past high school, if at all. By the early twentieth century, opinions on equal access to education began to change. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, J. D. Eggleston Jr., mused that the responsibility of the public school system was “to put all the people, young and old, to studying how to improve themselves, and their occupations, and how to improve community conditions.” He went on to say that “the school must reach out and strengthen the social and economic life of the community in which it is situated. To do this properly, it must touch...every social and economic interest that concerns the community.”¹ This idea took root in the fertile soil of Virginia but proved to be a slow-growing tree. It would take numerous committees, commissions, councils, studies, speakers, and a cast of thousands to bring it to bloom. After it had begun to bear, the following generations took over and increased the benefits to be

1 George B. Vaughan and Don Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream: A History of the Development of the Virginia Community College System* (Richmond: Virginia Community College System, 1987), 3.

harvested a hundredfold.

In this tangled debate over community improvement and equality, Wytheville Community College (WCC) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) emerged from the age of Massive Resistance in Virginia.² A small, partly open-door branch of Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI), Wytheville Community College was annexed into an education system focused on equal access—the likes of which had never been seen on Virginia soil. This was only part of the tale, however. The Virginia Community College System rose out of a fundamental shift in Southern educational ideals and philosophy, brought about by a new generation of educators and legislators who saw a need for the radical expansion of educational opportunity. Through their efforts, Virginia made a complete about-face in policy and created a truly open system of higher education.

The louder that Senator Harry F. Byrd Sr. sang the glories of Massive Resistance in Washington, DC, the more Southern states joined in the tune. This idea of wholesale resistance to efforts to break the back of Jim Crow laws in the “separate but equal” South may not have sprung from the Virginia senator’s mind, but he was most assuredly one of its greatest proponents. Desegregation created an atmosphere Southern education systems. To those in charge, there were only two possibilities: give in and integrate the schools, or close them to preserve segregation. When Georgia heard the mighty Byrd’s opposition to desegregation, the same conflict sprang up in Georgia as it had in Virginia.

A 1956 meeting between Roy Harris—“the man who ran Georgia”—and leaders from across the South sought to bring a united front of constitutional interposition against the inherent evil of desegregation.³ This campaign paralleled the same ideals that slave-owning elites used to fight the abolition of slavery a century before. In their minds, a state could, and should, block enforcement of a federal law within its borders if the law was either a “deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise” of powers not given the federal government, or if the law was an “evil” against the state.⁴ Many

2 Massive Resistance was a strategy instituted by Senator Harry F. Byrd to enlist white Virginians in resisting desegregation following the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

3 Jeff Roche, *Restructured Resistance: The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 30.

4 J. W. Randolph, *The Virginia Report of 1799–1800, Touching the Alien and Sedition Laws, Together with the Virginia Resolutions of December 21, 1798* (Philadelphia: C.

of the men at the 1956 meeting shared these ideals, but others saw integration as inevitable, if not the right thing to do. The rhetoric on both sides escalated throughout the late 1950s, until Governor Ernest Vandiver put together the Georgia General Assembly Committee on Schools. Governor Vandiver appointed lawyer John Sibley of Atlanta to steer the committee toward a decision on whether or not to allow desegregation.⁵ Hearings began on March 3, 1960 and continued through the month, taking testimony from educators and concerned citizens around the state.⁶ At the Atlanta meeting, the superintendent of the DeKalb County Public Schools, Jim D. Cherry, was called upon to testify.

Jim Cherry grew up in Clay County and later in Decatur County, Georgia. An illiterate former slave in his eighties, he lived down the road from the Cherrys near Fowlston, Georgia. The white families called him “Mr. Aleck.” The title of “mister,” rather than the more common and demeaning title “uncle,” showed the respect these families held for their neighbor. Mr. Aleck used the front door when he came to visit his neighbors every Saturday afternoon and would take a cup of coffee with them when invited in.⁷ This kind of fraternization, uncommon between blacks and whites even in 1960s Georgia, was almost unheard of during Cherry’s childhood in the 1920s. Mr. Aleck’s visits with neighboring families were a blatant and defiant violation of the racial etiquette of Southwestern Georgia.⁸ The Cherry family overlooked this violation. At the very least, several of

Sherman, 1850), 22.

5 Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, 83-84.

6 Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, 97.

7 Rachel H. Cherry, Interview by author, Comer’s Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013. According to 1920 US Census Data for Fowlstown, Georgia, there are a number of potential “Mr. Alecks.” In recounting these stories, no one could remember his last name. “Mr. Aleck,” was likely a man named Alex Albert, based on the age he would have been in 1861, the fact that he owned property, and that he was listed as illiterate. There is no way, however, to know for sure that he was the “Mr. Aleck” referred to by the Cherry family. There is no way to check the proximity of his residence to the Cherrys, as they did not move to the Fowlstown area until circa 1922. “Mr. Aleck” died prior to Jim’s going to college in 1930, and Alex Albert is not on the 1930 Census.

8 For numerous examples of how blacks and whites of all classes interacted in rural Georgia in the early twentieth century, consult Mark Schultz, *The Rural Face of White Supremacy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005). A discussion on the perceived disrespect of the term “uncle” can be found on page 85–86, and a section on interracial dining appears on pages 98–102.

the families near Mr. Aleck saw beyond the color of his skin. They saw a farmer just as poor and hard-working as they were.

Jim and his siblings learned about race in Southern society from Mr. Aleck's stories about his days as a slave. He told them about his experiences as a teenage field hand during the Civil War. They learned that although Mr. Aleck was treated kindly, he did not receive an education because it was illegal to teach a slave to read or write in Georgia.⁹ Mr. Aleck instilled the importance of education in the Cherry siblings. Most significantly, Mr. Aleck taught Jim Cherry, the future superintendent of the DeKalb County school system, that race was not an excuse for limiting the opportunities an education provided.

The Sibley committee hearings convinced Jim Cherry that there was a good chance Georgia would close its schools rather than submit to desegregation. Cherry viewed desegregation as the first blow against Jim Crow's reign in the South. At the committee's Atlanta meeting, Superintendent Cherry argued that closing schools would not stop integration, but would only cost the children of the state of Georgia their futures. He believed that allowing the counties themselves to choose whether to close or integrate would be a much better option than the state potentially closing them all down. He favored a plan that would allow those that did not agree with desegregation the option to send their child to a private school at county expense.¹⁰ Mr. Cherry attempted to sway those opposed to integration to pull the issue from the state's control. If control was given to the counties by the state then the superintendent could keep DeKalb schools open, as well as integrate them.

The testimony at the hearings generally called for the public schools of Georgia to shut down by adopting a policy similar to that of Prince Edward County, Virginia. Virginia's policy required any public school in the state that attempted to integrate along racial lines to close. It was named for then-governor Thomas Stanley and passed by a special session of the Virginia General Assembly in August 1956. The federal courts and the Virginia Supreme Court struck down the law in 1959. Members of the Prince Edward County School Board decided to take matters into their own hands, and closed their schools in defiance of federal integration orders.¹¹ Several members

9 Rachel H. Cherry, Interview by author. Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

10 Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, 148.

11 Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: A History of Virginia*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence:

of the Sibley committee traveled to Virginia to meet with Governor Lindsay Almond and several of the Prince Edward County Public School officials to gain a better understanding of the situation and, presumably, the plausibility of such a move in Georgia.¹² Both this trip and Mr. Cherry's testimony weighed very heavily in the group's deliberations in mid-April. When Mr. Sibley delivered the findings of the committee on April 28, 1960, they found that the state should leave the decision to the counties, and recommended open schools above all else. John Sibley ended his remarks by asking the people of the state of Georgia to accept at least some, albeit token, integration.¹³

After the Sibley Committee and Governor Vandiver settled the question of desegregation for the public school system in Georgia, Jim Cherry moved on to other projects that fell in line with his idea of quality comprehensive education. One of these was developing the community college founded by the DeKalb County Board of Education under Georgia's Junior College Act of 1958. By the time DeKalb Community College opened its doors in 1964 as the only public two-year college in the state run by a local school board, it was integrated just like the other public schools run by DeKalb County.¹⁴ This allowed the DeKalb public schools to provide continuous, comprehensive schooling for students ranging from kindergarten to college sophomores.

Jim Cherry's emphasis on education for the underprivileged was a product of his childhood in poor, pre-Depression South Georgia. Cherry demonstrated a philosophy of equal access to education through the fight to keep public schools open in Georgia and his role in the opening of DeKalb Community College. His efforts mirrored that of educators across the South, including his youngest brother: history teacher, principal, and counselor Earl K. Cherry.

As the Sibley committee hearings came to a close in Georgia, the Virginia General Assembly was mulling over a study requested by the State Council of Higher Education. This study, conducted in 1959 by Sebastian V. Martorana of the US Department of Education, called for a system of junior colleges to provide comprehensive technical, occupational, and academic education beyond the high school level

University Press of Kansas, 2014), 375, 382.

12 Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, 162.

13 Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, 163–165.

14 "History," *Online College Catalog*, Georgia Perimeter College, 2014, accessed on December 5, 2014, <http://www.gpc.edu/catalog/history> .

and serve the communities beyond the campuses. Martorana knew that Virginia could not make the leap to an independent system of community colleges at one time. He and his colleagues decided to recommend a system where the new schools would act as branches of existing ones. He hoped that this would be a “transitional agreement” on the way to an independent system.

The question of color is absent from the study, which means the question of integration is absent as well. Martorana explained, “In our studies and probing into that, we got no overt or open indication that this should be a factor that in any way would influence our recommendation.” He supported this by declaring, “No significant people or group that we interviewed or dealt with suggested a separate and equal or separate segregated system of two-year colleges.”¹⁵ For those against integration, the study implied that there would be no black students at the recommended institutions. For those supporting integration, however, the study’s lack of attention to race showed that perhaps things could change.

The report also outlined areas that Martorana believed had the greatest need for post-high school education. It originally called for a junior college to be opened in or near the independent city of Galax, due to the expanding population of upcoming high school seniors in that area. However, there was a stronger push for the college in nearby Wythe County. The steering committee, formed on the news of a community college coming to the area, worked tirelessly to secure the campus’s location in the old frontier county. By the time the 1962 session of the General Assembly was finished, funding had been allocated for the establishment of a branch college of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Wytheville.¹⁶

A flurry of activity began near the Wythe Courthouse. The county quickly started renovations at 275 South Fourth Street—formerly the Simmerman family mansion—converting it from a residence into office and classroom space. VPI selected faculty, furniture, and a mascot. Under the leadership of Director Sherrard Moseley, the faculty—Col. Richard Perkins, James Branscome, Jean Diggs, D. York Brannock, and recent VPI graduate James Wade Gilley—prepared for classes with course outlines and books provided by the Blacksburg campus. VPI chose a Confederate cavalryman on

15 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 12–16.

16 J. Wade Gilley, *The First Ten Years: A History of Wytheville Community College 1962–1972* (Wytheville, Virginia: Wytheville Community College, 1972), 1–4.

horseback charging in front of the Confederate Naval Jack as the junior college's mascot, calling him the Gray Ghost. The doors opened to the high school class of 1963 from Wythe, Grayson, Carroll, Bland, and Smyth Counties and the City of Galax on Thursday, September 19. One hundred five students registered that day and, by the end of the registration period for the quarter, two more had enrolled. The majority of the students were present when Governor Albertis Harrison came on October 6 to dedicate the new school.¹⁷ At this time, the long, strange story of the Wytheville Community College and her "Gray Ghosts" began – the community college whose support came from Richmond by way of Blacksburg.

As with any new organization, there were growing pains. The college outgrew the newly renovated building almost immediately, and another wing was added to the building until a new site could be found for the growing campus.¹⁸ Other issues emerged in the college's administration. The faculty found it harder and harder to operate under the VPI blanket of authority. Don Puyear, the director of another VPI branch school, described relations between the branches and the home campus:

It was a most strangulating situation. We were to offer only courses that were offered at VPI. We used the same outline and the same textbooks. There was nothing left to the discretion of the faculty at the branch. Our faculty then became the second rate faculty as far as the faculty members on the main campus were concerned. In many cases our people were as qualified or even more qualified than those on the parent campus.¹⁹

Due to the micro-management of the Blacksburg administration and their view of the branch faculty as inferior, the branch schools had very limited options. The focus on academic courses left technical or occupational classes—seen as "embarrassing" to VPI administrators—to be offered "under the table," if at all.²⁰

One local advisory board believed in the beginning that the branches would not only provide two years of transfer-oriented collegiate study, but also help those left unprepared by their primary and

17 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 6.

18 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 9.

19 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 24.

20 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 24.

secondary education to acquire the necessary skills and prerequisites to comprehend college-level academics. The board chairman lamented the junior college's role as a stepping stone for VPI:

VPI was really interested only in the branch as a commuter school for the main campus at Blacksburg. We began to feel, and particularly in that respect, that we had been somewhat stifled by the attempts to set up a very high quality of education. The requirements were too high for most students of the area to get into.²¹

The negative relations between Burruss Hall and the branch schools, the crowded classrooms, and the ever-increasing needs of the communities began to wear on everyone involved. Wytheville Community College lifted some of this tension when it acquired funds for a new campus. Construction on a new building began almost immediately. Enrollment had tripled in the first three years of WCC's existence. As 1965 droned on, even bigger news awaited the new school system.²²

Even though he was the head of VPI and its four branch colleges, T. Marshall Hahn supported an independent community college system. The explosion in enrollment at WCC likely influenced his stance. Dr. Hahn pointed out the branches' highly selective admission policies as part of the problem.²³ Just as the course outlines of the branch had to match those used on the Blacksburg campus, admission policies and tuition rates had to match as well. Escalating enrollment rates required more funding for the branch colleges. The home communities of these branches wanted more comprehensive programs while branch faculty and staff desired more freedom in course determination. The men in charge of the junior colleges faced pressure from all angles. Before the ink was dry on the check to purchase more land for Wytheville Community College, the General Assembly took another look at Dr. Martorana's original recommendation for a state-wide independent community college system.²⁴

The General Assembly decided to fund a new system of state-wide comprehensive community colleges, a premise completely new to

21 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 25.

22 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 9.

23 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 25.

24 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 9.

Virginia. After this landmark legislation passed, Eric Rhodes prepared a master plan for the new Virginia Community College System. He and his staff worked to develop guidelines for the placement of service regions and campuses, programs of education including an occupational and technical program, and of the established schools. Rhodes also read Martorana's 1959 study very closely, using many of the same ideas.²⁵ In January 1967, Rhodes presented his recommendations, officially titled "A Proposed Master-Plan for a Statewide System of Community College Education in Virginia." The work defined what a comprehensive community college was, what services it would offer the localities inside its service region, and how it would "make community college education available in a practical way to the maximum number of citizens in all counties and cities in the state."²⁶ It established boundary lines for each of the twenty-two service regions and located campuses to serve each. Location was based on a population size of 100,000 people, length and duration of the commute from the boundary of the region to the campus, and accessibility to main roads. The placement regulations also accounted for any pre-existing vocational school offering post-high school technical programs or "two-year university branches scheduled to become part of the Community College System." The Rhodes Report set tuition at \$45 per quarter, and allowed for a higher rate to be determined for out-of-state students.

Educational programs were based on population, economic need, cultural need, and educational need of those regions. One significant element was regional enrollment reciprocity.²⁷ The open-door policy adopted by the General Assembly for the VCCS eliminated race, gender, and—to a large extent—economic status as factors of exclusion. Now geography was added to the list. For the first time in Virginia history, any state resident could attend school in any part of the state. Furthermore, any state resident could potentially obtain an Associate's Degree and transfer to a four-year institution. This open-door policy came to the Old Dominion just as Harry F. Byrd Sr., erstwhile opponent of desegregation, was preparing to leave it. Byrd resigned his Senate seat in November 1965 and passed away less

25 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 15.

26 Eric Rhodes, *A Proposed Master Plan for a Statewide System of Community College Education in Virginia* (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia Press, 1967), 6.

27 Rhodes, *A Proposed Master Plan for a Statewide System of Community College Education in Virginia*, 7–10.

than a year later.

For WCC, the report proposed an initial offering of eleven programs: six occupational and technical and five university parallel or transfer programs. Full-time enrollment increased to 730 in two years and part-time increased to 600 over the same period. Wytheville Community College occupied the renovated Simmerman mansion until “expansion of the new facility [assured] adequate space.”²⁸ Rhodes recorded his overall impression of the “Gray Ghosts” at the end of the section detailing the school:

The Wytheville Community College, a branch of VPI, is operating in old facilities in Wytheville with an ongoing program, principally of engineering studies. An excellent site on the outskirts of Wytheville has been acquired, and will be turned over together with operation of the community college program, to the State Board for Community Colleges in July, 1967...construction of new building plans have been made, and construction of a new facility is planned for completion by September, 1968. Development of a complete comprehensive community college program, built upon the existing staff and student body should lead to expansion of enrollment, and operation of an excellent program.²⁹

One thing did not survive the change. The WCC “Gray Ghost” mascot dismounted, hung up his saber, and faded away—just as the Confederate cavalymen he represented had a century before.

With Massive Resistance, Harry Byrd Sr., and the “Gray Ghost” gone, WCC and education in the Old Dominion entered a new era. For the first time in the history of Virginia, anyone could enter the realm of higher education regardless of race, color, or gender. The efforts of an entire generation of lawmakers and educators—including Cherry, Martorana, and Hahn—had shifted educational policy from a focus on opportunity according to race to opportunity for all.³⁰ However, for people who did not have the financial means or

28 Rhodes, *A Proposed Master Plan for a Statewide System of Community College Education in Virginia*, 306.

29 Rhodes, *A Proposed Master Plan for a Statewide System of Community College Education in Virginia*, 20.

30 Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 405; James H Hershman, Jr., *Encyclopedia Virginia*, s.v. “A. Linwood Holton,” (Richmond: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2014) accessed on 11/25/2014, http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Holton_A.Linwood.1923-#start_entry.

basic levels of education, attending college remained a dream. Federal Student Aid, established under President Johnson's Higher Education Act of 1965 as part of his War on Poverty, evolved too slowly for those dreamers.³¹

The Rhodes Report activated a mad scramble to get ready for the change to an independent community college system. July 1, 1967 marked the official date of change and the start of a new fiscal year. The new programs—still unwritten—required new equipment and more teachers. As July 1 approached, Dr. Dana Hamel was selected to be the Director of the VCCS. On August 24, 1967, professor and original faculty member J. Wade Gilley assumed his new role as the first president of WCC.³²

This was not the only major change to occur. Admission was now open to all, regardless of what level of education the incoming student had achieved. Wytheville Community College reduced tuition by more than half, cutting the cost from \$330 to \$135 per year and from \$110 to \$45 per quarter. The college offered occupational and technical programs for the first time, as well as “foundations” courses for those in need of basic education. A new emphasis on counseling and guidance helped new students recognize where they were educationally and explore how to achieve their goals.³³ The Office of Continuing Education provided opportunities for students to continue their education beyond the community college. It offered seminars, workshops, and courses designed to appeal to the interests of those served by the college.³⁴ Even though plans were made for existing staff to be kept at WCC, students worried that the new teachers would not be up to VPI standards. They feared that without VPI influence, the quality of their education would drop and they would be unprepared to transfer or enter the workforce. However, that was not the case. An unidentified student remarked later that he was “dismayed...that we would lose the quality of teachers we had under V.P.I., [but the new system] was the greatest thing that has happened to

31 Lawrence E. Gladieux, “Federal Student Aid Policy: A History and an Assessment,” *Financing Postsecondary Education: The Federal Role - October 1995*, U.S. Dept. of Education Website, accessed on 11/25/2014, <https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/FinPostSecEd/gladieux.html>.

32 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 7–8.

33 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 9.

34 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 15; John DiYorio, interview by the author, Wytheville, Virginia, 1/30/2014.

higher education in Virginia.”³⁵ WCC’s admissions doubled that first year under VCCS control, proving the student right.

As enrollment climbed, the school’s need increased for a Financial Aid Office separate from the Counseling Office, which had overseen the disbursement of aid up to that point. When tasked with finding someone to set up an organized and expanded Financial Aid Program, Lucien Johnson knew just whom he should call.³⁶

Earl K. Cherry had worked in Beaufort for over two years on one of the War on Poverty programs, building houses on Daufuskie Island for some of the most impoverished people in the nation. Nixon’s election as president signaled the end of this program. As he pondered going back to Atlanta, perhaps to work for his brother Jim at DeKalb Community College, his phone rang. Lu Johnson, a friend and colleague from his days as principal at Lyerly High School in Georgia, told him of the new opportunity at Wytheville Community College. Cherry had done similar work in Atlanta, just before his move to Beaufort. Cherry paused on the phone before he asked the inevitable question: “Lucien, where in the hell IS Wytheville, Virginia?” Johnson responded, “Take 21 north, and run it ’til you hit Virginia and the top of the mountain.”³⁷ Cherry followed his friend’s directions and met with Wade Gilley, the president of Wytheville Community College. When Gilley asked how soon he could start, Cherry said he would be there the first day of December. He found a place to rent and made a quick tour of Wytheville. He packed up his family and moved from Beaufort over Thanksgiving week. On December 1, 1969, Earl K. Cherry walked onto the campus of Wytheville Community College for his first day as Assistant Professor and Financial Aid Counselor. Neither his life, nor that of WCC, would ever be the same.³⁸

Earl Cherry created a financial aid program as comprehensive as the college itself. He used every resource available to pay the way for those unable to afford enrollment even with reduced tuition. Cherry created a model that combined federal grants, work-study, scholarships, state funds, private grants, and private contributions.

35 Vaughan and Puyear, *Pursuing the American Dream*, 59–60.

36 Gilley, *The First Ten Years*, 13.

37 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer’s Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

38 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer’s Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013; Mary B. Kegley and William F. Snyder, *The Second Ten Years: A History of Wytheville Community College 1973–1982* (Wytheville, Virginia: Wytheville Community College, 1982), 48.

His model came to be used system-wide. He worked with colleague Jim Presgraves to develop programs of higher education for those who had only the most rudimentary schooling. These foundation courses provided people with little or no education with the necessary skills to begin a college-level program of study.³⁹ With these two final pieces in place, the VCCS truly made education accessible to all, regardless of race, gender, financial means, or prior educational level. The community college system came too late for the former slaves of the pre-Depression South like Cherry's neighbor Mr. Aleck. However, the generation influenced by their stories guaranteed that their descendants had the opportunity to pursue a better life through higher education.

By 1972, the Financial Aid Office was off and running and Earl Cherry saw a broader opportunity to help his community. When offered the position of Director of Continuing Education, he immediately accepted.⁴⁰ Up to this point, the Continuing Education department had mostly offered transfer courses with little outreach to the community. Earl saw a chance to carry the college into the community by involving as many people as possible with WCC. Cherry visited local industries to see how college could improve the skills of their workers.⁴¹ Factories across the region started to offer vocational classes in varied subjects tailored to individual factory needs, such as machine tool technology and sewing machine operation. Cherry also worked on countless projects with community leaders, helping them secure funding for desperately needed infrastructure. He collaborated with other colleges and localities to set up regional emergency medical service, training programs for emergency medical technicians, and a practical nursing program. He convinced Rachel Hall Cox, a cardiac and respiratory trauma nurse, to work for Wytheville Community College's nursing program. Due to Cherry's knack for developing needed, timely, and interesting classes combined with Cox's low-key style of teaching that allowed students to grasp difficult concepts, the nursing program at WCC reached full capacity.⁴² Noted cardiologist Henry J. L. Marriott came to Wytheville for a WCC workshop on advanced electrocardiography

39 Kegley and Snyder, *The Second Ten Years*, 18–19; Rachel H. Cherry, Interview by author, Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

40 Kegley and Snyder, *The Second Ten Years*, 48.

41 John DiYorio, interview by author, Wytheville Virginia, 1/30/2014.

42 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

as a supplement to the basic electrocardiography classes the college already offered. Raymond Moody and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross spoke to students about their research into death and dying.⁴³

James H. Hinson Jr., another Georgia boy, took over as Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System in the 1980s. He and Earl Cherry had another connection, besides their Georgia roots: Hinson had just left the presidency of DeKalb Community College.⁴⁴ He worked under Jim D. Cherry at DeKalb until Mr. Cherry's retirement in 1972. Jim Cherry left his mark on Hinson and therefore on the VCCS. Hinson recognized his new job as a responsibility to "[make] it better for faculties to teach and for citizens to learn."⁴⁵ Hinson worked to further adult education through the foundations programs and to ensure that the community college system helped citizens meet their goals and benefit the community. Shortly after his move to Virginia, Hinson and Earl Cherry each made an unfortunate trip back to DeKalb County on account of Jim Cherry's death. Jim David Cherry passed at the age of 69, just after a trip to Virginia to visit Earl, Rachel, and their young son.⁴⁶ Upon their return to Virginia, both men focused on carrying on Jim Cherry's legacy. At a conference in September, 1980, Hinson, Wade Gilley—by then the Secretary of Education for Virginia—and other officials of the VCCS called for a redefinition of community service. They asked those developing the classes "to define those things that are in the area of community development, as opposed to those things that are in the area of individual enrichment."⁴⁷ Earl Cherry formed many individual enrichment classes, but he also had more community development classes in the works. Jim Cherry would have been proud of both Hinson and Earl for committing themselves to give their communities what they truly needed: equal access to education.

Over the next several years, Earl Cherry worked toward those same goals of equal access and community enhancement by expanding and improving Wytheville Community College. He expanded classes in local factories to include more academics. This allowed factory

43 Kegley and Snyder, *The Second Ten Years*, 18.

44 Johnnie R. Simpson and Darrel A Clowes, eds. *Virginia Community Colleges in the Eighties* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1981), 7, 53–65.

45 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

46 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

47 Simpson and Clowes, *Virginia Community Colleges in the Eighties*, 60.

workers—unable to travel to campus because of their work schedule—to attend class at the end of their shift. He worked with local school divisions to establish evening college classes in high schools across the region. His Summer Scholars program gave high school students the chance to take college classes prior to graduating, which moved them closer to a degree after graduation. Outside the academic realm, Cherry helped with the formation of a local Meals-on-Wheels program. He also raised funds for an oral history recording program. In 1983, Cherry decided that after almost 35 years in education it was time to retire. He wanted to spend more time with his wife and two young sons. Effective September 1, 1983, Earl K. Cherry Sr. retired from WCC. James Hinson also left in 1983 to take over the presidency of Florida's Tallahassee Community College.⁴⁸

Through the course of his career as Director of Continuing Education, Earl Cherry involved over 137,000 people in the Continuing Education programs and gave out over 5,000 Continuing Education credits. He developed hundreds of classes to enrich the individual student and further Hinson's ideas for community development.⁴⁹ Successive Directors of Continuing Education expanded the programs he established at Wytheville Community College. Many WCC, VCCS, and community programs trace their lineage to a program developed by Cherry's Continuing Education Office. Meals-on-Wheels, which provides transit services to the underprivileged and elderly, became the District Three Governmental Cooperative. The Summer Scholars program became dual-credit classes that allow students to graduate high school with an Associate's Degree. The evening classes Cherry started in Wythe County factories and high schools became satellite campuses in the service region. Through Cherry's pioneering work at WCC, the Continuing Education program evolved into Workforce Development. Even after retiring, he urged others to get involved with education by confronting issues within his local public school system, convincing many to return and finish their schooling, and convincing others to begin their education. He requested classes for residents at his retirement home—addressing educational needs of others right up to his death in 2011, at the age of 90.⁵⁰

These achievements in education would not have been possible

48 Rachel H. Cherry, interview by author, Comer's Rock, Virginia, 11/18/2013.

49 Kegley and Snyder, *The Second Ten Years*, 18–19.

50 Personal recollections of the author.

without the great sense of community that existed at WCC and within the VCCS. The community of faculty, staff, and students created an atmosphere where ideas flourished and spread across the junior college system. WCC instilled a general belief in working together for the benefit of the students, the community, and staff. The faculty made sure the students earned their education. For example, Earl Cherry once asked for a professor of Foundations Chemistry to reconsider failing a nursing student who had just barely missed her mark. The professor would not let her slide—he noted that the failing grade was not due to her efforts, but stemmed from her failure to grasp the class’s concepts. She did not pass and dropped out of the nursing program. The college community worked together to help her find a field of study that suited her. She went on to become very successful in that field.⁵¹ Cherry and the rest of the college administration developed ideas for the college community through the Faculty Wives’ Club, floating weekend poker games, fishing trips to Claytor Lake, lunch in the Fincastle Hall Snack Bar, or over a cup of coffee from the vending machine—Cherry’s favorite way to discuss issues.⁵² This “collegial community” included everyone at WCC. Cherry provided this encouraging and positive community with a sound footing through his financial aid program and increased enrollment through the Continuing Education program, and he helped keep WCC viable.⁵³

This sense of fellowship pervaded schools throughout the Virginia Community College System. However, this fellowship seemed to be more departmentalized. For example, at New River Community College, the community consisted of separate factions. The academic departments clustered together and the occupational and technical departments formed a separate clique. There was no animosity of any kind between groups, however, and they interacted a great deal. The community members at NRCC, for example, interacted with each other based more on shared interests and studies.⁵⁴

A sense of community existed between the colleges as well. Joint-sponsorship of events such as the Elisabeth Kubler-Ross lectures enabled Wytheville Community College to collaborate with Southwest Virginia Community College on maintaining quality

51 John DiYorio, interview by author, Wytheville, Virginia, 1/30/2014.

52 Personal recollections of the author.

53 John DiYorio, interview by author, Wytheville, Virginia, 1/30/2014.

54 Charlie White, interview by author, Wytheville, Virginia, 2/5/2014.

education and serving their respective communities.⁵⁵ First shared among members of individual college communities and then between colleges in the greater VCCS community, principles of collaboration eventually became system-wide policies. The open interaction between people throughout the community college system turned their ideals into influential principles.⁵⁶ The sense of community, carried over from the common ground shared by educators and legislators, enabled Virginia to establish a truly open and accessible system of higher education.

Wytheville Community College began as a VPI branch and became part of the Virginia Community College System. The efforts of a generation concerned with the importance of education broke down barriers and removed obstacles for people previously excluded from higher education. The defeat of Massive Resistance and the integration of public schools emphasized the great need for affordable, quality education open and accessible to all people—regardless of race, color, gender, financial means, or prior educational background. The Virginia Community College System enabled truly open education for the first time in Virginia history. The fruit of the higher education tree was finally ripe and available to anyone willing to reach out and take it. A community of educators, legislators, and witnesses to the injustice and detrimental effects of a lack of education and state-sanctioned inequality increased educational opportunity on a local level. Their efforts resulted in the Virginia Community College System, which enhanced local communities by offering comprehensive educational programs. The junior colleges bettered the lives of those who took advantage of opportunities offered through classes on campus and out in the community. The same principles established by the “collegial community,” consisting of a generation of forward thinkers like Earl K. Cherry Sr., still guide the VCCS today.⁵⁷

55 Kegley and Snyder, *The Second Ten Years*, 18–19.

56 Rachel Cherry, interview by author, Comer’s Rock, Virginia 11/18/2013.

57 John DiYorio, interview by author, Wytheville, Virginia, 1/30/2014.

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SINGING SCIENCE

What Victorian Hymns Reveal about the Natural World

Abigail Gomulkiewicz

*Doubts are abroad: make Thou these doubts to cease;
Fears are within: set Thou these fears at rest!
Strife is among us: melt that strife to peace!
Change marches onward: may all change be blest!*

These poignant lines epitomize concerns that emerged during the Victorian period due to intense social, political, and economic changes taking place in Britain. Yet the source—a hymn—is not one typically studied by historians. Until recently, historians studied Victorian values and ideas almost exclusively through literature and poetry. These sources created an elite version of history characterized by accounts of “great men.” The history of science followed a similar trajectory. It focused on scientific theories, great ideas, and scientific geniuses reinforced by elite and academic sources produced by a select group of men such as Charles Darwin and Adam Sedgwick. The recent historiographical shift toward science in the marketplace led by James Secord and Aileen Fyfe, however, reoriented historians’ traditional perspective and encouraged a deeper investigation into religious tracts and sermons as reflections of popular engagement with the natural world.²

1 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1904), Hymn #454.

2 It is important to note that despite these sources being included in more

Despite these changes, hymns remain sidelined as valuable historical source material, often viewed as “a poor stepsister of belles-lettres.”³ However, Victorian hymns outnumbered poems, suggesting that hymns might reveal as much as poems or other sources about how the common Victorian understood the world.⁴ This paper inserts hymns into the historiography and investigates what they tell historians of science about Victorian conceptions of the natural world and natural knowledge.

Victorian hymns came from many different denominations and authors, but they reveal the relevance of nature and natural imagery as Victorians responded to rapid industrialization and British imperialism. Hymns written for children provide particularly useful insights. When it comes to what hymns reveal about reactions to industrialization, sometimes they offer a different perspective than other historical sources. More often, however, they reveal deeper and more nuanced insights into the perspectives of the natural world that both the British Protestant church and its members experienced throughout the nineteenth century. In particular, hymns reveal a society that idealized nature and a church that began by depicting nature negatively but ultimately accepted its positive portrayal—in a manner that kept it safely distinguished from the Darwinian view, that is. This point is reinforced by children’s hymns that reveal the idealization of nature and its growing acceptance throughout society. The presence of natural imagery in children’s hymns highlights how the natural world was no longer a negative or scary thing unacceptable for children by the end of the century. Instead, it became largely accepted in children’s hymns. This supports and offers deeper insights into the previous historiographical findings about nature in children’s literature. The study of imperial hymns also reveals how Victorians manipulated natural imagery to both justify and glorify their imperial

mainstream source material, sermons and tracts are largely studied from a publishing rather than content perspective; J. A. Secord, “How Scientific Conversation Became Shop Talk,” in A. Fyfe and B. Lightman, eds., *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

3 Susan S. Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord: Hymns as a Reflection of Victorian Social Attitudes* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1978), 1.

4 To get an idea of the number of hymns and hymnals circulating during Victorian Britain: *Hymns Ancient and Modern* sold over 4.5 million copies, Alexander’s *Hymns for Little Children* (1848) went into more than 100 editions and between 1800 and 1820 nearly 50 different hymnbooks were used in the Church of England alone. Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*, 2.

agenda, which supports the evidence that previous historians have gleaned from travel writings. These imperial hymns illustrate a changing vision of imperialism and the natural world that occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century, which emphasized the similarities rather than the differences between Britain and Britons and foreign lands and peoples.

This article highlights how British Protestant hymn writers and hymn singers shared, symbiotically, the changing conceptions of the natural world through their writing and singing. I argue that although hymn writers wrote for a variety of religious and personal reasons, the growing prevalence of natural imagery in their hymns indicates an iconographic shift in the Victorian conception of the natural world. As British Protestant congregations sang the hymns more frequently, the hymn singers began to view nature more positively and incorporate the hymn writer's view into their religious activities and beliefs.

Victorian Hymnology and Its Limitations

The historiography of Victorian hymnology is brief, but important. Past Victorian hymnology focused on specific denominations (epitomized by David Creamer's work on Methodist hymns), or served as generalized studies (such as Albert Bailey's *The Gospel in Hymns*).⁵ These approaches created narrow perspectives because they only considered hymns that made it into denominational hymnals. This excluded hymns written with and sung by more "radical" themes and authors. Additionally, the more generalized studies suffer by only offering limited mention of nineteenth-century hymns. Later Victorian hymnology investigated hymns merely as a form of escapism.⁶ More recent scholarship by Ian Bradley and Susan Tamke built on this idea and highlighted the larger social importance of hymns by looking at hymns thematically. These works place

5 David Creamer, *Methodist Hymnology: Comprehending Notices of the Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (New York: Joseph Longking, 1848). For more generalized scholarship on hymnology see Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns: Backgrounds and Interpretations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950); C. S. Phillips, *Hymnology Past and Present* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1937) or W. K. Lothar Clarke, *A Hundred Years of Hymns Ancient and Modern* (London: William Clowes & Sons., Ltd, 1960).

6 Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Angel-Makers: A Study in the Psychological Origins of Historical Change, 1750-1850* (London: Heinemann, 1958); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964).

hymns within a larger Victorian context by emphasizing the ideas and concerns of the period.⁷ Although the recent historiography of hymnology legitimized hymns as source material, the scholarship does not address how Victorian hymns reflect changing conceptions of the natural world, despite the intense scholarly interest about the tension between science and religion that originated in this period. This paper builds on the previous historiography of hymnology, but offers a new perspective for the history of science that focuses specifically on what Victorian hymns written and sung by British Protestants reveal about how the church understood and presented the natural world throughout the nineteenth century.

What Hymns Reveal about Industrialization

Victorian hymns provide insight into how people dealt with nineteenth-century industrialization. Though historians often present industrialization as straightforward, hymns reveal that the responses to it were complicated. Natural imagery in hymns reflects how different Victorian cultural, intellectual, and religious movements viewed industrialism. In general, the literal shift of machinery and people reinforced the Victorian conception that the natural world consisted of both an economic force to be harnessed and also an idyllic sanctuary being lost. Yet few hymns that present nature depict progress and control. Only one Victorian hymn highlights industrialization. That hymn compares a railroad with a believer's journey toward salvation.⁸ The focus of the majority of hymns reveals that Victorians preferred an idyllic or demonstrative natural world that had little connection with their gritty industrial reality.

Though the predominance of rural imagery in hymns may simply reflect scriptural themes, the plethora of these images highlights larger cultural responses to industrialization. Many Victorians responded to their urban reality by idealizing the countryside. Historians traditionally look to the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth and Davy for a point of reference on this theme.⁹ However, Romanticism was not just a literary movement, but was also

7 Ian Bradley, *Abide with Me: The World of Victorian Hymns* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1997); Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1978).

8 William Booth, *Salvation Army Music* (London: Salvation Army, 1890), Hymn #100.

9 Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Redwood, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1989).

a social ideology that impacted larger Victorian conceptions of the natural world, including hymns. Its ideological rejection of mechanical metaphors and its replacement of them with natural ones is reflected in hymns that unite the aesthetic and the scientific.¹⁰ Victorian hymns often accentuate the aesthetic beauty of Jesus' earthly life and draw comparisons between the natural beauty of Paradise and a dark industrial reality.¹¹ In nineteenth-century hymns, nature prompts an emotional response, which ultimately led Christians toward a greater understanding of God.¹² Thus, Victorian hymns, like romantic poetry, present a clearer and more emotive description of nature than their eighteenth-century counterparts, which emphasized more theological and technical imagery.

Hymns show that the church and its members did not reject the natural world. Although traditional historians contend that the church either believed in demonstrative natural theology (meaning that nature proved the existence of God) or faltered in convictions following Darwin, hymnology reveals a different narrative. Recent scholarship in the history of science presents a more nuanced perspective about religion and natural knowledge which is supported by hymnology. Hymns similar to the *Bridgewater Treatises*, which were an encyclopedia of the natural world that presented a largely demonstrative theology in line with William Paley's ideas, provide a vital resource for this new historiographical shift. These hymns show the continued acceptability of nature by Victorian Christians long after Darwin's publication. These hymns reveal how the church and its members maximized natural imagery within a "safe science" context of Christian belief that shows a growing acceptance of the natural world.¹³

Although Victorian hymns presented the natural world as a positive alternative to industrialization, some Christians challenged

10 David Knight, "Romanticism and the Sciences" in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, eds. Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

11 Susan Drain, *The Anglican Church in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Queenston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1989), 425, 427, 433.

12 Some previous hymnology explores the connection between hymns and the Romantic Movement. See J. R. Watson, ed. *An Annotated Anthology of Hymns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 235-287.

13 Jonathan R. Topham, "Science and Popular Education in the 1830s: the Role of the Bridgewater Treatises" *British Journal for the History of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 25, 397-430.

and changed this presentation throughout the century. Different denominations accepted nature and natural imagery differently, a variety reflected in hymns. At the beginning of the century, for example, Evangelicals rejected earthly life in order to elevate the heavenly and thus viewed natural beauty as temptation from the devil.¹⁴ This theological rejection of the natural world is reflected in Victorian Evangelicals' hymn choices. For instance, the 1836 *Congregational Hymn Book* includes few hymns that positively described the natural world.¹⁵ The hymns that do include natural imagery emphasize the world's "short-lived beauties [which] die away" and lament that "the lovely flowers are gone."¹⁶ This denominational tension with the natural world peaked during the 1855 controversy surrounding the publication of *Hymns for Heart and Voice: The Rivulet* by Thomas Toke Lynch. At that time, many Evangelicals criticized Lynch's presentation of nature. They contended that he must be a deist or freethinker because the hymnal presented positive portrayals of the natural world.¹⁷ This controversy reflects larger Christian fears about the role of nature in a Christian context, especially the fear that positive portrayals of nature dissolved Christians into deists.

Additionally, Victorian Christians worried about whether natural imagery distracted from deeper theological issues. Hymns reveal a middle ground between Paley's natural theology, which saw nature as a way to prove God's existence, and a theology of nature, with its belief that nature brought people closer to God. By the end of the nineteenth century, Victorian Christians (even Evangelicals) viewed natural imagery positively. The 1884 *Congregational Hymns*, for example, included an entire section entitled "Nature" made up of twenty-two hymns.¹⁸

This increase in nature-related hymns challenges traditional historiography about how nineteenth century developments in natural knowledge created antagonism between religion and science. One might expect that as the century progressed and the divide between

14 Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*, 44.

15 Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*, 44.

16 John Allen, *Penny Hymnbook* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1860), Hymn #101; Booth, *Salvation Army Music*, Hymn #15.

17 Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 454-5; H. A. L. Jefferson, *Hymns in Christian Worship* (London: Rockliff Publishing Corporation, 1950), 117.

18 Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*, 47.

religion and science grew, Victorian Christians would write and accept fewer hymns with natural imagery. However, research shows the opposite trend. Hymns with natural imagery became more accepted as the century progressed because of developments in Christian theology that have previously been overlooked by scholars. Thus, hymns offer a different historical interpretation that helps historians more deeply understand Victorian society and its response to industrialization.¹⁹

Insights from Children's Hymns

Adults primarily sang the hymns discussed above, but the Victorian period also saw the emergence of children's hymns that dealt with the natural world. These hymns offer historians insights into how the church presented nature to Victorian children. The child became increasingly important as Victorian writers interpreted philosopher John Locke's conception of *tabula rasa*, through which society played a vital role in how children became upright citizens.²⁰ Thus, Victorian religious societies increasingly produced literature specifically for children. As the century progressed, religious groups worried that the proselytizing ventures of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, including the secular publications of natural knowledge seen in the *Penny Magazine*, might lead Victorian children away from a religious understanding of nature.²¹ In response, religious societies published new tracts like *History of Beasts* and *History of Birds* that presented natural knowledge in a context of Christianity.²² Hymns offered another form of influence that religious societies maximized. For example, the 1875 revised edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* included eight new children's hymns with a decidedly different viewpoint, which worked better for children than the more adult-oriented 1860 edition.²³

Children's hymns also reveal shifts from more negative

19 Some recent scholarship has investigated the role of church professionalization in the debate between science and religion. See F. M. Turner, "The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: a Professional Dimension" *Isis* 69 (1978): 356-76.

20 Lynne Vallone, "A Humble Spirit under Correction: Tracts, Hymns, and the Ideology of Evangelical Fiction for Children, 1780-1820," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 15 (1991), 72-95; 74.

21 J. S. Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1981), 39.

22 Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction*, 39.

23 Drain, *The Anglican Church in Nineteenth Century Britain*, 461.

portrayals of the natural world to more positive representations later in the nineteenth century. Early Victorian children's hymns present nature as fickle and ephemeral, similar to the natural imagery found in early Evangelical hymns. These hymns emphasize hell-fire imagery, comparing struggles in the natural world with battles against sinfulness. One hymn asserts that depraved children "anger and rage like lions."²⁴ Additionally, children's hymns reinforce morality through the all-seeing eye of God. This theme of an all-powerful and vengeful God is found within a hymn in *The Fairfield Family* and later in the century in the 1879 Methodist Sunday School hymnal.²⁵ Many Victorian children later associated early Victorian children's hymns with fear and negative portrayals of the natural world. For instance, Janet Courtney remembered her childhood in Lincolnshire through a hymn that compared the autumn winds to death and the Devil.²⁶ This negative portrayal of the natural world resulted from the origin of these hymns. Evangelicals produced most early children's literature and hymns. By 1840, the Religious Tract Society had a catalogue of literature and song specifically for children.²⁷ Although the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge also viewed children as vital moral instruments to teach, their development of children's literature occurred more slowly. Therefore the Evangelical monopoly on children's literature and hymns influenced the presentation of the natural world. Since Evangelicals viewed the natural world negatively at the beginning of the century, this message characterized early children's hymns as well.

Similar to the shifts seen in the Evangelical acceptance of a more positive portrayal of nature toward the latter half of the nineteenth century, later Victorian children's hymns present a more idealized version of the natural world. Animals are no longer reminders of sin, but act as reminders of God's goodness. He is not a God of wrath, but one who "made the pretty birds to fly" and "the cow to give milk."²⁸ Additionally, animals symbolically represent the

24 Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement, 1780-1917* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 149.

25 Tamke, *Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord*, 82; *The Methodist Sunday-School Hymn-Book* (1879), Hymns #266, #370.

26 Janet Courtney, *Freethinkers of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1967), 4.

27 Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Literature*, 41.

28 *Hymns and Rhymes for Children: By the Daughter of a Clergyman* (London: Ward,

relationship between Man and God, with one children's hymn going so far as to equate God's loyalty to that of a good farm dog.²⁹ These images helped religious societies teach children deeper theological ideas through familiar natural imagery. This imagery is not gender- or class-specific, but speaks to the universality of Victorian ideas of both religion and the natural world. The use of these hymns placed natural imagery at the forefront of didactic teaching about religion. This suggests that Christian denominations did not feel threatened by the natural world, but instead simply wanted to offer their own interpretation of natural knowledge within a Christian context- perhaps, in the words of historian Jonathan Topham, as "safe science."³⁰

The presentation of nature in Victorian children's hymns parallels Victorian children's literature. For instance, *Hymns and Rhymes* presents a moral poem entitled the "Busy Bee" that compares moral children with bees who fulfill their natural God-given role in the world.³¹ Similarly, Charles Kingsley's children's book *Madam How and Lady Why* details how young boys can understand God more through observing the idyllic nature surrounding them.³² Thus, children's literature and children's hymns highlight a shared iconography of nature in the Victorian period. Although at the beginning of the century, imagery of nature for children received a darker portrayal that reminded children of their fallen state in the world, natural imagery became more idealized and positive as the century progressed. While later Victorian hymns and children's literature maintained their didactic function, they presented this function in quite a different way by the end of the nineteenth century, maximizing natural imagery for good and intertwining nature and God into a "safe science."

Imperialism

Not only do Victorian hymns offer insight into responses to industrialization as well as the growing acceptance and propagation of natural imagery for children, but they also illustrate how the church and its members viewed imperialism. Victorians wrote hymns for both domestic and foreign mission work. In this paper, I examine

Lock, and Tyler, 1871), 17.

29 *Hymns and Rhymes for Children*, 28.

30 Topham, "Science and Popular Education in the 1830s."

31 *Hymns and Rhymes for Children*, 22.

32 Charles Kingsley, *Madam How and Lady Why* (1869).

mostly imperial missionary hymns because they more closely detail the natural world. These hymns are especially insightful when compared with Victorian travel narratives. Together, these sources show how Victorians understood and propagated ideas about the basis for imperialism, including notions of British superiority over native people.³³ Hymns specifically reflect British imperial desires that existed throughout the century. This is epitomized in the 1870 hymn *The day thou gavest Lord is ended*, sung at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee service in 1897.³⁴ In this hymn, the British Empire becomes synonymous with the Kingdom of God. Further hymns characterize Britain as "favored of the skies" and as the country that "owns the divine hand."³⁵ These hymns detail the Victorian belief in British superiority that underlined the imperial and missionary efforts of the nineteenth century. The Christian message became the "secret of England's greatness."³⁶ Looking at hymns strengthens the historiographical tradition that shows how Victorian Britons viewed themselves as superior and perceived their dominant role over nature and native people.

Victorians grappled with how to view new people and new lands as the British Empire grew and became more accessible to the British public through travel narratives, newspapers, and even zoos.³⁷ Many travel narratives from the period, such as *Stories of the Gorilla Country*, present native peoples as uncultured and superstitious.³⁸ Victorian missionary hymns present a similar interpretation, with native peoples frequently described as "the heathen," "bigot," or "rude barbarian."³⁹ While Victorian travel narratives glorified the imperial

33 M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge: London, 1992).

34 Erik Routley, *Hymns and Human Life* (London: John Murray, 1952), 94-5.

35 Edward Bickersteth, *Christian Psalmody: A Collection of Above 700 Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* (London: L. B. Seeley and Sons, 1833), Hymn # 434.

36 Leslie Howsam, *Cheap Bible: Nineteenth Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4.

37 H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: the English and Other Creatures in Victorian England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), Chapters 5 and 6.

38 Paul Du Chaillu, *Stories of the Gorilla Country* (1871).

39 Reginald Heber, *From Greenland's icy mountains* (1819) in *The Church Missionary Hymn Book* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899); Henry Allon, *Children's Worship: A Book of Sacred Songs for Home and School* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887), Hymn #527; Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, ed., *Church Praise* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1885), Hymn #189.

hunter with his animal trophies, Victorian missionary hymns often equated their converts to trophies, discussing how the propagation of the Gospel maximized the “the trophies it has won.”⁴⁰ Here, trophies refers to the native converts won through British missionary and imperial efforts. Hymns reflect the same British attitude of superiority towards the natural world that justified large game hunts also justified the British imperial missionary efforts.

Victorian hymns, like Victorian travel narratives, divorced the beauty of nature in foreign lands from the native people, another interesting way hymns offered a justification for British imperial and missionary efforts. Travel narratives like J. D. Hooker’s *Himalayan Journals* contrast the natural beauty and economic opportunities of India with its people, who supposedly do not appreciate this beauty and its economic potential.⁴¹ Hooker concludes that the native people need British leadership to maximize their natural resources. By praising India’s natural beauty and contrasting it with its native people, his narrative draws out Indians’ apparent savageness which, for Hooker, justifies British imperialism.⁴² Victorian hymns such as Reginald Heber’s missionary hymn “From Greenland’s icy mountains” present similar justifications through contrast. Heber, for example, compares “India’s coral strand” and “Africa’s sunny fountains” with “the heathen in his blindness” who lives among these riches.⁴³ Other hymns simply highlight the many “wide realms [which] in darkness lie,” contrasting a bountiful land with its unsaved inhabitants.⁴⁴ These Victorian hymns, like the period’s travel narratives, heighten the distinction between native peoples’ ignorance and superstition and God’s natural beauty around them. Missionary hymns justified missionary efforts just as travel narratives justified imperial efforts. As source material hymns prove useful because they reveal a shared nineteenth-century language and iconography about the natural world

40 *Church Missionary Hymn Book Hymn*, Hymn #239.

41 J. D. Hooker, *Himalayan Journals: Notes of a Naturalist*, Vol. 1, (John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1854).

42 A similar description between savageness and animals was seen at Victorian zoos, which often added natural settings to heighten the contrast between beast and nature. See Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

43 Heber, *From Greenland’s icy mountains*, (1823).

44 *Missionary Hymns: Composed and Selected for the Public Services at the Annual Meetings of the London Missionary Society* (London: London Missionary Society, 1830), Hymn #14.

that justified imperialism and missionary efforts as well as reinforced British superiority over the natural world.

Although hymns do offer insight into how Victorians understood and portrayed nature within an imperial context, they do not always present a straightforward imperial interpretation of the natural world. Hymns and their natural imagery also reflect the changes and challenges to nineteenth-century British imperialism. While many hymns detail British superiority, other hymns emphasize the equality and brotherhood between domestic and foreign believers in Christ, stating that all “are one in Christ their head.”⁴⁵ These hymns, that highlighted the Christian qualities of native people rather than their superstitious or savage natures, appeared later in the nineteenth century. Taken together, these hymns highlight the new outlooks which Christian denominations took toward missionary work at the turn of the century and illustrate how the natural world went from offering a justification for missionary and imperial ventures to providing attacks that changed the Victorian church’s perception of nature and society. Thus, John Oxenham’s 1908 hymn “In Christ there is no east or west,” with its imagery of Christian brotherhood between all races, stands in sharp contrast to John Ellerton’s aforementioned 1897 hymn for Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Hymns make historians consider the human motives and interactions under which texts evolve. D. F. McKenzie calls this the “sociology of texts.”⁴⁷ An investigation into Victorian hymns highlights the continued bond between nature and religion despite the idea of a perpetual “war” between the two begun by J. W. Draper in his *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* and continued by Richard Dawkins.⁴⁸ These hymns support historians such as Jonathan Topham and John Brooke, who present an evolving rather than an antagonistic relationship between nature and religion. Hymns also show the need in the history of science to consider changes in religion

45 *Hymns for Use at United Prayer Meetings and Other Denominational Services* (London: Alliance House, 1886), Hymn #88.

46 John Oxenham, *In Christ there is no East or West* (1908), quoted by Calvin W. Laufer, *Hymn Lore* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1932), 158-61.

47 Howsam, *Cheap Bible*, xv.

48 John Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science and Religion* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 151, 16.

as influences on the professionalization of science and dynamic views of the natural world. This is seen quite clearly through the impact that Evangelicalism had on how hymns presented the natural world.

Hymns do not always challenge traditional historiography, but they do illuminate how similar the Victorian iconography and language was between missionary hymns and travel narratives. They also highlight the deep role played by the church both as an institution and as a body of individual members in Victorian conceptions of the natural world beyond just tracts or sermons. In the final analysis, hymns provide a valuable historical perspective because they present the natural world in a nuanced manner. Although doubts existed, hymns show that faith persisted and utilized natural imagery within certain dynamic, not static, contexts throughout the nineteenth century.

Moreover, hymns place historians of science in the church pew rather than in the publishing house or lecture hall. Although recent scholarship investigates more popular interactions with the natural world, few scholars look into how worshippers literally experienced imagery and language of the natural world within their place of worship. There is something powerful about understanding the repeated singing of hymns that Victorians would have experienced regularly throughout their lives. Hymns offer an inclusive space, perhaps like no other, where we can see how women and children as well as men across Victorian society visualized and thought about their natural and spiritual worlds together.

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THE ASPARTAME CONTROVERSY OF 1981

The Hidden Truth Behind the Not-So-Sweet Artificial Sweetener

Morgan Sykes

Ninety-eight out of 196 infant mice died after exposure to aspartame in a 1977 Food and Drug Administration investigation. The results, published in a document known as the Bressler Report, revealed these FDA findings as well as numerous other troubling data submitted to the FDA by the primary producer of aspartame, G. D. Searle & Company.¹ Astonishingly, just four years later, the FDA approved aspartame for human consumption in dry foods, and two years after that authorized its use in carbonated beverages. To this day, every time someone consumes a diet soda, they are putting this potentially toxic chemical into their body.

For the next several decades, the use of artificial sweeteners, especially aspartame, remained a popular topic of concern. Substances sweeter than sugar with few to no calories initially seemed like a dream come true, but unfortunately many harmful side effects tarnished the reputation of these chemicals. While the FDA restricted many uses of these sweeteners over the years, aspartame continues to be one of the most frequently used food additives since 1983. Shockingly, many people are unaware of the chemical's potentially harmful long-term effect on regular users, both animal and human.

1 Mark D. Gold, "Recall Aspartame as a Neurotoxic Drug," FDA Docket 02P-0317, 2003. <http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/DOCKETS/dailys/03/Jan03/012203/02P-0317.emc-000196.txt>.

Much has been written about aspartame and its health effects over the past several decades. Newspapers conducted interviews and undertook investigations related to the possible detrimental consequences. Academic journals thoroughly analyzed the content and chemical makeup of the substance and numerous studies were completed recording the effects of aspartame in animals. For example, in 1993 Dr. Morando Soffritti conducted the Ramazzini study using 1,800 rats over a thirty-six-month period. The Italian scientist monitored the rodents for three years instead of two to better simulate the corresponding age that cancer develops in most humans. His findings included many cases of leukemia, lymphoma, and kidney cancers, thus further emphasizing the potential dangers of aspartame.²

Previous authors have focused on the content of the drug and personal testimony related to its use. *Sweet Poison*, by Janet Starr Hull, elaborates on the author's personal experiences with aspartame and the negative impact it had on her life. Her symptoms included severe headaches, vision problems, and regular nausea.³ Many people affected by aspartame offer to share their stories, and newspaper articles often question the safety of the additive.⁴ *Empty Pleasures: From Saccharin to Splenda* by Carolyn de la Pena illustrates the evolution of artificial sweeteners, their effects on the human body, and the history of the use of sugar substitutes in America. Carolyn La Pena, author of *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners From Saccharin to Splenda* explains that when the body perceives artificial sweeteners as sugar, the lack of calories and energy actually trick it into feeling empty and cause more food cravings. This lack of fulfillment defeats the purpose of eating low-calorie foods.⁵ In this article, I explore not only the published record on aspartame's safety and toxicity, but also the reasons this potentially dangerous chemical remains legal today.

2 Melanie Warner, "The Lowdown on Sweet?" *New York Times*, February 12, 2006, sec. Business/Your Money, February 12, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/12/business/yourmoney/12sweet.html?pagewanted=all>.

3 Janet S. Hull, *Sweet Poison: How the World's Most Popular Artificial Sweetener Is Killing Us* (Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1998).

4 So much controversy has arisen from aspartame that websites, blogs, and health forums were created solely to share stories about the negative side effects of the chemical. Websites such as www.aspartamecontroversy.com publish emails sent in by consumers. Also the FDA conducts studies based on consumer experiences, analyzing the side effects and correlations to aspartame.

5 Carolyn D. La Pena, *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners From Saccharin to Splenda* (Greensboro, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

The considerable amount of evidence concerning the hazards of aspartame might lead one to conclude that an FDA ban exists on the substance. However, I argue that corruption within the government and big business led to the FDA's approval of aspartame. Evidence of corruption found in government documents, court trials, newspapers, and academic journals forms a solid foundation of facts to support these claims.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the validity of the FDA's approvals and further investigate the side effects of aspartame. While some consumers are aware of the possible consequences of this artificial sweetener, others remain unaware of the problems. Further understanding of why the chemical was initially approved can raise consciousness about food issues more generally and hopefully cause consumers to scrutinize their food ingredients. As technology increases, our society puts less emphasis on food safety and instead blindly trusts the FDA. Today, most people rely on simplicity and convenience of food rather than understanding where it comes from and what it actually contains.

Although numerous studies were conducted documenting negative findings concerning the effects of aspartame, the sweetener remains legal, partially due to the political power of companies who manufacture it. In 1981, Ronald Reagan, with help from members of his transition team, including the CEO of G. D. Searle, Donald Rumsfeld, appointed Dr. Arthur Hull Hayes Jr. as the new FDA commissioner. Just weeks later, Rumsfeld submitted a reevaluation of aspartame and Hayes, ignoring the recommendations of several doctors, approved the substance for human consumption.⁶ This article argues that the numerous conflicts of interest within the government and big business allowed aspartame to be approved for human consumption even when it was demonstrated to be a carcinogen and a cause of other harmful side effects in animals. Rumsfeld was able to use political power and connections in Washington to influence key decisions of the FDA in the early 1980s.

Saccharin: The Original Artificial Sweetener

The artificial sweetener saga began when saccharin was inadvertently discovered in 1879. While scientists were intrigued, the

⁶ Ashley Nill, "The History of Aspartame," (Food and Drug Law/Third Year Paper Harvard Law School, Cambridge MA, 2000), accessed February 15, 2014, http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/8846759/Nill,_Ashley.-The_History_of_Aspartame.html?sequence=6.

popularity of this sweetener did not catch on with the public until the sugar shortage in World War I.⁷ As saccharin gained popularity, its success encouraged other manufacturers to create more artificial sweeteners. In 1951, cyclamate was approved as a food additive and the combination of cyclamate and saccharin became the country's most popular sugar substitute. Containing many fewer calories and being one-tenth the price of pure sugar, this combination gained the immediate attention of manufacturers. Sweet'N Low was created in 1957 and was immediately advertised as a substance to help "ladies keep their girlish figures."⁸ For the next decade, cyclamate and saccharin continued to thrive as the first diet sodas were produced. Health concerns were noted, but widely ignored until the Pure Food and Drug Act forced the FDA to temporarily ban saccharin after links with cancer were documented and exposed.⁹

In 1977, a Canadian study brought attention to saccharin as its results showed an overwhelming amount of bladder cancer found in Charles River lab rats as a result of saccharin intake. After this research, the Canadian government decided to ban saccharin.¹⁰ The findings of the study also made the FDA take notice and propose a ban on saccharin. While there was much public opposition, the FDA's hands were tied due to the Delaney Clause within the 1958 Food Additive Amendment. This clause declares that if a chemical has been found to cause cancer in animals, it cannot be used as a food additive. To the surprise of the FDA, a vast amount of public outcry, especially from the diabetic community, made Congress postpone the ban until they could further discuss the product.¹¹

With so much public opposition, Congress decided to delay the ban on saccharin until further tests could be conducted. Although the ban was postponed, Congress passed the Saccharin Study and Labeling Act, which required all products containing saccharin to

7 Nill, "History,"

8 "The Story of Sweet'N Low," Sweet'N Low, accessed February 17, 2014, <http://www.sweetnlow.com/brand>.

9 Wallace Janssen, "The Story of the Laws Behind the Labels," US Food and Drug Administration, accessed February 17, 2014, <http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/WhatWeDo/History/Overviews/ucm056044.htm>.

10 "Epidemiological Studies of Saccharin: Addendum", 1977, <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk3/1977/7702/770213.PDF>.

11 Richard Merrill, "Regulating Carcinogens in Food: A Legislator's Guide to the Food Safety Provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act," *Michigan Law Review* 77, (1978): 191-195. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1287920>.

nclude a warning label, declaring the product as a carcinogen in animals.¹² In 1981, despite these precautions, the National Toxicology Program described saccharin as “reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen based on sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in animals.”¹³ With the ominous labels, saccharin lost much of its popularity and demand. For G. D. Searle, this ban marked the beginning of a golden opportunity to take control of the artificial sweetener market with their new product, aspartame.

An Accidental Discovery Leads to a Gold Mine

In December 1965, James Schlatter unintentionally discovered aspartame and his company, G. D. Searle, immediately began testing the chemical hoping for success. Aspartame is an odorless powder made up of two amino acids, L-aspartic acid and L-phenylalanine and was found to be one hundred eighty times sweeter than sugar, with few calories. Although aspartame was not as sweet as its former competitor saccharin, its creators hoped to market it as a safer alternative. G. D. Searle published the findings in *Science Magazine* in 1970.¹⁴ While other sugar substitutes were being scrutinized for links with cancer, Searle wanted aspartame to be approved so it could break into this competitive, lucrative market. A memo written within the company explained their strategy of getting aspartame approved: “The basic philosophy of our approach to food and drugs should be to try to get them to say ‘Yes,’...this would also help bring them into subconscious spirit of participation.”¹⁵

G. D. Searle applied for the first FDA approval of aspartame on March 5, 1973, and Dr. Martha M. Freeman of the FDA Division of Metabolic and Endocrine Drug Products was not impressed. In an FDA memorandum, she expressed her concern with the studies conducted, especially the single dose studies. According to Dr. Freeman, results from single dose testing could not generate accurate predictions of regular consumption. Freeman concluded that the

12 Times Staff, “A History of Saccharin,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 2010. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/27/health/la-he-nutrition-lab-saccharin-timelin20101227>.

13 “Saccharin,” National Toxicology Program, accessed, February 17, 2014, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1637197/>

14 Marion R. Cloninger and Ruth E. Baldwin, “Aspartylphenylalanine Methyl Ester: A Low-Calorie Sweetener,” *Science* 170 (1970): 81-82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1730176>.

15 Gold, “Recall Aspartame.”

information submitted was insufficient evidence of clinical safety.¹⁶ In 1974, the FDA rejected Freeman's recommendation and approved aspartame for use in dry foods.

While the FDA found many irregularities in G. D. Searle's sloppy reports, the approval was granted based on an assumption of safety since the chemical makeup of aspartame included two naturally occurring amino acids found in the human body.¹⁷ Even with naturally occurring ingredients, not everyone was convinced of the new sugar substitute's safety. The simple assumption of safety without scientific evidence was not sufficient proof for many doctors. Neuroscientist Dr. John Olney and consumer attorney James Turner were appalled by the approval and immediately filed a formal objection to the authorization. Dr. Olney had dedicated his life to brain damage research after graduating from Washington University School of Medicine.¹⁸ Turner represented businesses and consumers in cases regarding food, drug, health, and environmental regulations.¹⁹ Working together, they strongly opposed the approval of aspartame for use in dry foods and demanded an appeal. Dr. Olney and Turner were especially concerned with aspartame's potential for causing brain damage and other harmful effects in children. They did not feel significant research in either of those fields had been conducted. Without indisputable evidence of safety, these specialists were not comfortable with this product being on the market.²⁰ While the FDA did find discrepancies in the studies, they concluded that the problems did not provide adequate cause to overturn the safety results.²¹

In 1977, aspartame was pulled from market until the completion of an FDA inquiry questioning the safety results documented in G. D. Searle's studies. Richard Merrill, FDA Chief Counsel, suggested

16 Martha M. Freeman, "The Role of Clinical Guidelines in Research: FDA's Viewpoint," *The Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* 17 (1977): 682-685.

17 "NutraSweet-Not So Neat," *Off Our Backs* 14, no. 8 (1984): 8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25794461>.

18 John Olney, "Medicine Alumni Society: Alumni Interview," The University of Iowa, accessed, February 16, 2014, <http://www.healthcare.uiowa.edu/alumni/interviews/olney.john.html>.

19 Swankin and Turner: Attorneys at Law, "James S. Turner," accessed February 16, 2014,, <http://www.swankin-turner.com/jim.html>.

20 "Controversy Over New Sweetener," *Science News* 116, no. 6 (1979) 103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3964327>.

21 US Food and Drug Administration, Food Additive Approval Process Followed for Aspartame, June 1987, <http://archive.gao.gov/d28t5/133460.pdf>.

a grand jury be appointed to further investigate the company's shady past. The FDA unit began examining fifteen studies: nine were deemed crucial, objectors suggested three, and the last three were chosen at random. A common theme among the studies was a lack of quality control. The research was not uniformly performed and reviewed, causing the data to be extremely inconsistent and inaccurate. Lab rat feeding methods involved serving non-homogeneous samples where the aspartame was not dissolved in the food and could be separated and avoided by the subjects. Since the food sample was not homogeneous, the rats often ate around the aspartame, skewing the results. Another problem noted with the data was missing tissue samples lost during autolysis.²² Omitted data in research is an immediate red flag, even when the results of the missing findings cannot be determined. Lastly, one study claimed that one researcher conducted 329 fetal examinations in two days. The FDA team found this feat impossible if done adequately and accurately. The main concerns regarding all fifteen studies surrounded missing details in reports and the variable conditions of testing. The FDA decided to appoint an independent organization to further investigate the irregularities and reliability of Searle's studies concerning safety.²³

Under Merrill's request, United States Federal Attorney Samuel Skinner was designated to head the investigation into the irregularities found in G. D. Searle's studies. The five year statute of limitations was quickly approaching, however, so the investigation needed to be done rapidly. After the statute of limitations ran out, the investigation and any possible penalty could not be pursued. Skinner was appointed to act quickly and efficiently on the case in order to reveal the truth about aspartame's safety. In the midst of the investigation, the law firm Sidley Austin, G. D. Searle's attorneys, approached Skinner and offered him a position in their company. Through persuasion and financial compensation, Sidley Austin managed to convince Skinner to relinquish his current position within the federal attorney's office, leaving the investigation without a leader. Lacking an immediate replacement, the trial was stalled and eventually

²² Autolysis is defined as the self-destruction of cells by enzymes found within the body. Healthy cells through the process of autolysis will often digest deformed or injured cells that are no longer able to absorb nutrients.

²³ Milton J. Socolar, "Report to the Honorable Howard M. Metzenbaum. U.S. Senate: Food and Drug Administration Food Additive Approval Process Followed for Aspartame" (GAO/HED-87-46) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 1987), <http://archive.gao.gov/d28t5/133460.pdf>.

dismissed after the statute of limitations expired.²⁴

Rumsfeld Hired to Save G.D. Searle

Aware that they faced adversity, G. D. Searle hired Donald Rumsfeld as their new CEO with hopeful anticipation that his political power and leadership could revamp the company. Rumsfeld was no stranger to Washington. In 1962, he ran for Congress in the 13th Congressional district of Illinois on the Republican ticket and won in a landslide. During his time in Congress, colleagues described him as a sharp and aggressive politician. He quickly grew tired of his congressional position and after holding other posts became the youngest secretary of defense in 1975. When Democrat Jimmy Carter took office in 1977, Rumsfeld was left without a job and decided to accept the position with G. D. Searle.²⁵ With multiple connections in Washington, Rumsfeld promised to stop at nothing until the company was out of trouble and thriving once again. Part of Rumsfeld's plan was selling off underperforming divisions and focusing on products that were in high demand. He placed a big focus on aspartame, but approval was necessary before the sugar substitute could become a moneymaker.²⁶

Following the release of the Bressler Report in 1977, Searle was once again under the scrutiny of the FDA. An FDA task force headed by Jerome Bressler examined three crucial studies and found an abundance of questionable evidence and indisputable neglect by Searle's scientists. Delayed autopsies left many dead rats with insufficient standards of quality for valid observation, so they were simply discarded. In the reports, several animals were noted dead and then referenced again as alive weeks later. An infectious disease, which plagued many of the animals in question, remained unreported. The pathology details of thirty rats submitted to the FDA were not in agreement with the documentation recorded during the actual study. Also, the animals studied were not permanently labeled, allowing numerous instances of inaccurate documentation and uncertainty. In one experiment, the details of fifteen fetuses examined were absent in

²⁴ Ed Metcalfe, "Sweet Talking," *The Ecologist* 30 (2000): 16. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/743764035>.

²⁵ Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007) 51-75.

²⁶ Stephen Chapman, "Can Rumsfeld Add Another Line To A Strong Resume?" *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1987, C3. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-02-15/news/8701120628_1_donald-rumsfeld-white-house-secret-service.

the reports submitted to the FDA. Standards and control groups for each study were not set until after many experiments had begun, and several protocols changed midway through the examinations.²⁷ None of these major discrepancies were reported to the FDA. Jerome Bressler reported to the Senate:

Because of the importance of this study, why wasn't greater care taken? The study is highly questionable because of our findings. Why didn't Searle, with their scientists, closely evaluate this, knowing fully well that the whole society, from the youngest to the elderly, from the sick to the unsick, everyone will have access to this product.²⁸

The results of the Bressler Report led the FDA to launch a new investigation to corroborate its conclusions. An FDA toxicologist, Jacqueline Verrett, led a five member task force. This team was faced with the difficult task of proving that G.D. Searle purposefully manipulated evidence in order to gain FDA approval of aspartame. The problem Verrett encountered was that the experiments and data were so flawed and inconsistent that no specific incidences of misconduct could be identified. Although the validity of many studies was clearly uncertain, no intentional falsification of data could be proven. Regardless of G. D. Searle's inadequate experiments, the FDA was unable to indisputably substantiate that the company had deliberately submitted inaccurate facts. According to her reports before the Senate, Verrett was frustrated by the FDA's inability to act based on the findings in the Bressler Report. She explained that her assignment was not to question the validity of the data submitted by G. D. Searle, but to prove intentional deceit by Searle's scientists. Due to the substantial number of inconsistencies during their research, pinpointing specific details of falsified information was impossible. She concluded by stating that regardless of the motives behind the conflicting and incomplete data, she firmly believed that the safety of aspartame had not been satisfactorily confirmed and should be studied further.²⁹

Under pressure by Olney and Turner, the FDA finally held a public board of inquiry in 1979 to review health claims concerning aspartame. The two issues under scrutiny were whether aspartame

27 Gold, "Recall Aspartame," FDA, <http://www.fda.gov>.

28 Jerome Bressler, interview by Robert A. Tucker, History of the US Food and Drug Administration, April 23, 1999, <http://www.fda.gov>.

29 Gold, "Recall Aspartame."

increased the risk of brain damage or mental retardation and if ingestion of aspartame led to brain tumors in animals, namely rats. After analyzing the issues, the board was to decide if this additive should continue to be used in foods, and if the approval was not revoked, if warning labels should be required on products containing aspartame. The board met three times and discussed both issues, placing emphasis on addressing the risks of aspartame as a known carcinogen. With insufficient evidence of aspartame's safety, the board concluded that the artificial sweetener should remain off the market until further tests were conducted to confirm adequate safety standards before approval was granted.³⁰ The board was particularly alarmed by two particular studies known as E33 and E70. In E33, 320 rats were fed aspartame. Compared to the control group, the rats exposed to the chemical suffered from a significantly higher number of brain tumors. E70 revealed abnormally high amounts of brain tumors in both the aspartame and control groups, leading the board to believe that both groups had exposure to the substance. Based upon the evidence available, in 1980 the Public Board of Inquiry unanimously agreed to reject the approval of aspartame until further testing could be completed.³¹

The Revolving Door of FDA Employees Begins to Turn

As Rumsfeld promised, he was not opposed to using political influence in order to help his company. As a member of Ronald Reagan's transition team, his power in Washington was once again evident.³² Reagan was sworn into office on January 20, 1981, and the next day G. D. Searle resubmitted their request for approval of aspartame as a food additive. By using his political prestige and experience shortly after the new President's inauguration, Rumsfeld encouraged Reagan to replace the current FDA commissioner, Jere Goyan. Reagan, under the guidance of Rumsfeld, appointed Arthur Hull Hayes Jr. as the new FDA commissioner in April 1981. Hayes had no experience with food additives before accepting his job with the

30 Todd R. Smyth, "The FDA's Public Board of Inquiry and the Aspartame Decision," *Indiana Law Journal* 58 (1983): 633-635. <http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2268&context=ilj>.

31 "Controversy Over New Sweetener," *Science News* 116, no. 6 (1979): 103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3964327>.

32 Established in 1963, The Presidential Transition Act of 1963 allowed for a transition team to be appointed for each new president to aide the transfer of power from one administration to the next.

FDA. Despite his lack of qualifications, Hayes did have a relationship with Rumsfeld from working together on chemical warfare for the Department of Defense. Just two months after his appointment on July 15, 1981, Hayes disregarded the unanimous decision and recommendations of the Public Board of Inquiry by approving aspartame for use in dry foods.³³ Hayes did admit that he wished more studies had been completed, but he did not think there was enough evidence present to delay the manufacturing of aspartame any longer. "I'm not prepared to say there is no risk from aspartame, but I thought it had been demonstrated that there was not a significant risk," Hayes concluded.³⁴ G. D. Searle immediately began marketing aspartame as a safe alternative to saccharin. Products containing aspartame did need to be clearly marked, but unlike saccharin, did not require a warning label stating possible side effects. Even with their recent success, G. D. Searle was not satisfied with the approval for dry use only and immediately began the process to obtain approval for use in carbonated beverages as well.³⁵

G. D. Searle filed a petition on September 27, 1982, for the use of aspartame in carbonated beverages. In public statements, Searle declared that the chemical had been tested and found stable in soft drinks. At the time of the petition, South Africa and Canada had already approved the use of aspartame for human consumption in carbonated drinks.³⁶ Although several objections were brought to the attention of the FDA, those protesters were dismissed and denied a public hearing due to lack of evidence regarding its safety. The courts argued that safety issues were resolved during the initial approval of aspartame in 1981 and did not need to be revisited.³⁷ In 1983, without

33 "Low-Cal Aspartame: The New Kid in Town," *Science News* 120, no. 4 (1981): 54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3965996>.

34 Jeffery Smith, "Aspartame Approved Despite Risks," *Science* 213, no. 4511 (1981): 986-987. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1687044>.

35 Eva Hoffman and Margot Slade, "Ideas & Trends: In Summary F.D.A. Approves A Competitor For Saccharin," *New York Times*, July 19, 1981, E22. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/19/weekinreview/ideas-trends-in-summary-fda-approves-a-competitor-for-saccharin.html>.

36 "Searle Sweetener," *New York Times*, September 28, 1982, D10. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/28/business/searle-sweetener.html>.

37 Lars Noah, "Legal Aspects of the Food Additive Approval Process," in *Enhancing the Regulatory Decision-Making Approval Process for Direct Food Ingredient Technologies*, (Washington DC: The National Academy Press, 1999), 16-27. <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record.id=9453&page=39>.

significant evidence against the safety of aspartame in liquid form, Hayes approved its use in beverages and syrup.³⁸

Several months after the approval of aspartame in liquid form, Arthur Hull Hayes Jr. resigned as commissioner of the FDA after being personally investigated in connection with irregularities in his travel vouchers.³⁹ Hayes was found to be taking benefits, namely the use of a private jet owned by General Food Corporation, a major distributor and user of NutraSweet. Accepting incentives from a company so closely related to his recent approval caused the FDA and many of his colleagues to question his neutrality and integrity. In 1986, Hayes accepted a position with E. M. Industries and served as a Senior Scientific Consultant with Burson-Marsteller. The public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller represented NutraSweet and several major users of aspartame, but Hayes claimed to not have discussed aspartame during his time at the company and no substantial evidence of misconduct could be documented.⁴⁰

From the initial approval of aspartame in 1974 until the final approval in 1983, many changes in FDA personnel occurred. Hayes and Rumsfeld were not the only two officials to be simultaneously involved in government and big business. Several officials involved in key decisions regarding the status of aspartame left their jobs with the FDA and accepted positions with companies closely linked to aspartame and its production. Sherwin Gardner signed for its approval in 1974 and resigned from the FDA in 1979 to take a job as Vice President of Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., a large distributor of aspartame. Stuart M. Pape served as a Special Assistant to the FDA Commissioner from 1976 to 1979 but later left to take a position with the law firm of Patton, Boggs, and Blow, a firm that worked closely with the National Soft Drink Association, many times addressing aspartame. Dr. Howard R. Roberts worked as the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Foods. During his employment, he worked closely with the Public Board of Inquiry in 1980 and personally

38 Jane E. Brody, "Judging Safety of Aspartame in Soft Drinks," *New York Times*, July 13, 1983, C1. <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/13/garden/personal-health-judging-safety-of-aspartame-in-soft-drinks.html>.

39 "National Report: FDA Commissioner Resigns Under Fire," *Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1983, 8. Proquest Historical Newspapers (175962550).

40 David P. Baine, "Report to the Honorable Howard Metzenbaum, US Senate. Food and Drug Administration: Six Former HHS Involvement in Aspartame's Approval" (GAO/HRD-86-109BR) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 1986) <http://www.gao.gov/assets/80/75806.pdf>.

reviewed G. D. Searle's studies pertaining to aspartame safety. In 1978, Roberts left to become Vice President for Science and Technology at the National Soft Drink Association. Robert A. Dormer was formerly the trial attorney for Health and Human Services between 1976 and 1979, participating in several cases relating to aspartame. After leaving his position, Dormer was hired by the law firm of Hyman, Phelps, and McNara, a firm that provided legal advice to G.D. Searle. All four of the men contacted the FDA after their resignations on behalf of their new companies, but only Roberts, Pape and Dormer were confirmed to have discussed aspartame. Ultimately, these men accepted prestigious positions with companies they had communicated with and assisted during their employment with the FDA. The seemingly quick trust and responsibility given to these men by their new employers further reveals and emphasizes the fine line between big business and government officials.⁴¹

Aspartame's Approval Impacts the Sweetener Market

Despite the possible corruption involved with its approval, aspartame's popularity grew exponentially. By 1983, the aspartame sugar substitute branded Equal was dominating the table-top sweetener market with a net worth of \$150 million, surpassing former saccharin-based leader Sweet'N Low. Soft drink companies took notice of the new artificial sweetener and adjusted accordingly. The advantages of switching sugar substitutes included the fact that, unlike saccharin, aspartame required no safety label in 1983. Also, aspartame appealed to diabetics because its protein composition did not require insulin to be metabolized. Lastly, this substitute tasted more like sugar than other sweeteners and cost a fraction of the price of pure sugar. Even so, aspartame was still considerably more expensive than its competitor saccharin. To maximize profits, Coca-Cola and Royal Crown announced they would use a combination of the two artificial sweeteners in their low calorie products. In 1984, just one year after complete approval was granted, 6.9 million pounds of aspartame were consumed in the US.⁴² A decade earlier, Searle's stock had plummeted after cancer became associated with aspartame. After hiring Donald Rumsfeld, who influenced aspartame's final approval in 1982, G.D.

41 US Food and Drug Administration, Six Former HHS Employees' Involvement, <http://archive.gao.gov/d4t4/130780.pdf>.

42 Pamela G. Hollie, "Aspartame Builds a Market," New York Times, September 3, 1983, 29. <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/09/03/business/aspartame-builds-a-market.html>.

Searle regained their momentum. NutraSweet quickly became a highly profitable portion of G. D. Searle and between 1981 and 1982, sales increased from \$13 million to \$74 million. By 1983, sales reached \$336 million, and NutraSweet was responsible for thirty-four percent of Searle's profits that year. As the market for diet products rapidly expanded, consumers became less influenced by safety concerns and G. D. Searle thrived financially.⁴³

While many US consumers were enthralled with the new artificial sweetener, some skeptics remained unconvinced of its safety and continued to actively research the effects of aspartame, especially in liquid form. Dr. Woodrow Monte dedicated his life to studying food ingredients and products and their impact on human health. After conducting several experiments at Arizona State University, Monte found that aspartame, specifically in unstable, liquid forms, caused health dangers far beyond what was documented. He filed an objection against aspartame's approval in soft drinks due to links with methanol poisoning. Ingesting as little as two teaspoons of methanol can be fatal in humans, yet Monte found that methanol is a component found in aspartame. When consumed, methanol is released into the small intestine after the hydrolysis of the methyl group breaks down the dipeptide. Within hours after consumption, approximately ten percent of the aspartame consumed is converted to methanol and enters the blood stream. Additionally, since aspartame in liquid form is not stable, sodas in storage have the ability to decompose on their own and release methanol, especially when exposed to high temperatures. The methanol ingested during moderate aspartame consumption would be unlikely to cause death, but Monte explained that the amount found in just one liter of diet soda is significantly higher than the Environmental Protection Agency's daily limit recommendation.⁴⁴

Monte compared side effects of excessive exposure to methanol found in Public Health Service reports to the symptoms reported in complaints from aspartame users. After studying individuals exposed to environments with high methanol content, Public Health Services found that methanol exposure could lead to headaches, dizziness, numbness, and a multitude of vision problems. Hundreds of aspartame consumers reported similar symptoms to the Centers

43 "Searle (G.D.) & Co.," Encyclopedia of Chicago, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2839.html>.

44 Woodrow Monte, "Report Aspartame: Methanol and the Public Health," *Journal of Applied Nutrition* 36 (1984): 4. <http://dorway.com/doctors-speak-out/aspartame-methanol-the-public-health/>.

for Disease Control in Atlanta.⁴⁵ With this data, Monte was confident that the similarities were not coincidental. Though he recognized that drinking a diet soda occasionally, or even regularly, would not be lethal, the lack of long-term experiments documenting the effects of regular methanol consumption concerned him. Monte's findings led to his request for a public hearing regarding aspartame's safety in beverages.⁴⁶ After his findings spread throughout the Arizona State University community, G. D. Searle sent lobbyists to Arizona Legislators, causing Monte's request for a hearing to be denied. Searle responded to the findings by claiming that more naturally occurring methanol is released from fruits and vegetables than from aspartame. Monte retorted by explaining the methanol released naturally from fruits and vegetables is also accompanied by a release of ethanol, which counteracts the methanol in the body, making the consumption far less dangerous. Aspartame decomposition contains no ethanol to counteract the methanol.⁴⁷ Without the support of the FDA, however, Monte was unable to pursue his allegations. Even so, his research and conclusions were widely noticed, encouraging the government to once again investigate the safety of aspartame. Even today, Monte is still conducting research and publishing books and articles to inform the general public of the potential health risks of aspartame.

Safety Concerns Arise Once Again

Ohio Senator Howard Metzenbaum proposed the Aspartame Safety Act of 1985, which required a disclosure of the quantity of aspartame present in any product. Known for his liberal views and support of labor unions, Metzenbaum was dissatisfied with the way big business manipulated aspartame's safety approval. Metzenbaum's motivation for introducing the bill was based upon Monte's findings. He thought warning consumers of the amount of aspartame found in food products could help educate the public without banning the substance altogether. With the existence of several lawsuits against G. D. Searle, along with hundreds of complaints filed to the Centers for Disease Control and the potential for brain damage found after consuming large amounts of aspartame, Metzenbaum strongly

⁴⁵ Daniel P. Puzo, "Complaints on Aspartame Lead to Nationwide Investigation," Los Angeles Times, July 5, 1984, 11. Proquest Historical Newspapers (153917671).

⁴⁶ Monte, "Report Aspartame," 4.

⁴⁷ Nancy Yoshihara, "NutraSweet: A Big Taste of Success," Los Angeles Times, April 12, 1985, B1, http://articles.latimes.com/1985-04-12/news/mn-7766_1_sugar-substitute.

emphasized the need for adequate labeling. Unfortunately, after being sent to the Senate floor, the bill failed by a 68-27 vote.⁴⁸

When questioned about the backlash and complaints from users of aspartame, G. D. Searle responded that they actually expected more complaints than they received. Out of 70 million users, only six hundred consumers formally filed complaints. In all interviews referencing the harmful side effects caused by aspartame, G.D. Searle's employees dismissed the symptoms as a coincidence and always supported the chemical's safety. In 1985, Dr. Sturtevant of G.D. Searle told the *New York Times*, "We have no objection to the FDA requiring quantitative labeling of food ingredients in general, but we do object to FDA singling out aspartame because there is no scientific evidence suggesting it need be."⁴⁹

Even without support from the FDA, skeptics of aspartame have continued to research its undesirable effects throughout the last few decades. In an article in the *Star Tribune*, the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences revealed that their scientists had requested grants to further investigate aspartame without the influence of the NutraSweet Company. These requests were filed between 1980 and 1994, but the FDA denied all four proposals because officials insisted the product was already proven safe and unless new scientific evidence was brought forward (extra tests would be redundant.) When interviewed about the subject, David Rall, who worked for the NIEHS for 19 years, found the opposition of further safety studies by the FDA simply irresponsible. Rall and many other scientists agreed that updated testing on such a popular product was absolutely necessary to ensure safety.⁵⁰ Dr. John Olney also continued his research and in 1996 published his results in the *Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology*. Those studies documented a startling increase in brain tumors and brain cancer since the approval of aspartame's use in carbonated beverages in 1983. Olney was convinced of the link between the two.⁵¹ Without support from

48 David Shribman, "Senate Continues Block of FDA Ban on Saccharin Use," *Wall Street Journal*, May 8, 1985, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRI-1985/html/CRI-1985-SACCHARIN-STUDY-AND-LABELING-ACT.htm>.

49 Marian Burros, "A Sweetener's Effects: New Questions Raised," *New York Times*, July 3, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/07/03/garden/a-sweetener-s-effects-new-questions-raised.html>.

50 Greg Gordon, "FDA Resisted Proposals To Test Aspartame," *Star Tribune*, November 22, 1996.

51 John Olney, "Increasing Brain Tumor Rates: Is There a Link to Aspartame,"

the FDA, however, much of the general public remained unaware of these findings.

Although a great deal of controversy continues to surround aspartame, health concerns have failed to hinder the success of G. D. Searle. Indeed, NutraSweet has become an international billion-dollar company. NutraSweet's goal was always to market its product directly to consumers with positive advertising. Their tactics have been wildly successful. In America, approximately 17,100,000 pounds of aspartame were consumed in 1987, and a majority of that intake was in the form of diet carbonated beverages. After 1987, NutraSweet stopped releasing consumption data to the USDA.⁵² Before NutraSweet's patent on aspartame ended in December 1992, the company carefully negotiated with Coca-Cola Co. and Pepsi-Cola Co. to convince them both to sign a contract promising that NutraSweet would remain their preferred manufacturer of aspartame for use in their diet beverages. This contract guaranteed that NutraSweet would maintain their monopoly on aspartame production even after their patent expired. According to Richard Nelson, a spokesperson for NutraSweet, by 1992 soft drinks were responsible for seventy-five percent of the aspartame consumed in the United States. A contract with the two largest soft drink companies solidified the prolonged success of NutraSweet. Today on NutraSweet's website, the company brags of the sweetener's availability in over 100 countries and its consumption by 250 million people.⁵³ Even with the introduction of a new sugar substitute branded Splenda in 2000, aspartame still dominates the market.

Although little legal action has been taken against aspartame recently, the growing popularity of the internet over the past twenty years has enabled consumers to become more aware of its possible harmful side effects. In 1995, an internet hoax was created to warn consumers of the dangers of aspartame. The website and emails were highly inaccurate and biased, but the email sparked conversation about possible symptoms related to the consumption of the substance.⁵⁴ Numerous blogs and websites today are committed

Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology 55 (1996): 1115-1123, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8939194>.

52 Janny Scott, "The Promises and Perils of Designer Foods," Los Angeles Times, October 8, 1989, Q57. <http://articles.latimes.com/1989-10-08/magazine/tm-46.1.food-engineering>.

53 "NutraSweet Overview," The NutraSweet Company, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.nutrasweet.com/company.asp>.

54 "Aspartame Controversy," Wikipedia, accessed February 20, 2014, <http://>

to providing “facts” about it, and while they can provide valuable information, many are still plagued with biases. If the reader can successfully navigate between the facts and embellishment, these websites can be useful resources. Janet Starr Hall, writer of *Sweet Poison*, has dedicated her life to warning the public about aspartame through her book and website. While her website is obviously anti-aspartame, she strives to utilize facts to validate her claims.⁵⁵

Technology has exposed American society to an infinite number of daily dietary choices. The nation’s food footprint has expanded to lengths that previous generations could not imagine. With the plethora of opportunities and options, consumers must make educated decisions about what they put into their bodies. This paper illustrates that although the government and the FDA is charged with keeping unsafe products off the market, some still slip through the cracks. No system is perfect and big business will continue to influence government decisions if citizens remain uninvolved and choose to look the other way. Unfortunately, just because a product is legal does not necessarily mean it is safe, especially in large quantities. By being aware of and educated about the food they eat, hopefully people can successfully eat healthier and limit the amount of unsafe chemicals in food. As Michael F. Jacobson, Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, stated in 2006, “For a chemical that is used by hundreds of millions of people around the world, it should be absolutely safe, there shouldn’t be a cloud of doubt.”⁵⁶

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspartame_controversy.

55 Janet Starr Hull, “Aspartame Dangers Revealed,” *Sweet Poison*, accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.sweetpoison.com>.

56 Melanie Warner, “The Lowdown on Sweet?” *New York Times*, February 12, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/12/business/yourmoney/12sweet.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0.

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THE SPANISH INFLUENZA IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

1918-1919

Rachel Goatley

The Spanish Influenza of 1918 is widely regarded by historians as the “forgotten pandemic.”¹ Though it killed between thirty million and one hundred million individuals, around five percent of the world’s population, the Spanish Flu has been largely ignored in the historical discussion of worldwide disease.² Comparable to the immense mortality of the Black Death on the Eurasian continent in the fourteenth century, the Spanish Flu did not discriminate among its victims. According to historian Alfred Crosby, “the flu...ignored the differences between rural and urban, patrician and peasant, capitalist and proletarian, and struck them all down in similar proportions.”³ The prevailing question remains: if this deadly virus afflicted such a large portion of the world population, why has the memory of this global pandemic been erased? One possible answer to this debate lies in another global event that occurred simultaneously with the outbreak of the Spanish Influenza—World War I. A large percentage of the global population lived in countries embroiled in the war. In the fall of 1918, when the deadliest wave of influenza began creeping across

1 Alfred Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic: the Influenza of 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

2 Paul Kupperberg, *The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919* (New York: Chelsea House, 2008), 64.

3 Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 323.

the continents, members of vulnerable populations were more interested in broadcasts of battles than news of the flu. Though the fatality of World War I gripped the attention of nations across the globe, the Spanish Influenza of 1918 actually reaped much more devastating effects among international populations without the aid of firearms or tanks.

Historiography existing by epidemiologists and other researchers have focused upon the Spanish Influenza of 1918 in a national or international context. This broad interpretation of history allows historians to examine the immense impact of the flu on the global population, but fails to create a local history of the disease among different cultures. In addition, examining pandemics from solely national or international perspectives only presents the outbreak as a disease of the masses, rather than a volatile individual experience. Some historians, such as Alfred Crosby, even suggest that local history of the Spanish Influenza is inconclusive or unproductive. He explains, "Their chronicles are poorly kept and usually no more than anecdotal."⁴ This statement is arguably false, as evidenced by the well-documented events of the Spanish Influenza in local newspapers such as those published in Southwest Virginia. While local newspapers did not display specific statistics of the Spanish Influenza, they did provide a thorough understanding of the spread of disease throughout a particular region. Local history also demonstrates the efficacy of municipal governments in the battle against the flu. According to historian John M. Barry, "some local authorities might take some action [against the flu], but no national figure could."⁵ Unlike national and state officials, local officials, especially those in Southwest Virginia, possessed the prime concoction of smaller constituencies and fluctuating power. This granted their preventative health measures greater effectiveness, and contributed to the quelling of the epidemic in the region.

The particular strain of flu that infected the global population in 1918 was unusually severe. This is demonstrated not only by the mortality rates of those infected, but also in the symptoms displayed by the sick. For example, many ill individuals experienced violent epistaxis, or nosebleeds. One infected young woman spewed blood from

4 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 66.

5 John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: the Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Viking, 2004), 257.

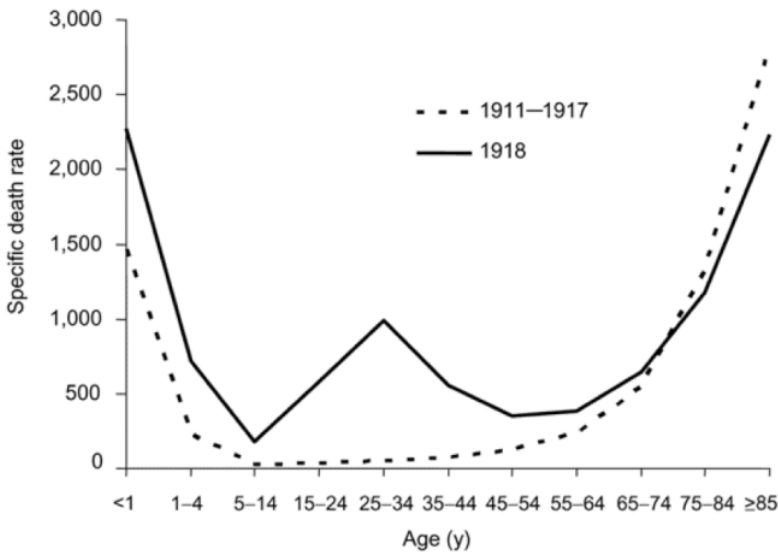


Figure 1: “Normal Flu Mortality Rate Compared to 1918 Outbreak,” Kenyon University, Web, Accessed Dec. 7, 2013. <http://microbewiki.kenyon.edu/index.php/File:Flu-Picture2.png>

her nose one foot across her bed linens.⁶ The destruction of infected patients’ lungs was also terrifically severe. According to historian Tom Quinn, “some victims coughed up as much as six pints of pus a day.”⁷ Following death, autopsies often revealed that patients coughed so hard that they tore apart abdominal muscles and rib cartilage.⁸ Yet another cruel symptom of the influenza was the secondary disease associated with the strain, which most often acted as the cause of death—pneumonia. The form of pneumonia accompanying the Spanish Flu often featured a blueness of the skin, termed *heliotrope cyanosis* in the medical world.⁹ This was later determined to be caused by a lack of oxygen in the blood, “as patients literally drowned from fluid in their lungs.”¹⁰

The Spanish Influenza of 1918 was also unprecedentedly lethal. Unlike the majority of past strains of the influenza, the mutated virus

6 Richard Collier, *Plague of the Spanish Lady: the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1974), 68.

7 Tom Quinn, *Flu: A Social History of Influenza* (London: New Holland Publishers, 2008), 132.

8 Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 2.

9 Susan Kingsley Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919* (Boston: Beford/St. Martin’s, 2013) 2.

10 Nancy K. Bristow, *American Pandemic: Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45.

of the Spanish Influenza was unusually deadly among young adults (Figure 1).¹¹ According to Susan Kingsley Kent, “unlike its predecessors, which tended to take infants and the elderly, this strain of influenza preferred men and women aged fifteen to forty-five, victims in the prime of their lives.”¹² In his book *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, Alfred Crosby presents a great analogy between the Spanish Influenza and the concurrent conflict of 1918: “like war, it preferred young adults as victims.”¹³ The deaths of so many able-bodied adults had drastic social and economic ramifications around the globe.

The Spanish Influenza of 1918 left no area of the world unaffected. At the time, contemporaries mistakenly referred to this deadly strain of influenza as the “Spanish Influenza” or the “Spanish Grippe” because they believed the virus to have evolved in Spain.¹⁴ Restrictions on the press of nations involved in World War I contributed to the misnomer. In the earliest months of the virus in the spring of 1918, the Spanish press cited an outbreak of influenza among the civilian population and the infection of the monarch, King Alphonse XIII.¹⁵ At the time, Spain was one of the few nations releasing international news reports. According to historian Tom Quinn, “within the censorship of the press of combatant nations across war-torn Europe, the only country that publicly mentioned the new disease was neutral Spain.”¹⁶

The assumption that the influenza of 1918 emerged in Spain was far removed from reality. Recent historians and epidemiologists actually traced the origins of this particular strain of flu to a single physician’s office in the United States, located in Haskell County, Kansas, in the southwestern portion of the state.¹⁷ With the aid of primary sources from local newspapers and manuscript collections, historians even pinpointed the initial advancement of the Spanish Influenza between civilian and military populations. Over the holiday season of 1917-1918, a young soldier named Dean Nilson visited his family in

11 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 3.

12 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic* 2.

13 Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 21.

14 Collier, *Spanish Lady*, 40.

15 Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 171.

16 Quinn, *Flu: A Social History*, 125.

17 Kuppererg, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 23.

Haskell County where he unknowingly contracted the flu.¹⁸ He then carried the virus to Camp Funston, now known as Fort Riley, an army base located three hundred miles away.¹⁹ From there, he infected many fellow troops who were drafted into the United States Army and sent overseas. These debilitated soldiers then spread the flu amongst other military bases and eventually to the front lines in Europe.

Using a combination of historical and public health sources, scholars have tracked the progression of the virus, and now divide the flu season of 1918-1919 into three distinct waves of disease. Of these waves, the second was the most deadly.²⁰ After abating in severity over the warm spring and summer months, the Spanish Influenza mysteriously mutated in Europe, becoming an especially virulent strain of the disease in early fall. This second wave of the Spanish Influenza emerged in the United States in August 1918. On August 12, the *Bergensfiord*, a Norwegian vessel, arrived in New York Harbor with two hundred cases of influenza onboard.²¹ New York authorities refused to quarantine the ship, allowing the infected sailors to disembark. This action proved to be deadly. By August 27, the influenza appeared on the Commonwealth Pier in Boston—a major receiving port for military personnel during World War I—and infected nearly seven thousand soldiers.²² From there, the influenza spread to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, where the epidemic exploded. By October, cases of the Spanish Influenza among the United States population rose so precipitously that they interrupted the monthly draft contingent. On October 7, 1918, the Provost Marshal General of the United States Army cancelled the home-front conscription of 142,000 young men.²³ Though chief military personnel postponed the draft of over 100,000 soldiers due to the flu epidemic, President Woodrow Wilson refused to halt the transit of troops to the front lines in Europe.²⁴ This action most certainly facilitated the further spread of the second wave of

18 Barry, *The Great Influenza*, 95.

19 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 52.

20 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 44.

21 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 29.

22 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 39.

23 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 49.

24 "The Great Pandemic: Woodrow Wilson," United States Department of Health and Human Services, accessed November 3, 2013, <http://www.flu.gov/pandemic/history/1918/biographies/wilson/>.

disease into virgin territories, decimating both civilian and military populations abroad. At the same time, the Spanish influenza continued to ravage most regions of the United States.

The Spanish Influenza first arrived in the state of Virginia in September 1918 at the army base Camp Lee (now known as Fort Lee) in Prince George County near Petersburg, Virginia.²⁵ According to Alfred Crosby, the influenza dispersed from Camp Devens to Camp Lee around September 23.²⁶ From Camp Lee, local soldiers disseminated the influenza virus to Southwest Virginia during hometown visits. The Spanish Influenza first emerged in Tazewell County during the week of October 4, while in Wise County it appeared sometime before October 16. The transmission of the Spanish Influenza to soldiers from the area was significant because young men drafted into the United States military from rural regions often suffered worse during disease epidemics than soldiers from urban areas due to their weaker immune systems. For historian Tom Quinn, “in the USA it was noted that raw recruits from army camps who arrived from remote rural areas were far more likely to be affected severely by influenza and die.”²⁷ Thus, the advancement of the violent influenza to bucolic counties also proved to be especially lethal among nonmilitary citizens within the region of Southwest Virginia.

Similar to most other regions in the United States, Southwest Virginia was struck by the deadly second wave of the Spanish Influenza in the fall of 1918. Transmitted from army camps near Appalachia, the flu even spread to the most remote, rural areas of the region. In order to disseminate knowledge concerning the prevention of the spread of the deadly influenza, public health officials in the United States employed the information medium with the highest broadest audience—newspapers.²⁸ Local health officials in Southwest Virginia also used small town newspapers to document the escalation and impact of the virus on the populations in the region. This case study on the flu’s significance in Southwest Virginia is based on such sources. The local newspapers of two counties in the area—*Big Stone Gap Post* in Wise County and *Clinch Valley News* in Tazewell County—provide

25 “Spanish Influenza,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 2, 1918, accessed November 7, 2013, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-02/ed-1/seq-1/>.

26 Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 4.

27 Quinn, *Flu: A Social History*, 135.

28 Bristow, *American Pandemic*, 106.

descriptions of prevention tactics, treatment, and the aftermath of the particularly fatal flu season of 1918-1919. These sources also furnish an intimate perspective on the effects of a global pandemic, such as economic burdens, public health measures, and government intervention, in one of the poorest regions of the country, largely ignored by historians of the United States.

Wise Country

The Spanish Influenza arrived in Wise County, Virginia, in October 1918. Located in extreme Southwest Virginia, Wise County sits on the Kentucky border. The largest town in the county during the influenza pandemic was Big Stone Gap, also the hub of the local newspaper in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the *Big Stone Gap Post*. The particularly virulent strain of Spanish Influenza was first mentioned in the *Post* on October 2, 1918. Editors warned of the impending emergence of the virus in Southwest Virginia: “Spanish influenza probably will soon be here, there, and everywhere.” This article designated influenza as a “spray-borne disease” spread by sneezes and coughs. It also suggested a simple prevention method commonly prescribed by the US Surgeon General at the time, Dr. Rupert Blue, who advised avoiding “crowded, ill ventilated places.” However, the most striking inclusion in the article from October 2 is the statement pertaining to the nature of seasonal influenza. The *Big Stone Gap Post* described the virus as a “seldom menace of life.” Clearly, the inhabitants of Wise County did not anticipate the enormity of the deadly flu season of 1918-1919.²⁹

Placed into historical context, the apathetic responses of both the newspaper editors and the local public health officials in Wise County were not unusual. In the early-twentieth century, influenza was a common, seasonal occurrence throughout not only Virginia, but the entire United States. Wise County clearly possessed experience with the flu, or “grippe,” as it was often called. As early as January 1917, the *Big Stone Gap Post* warned Virginians of the impending annual flu season. The Virginia Board of Health mentioned simple precautionary actions, such as breathing fresh air, and also promoted the evidence of germ theory.³⁰ In January the following year, the *Big Stone Gap Post* ran

29 “Spanish Influenza”.

30 “Respiratory Ills Killing 18 Daily,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Jan. 10, 1917, accessed November 7, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1917-01-10/ed-1/>

advertisements for “Rexall Cold Tablets,” a medication that promised to “arm...against Grippe, Influenza, Bronchitis, Cold in the head, Catarrh and Pneumonia.”³¹ Based on these newspaper clippings and the initial response of locals, the annual influenza outbreak in Southwest Virginia had never been as serious as the viral pandemic that struck in the fall of 1918.

One week following the initial lackadaisical acknowledgement of the Spanish Influenza in the local newspaper, the Board of Health in Wise County implemented much more serious prevention tactics to restrict the spread of the virus to the region. Adhering to advice outlined by Surgeon General Blue, on October 9 the local government closed nearly all public gathering places, especially churches, schools, and theaters.³² By October 16, precautionary measures became even more rigid as influenza finally reached the county. Following a town council meeting, the local government voted to allow hired civil servants to enforce the sanitary laws laid out by the Board of Health. According to the front page of the *Big Stone Gap Post*, “special officers will be employed to enforce the ordinance always in existence against spitting on the sidewalks, and to prevent the forming of crowds on the streets...or at any other point within the town limits.”³³ The local government even took a step further and granted permission for Boy Scouts to report violations against the ordinances and imposed fines ranging from ten to twenty-five dollars on offenders.³⁴ Members of the Wise County government were evidently beginning to understand the magnitude of the disease situation, and attempted to control unsanitary public actions.

The local Board of Health in Wise County adopted a variety of methods to spread information regarding the prevention of the flu. *The Big Stone Gap Post* not only published health warnings from Surgeon General Blue, but they also relayed information from the Red Cross.³⁵

seq-1/.

31 “Cure That Cold,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Jan. 2, 1918, accessed November 7, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-01-02/ed-1/seq-3/>.

32 “Stop Influenza,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 9, 1918, accessed November 7, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-09/ed-1/seq-1/>.

33 “NOTICE,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 16, 1918, accessed November 7, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-16/ed-1/seq-3/>.

34 “NOTICE,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 16, 1918.

35 “NOTICE,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 16, 1918.

One of the more unique forms of sanitation publicity employed by the State Board of Health of Virginia appeared in a newspaper article on November 13, 1918. This passage described the creation of an “Influenza Catechism” for school children. Described as an “attractive publication,” the State Board of Health created the guide “in the hope that youngsters...follow the simple precautions it offers in connection with the prevention of the ‘flu.’”³⁶ Another common tool used for the dissemination of knowledge about the Spanish Flu in both national and local newspapers was illustrations. These simple visuals were easily understood by nearly all Americans because they did not necessarily require the viewer to be literate. Graphic visuals are still an important tool in spreading sanitation knowledge today. The current and recognizable “Cover your Cough” posters issued by the Centers for Disease Control mimic visuals from the Span-



Figure 2: Big Stone Gap Post, Oct. 1, 1919, accessed November 13, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-10-01/ed-1/seq-1/>.



Figure 3: “Cover Your Cough: Seasonal Influenza,” Centers for Disease Control. Web. Accessed December 7, 2013. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>.

36 “Study Flu Catechism,” Big Stone Gap Post, Nov. 13, 1918, accessed November 7, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-13/ed-1/seq-1/>.

ish Influenza, such as the one published on the front page of the *Big Stone Gap Post* on the first day of October 1919 (Figures 2 and 3).

Unlike the gradual infection of individuals in Southwest Virginia in September and October, the Spanish Influenza was ravaging vulnerable troops at military bases throughout the United States in the fall of 1918. The *Big Stone Gap Post* published a startling figure on October 9: the mortality rate of American soldiers at army camps had reached nearly thirty-five percent on September 27, 1918. This was a thirty percent increase from the previous week.³⁷ In this initial onset of the second wave of the flu, civilian populations seem to have been infected at a much slower rate. On October 16, *Big Stone Gap Post* declared 60,000 cases of Spanish Influenza in Virginia so far, and only two or three cases of the virus in the local area.³⁸ An explanation for these large discrepancies in infection rates between military and civilian populations lies in the geographic location of the infected area. While military bases boasted thousands of constantly mobile individuals, the rural region of Southwest Virginia was a less populated area with fewer travelling persons.

However, the flu did not forsake the area for long. The quickly multiplying infection rates in Wise County within a one week period in October showcase the immensely contagious nature of the Spanish Influenza. On October 23, the Home Service Section Chairman of the local American Red Cross congratulated the people of Big Stone Gap for preventing a major scourge of the virus on the public.³⁹ This statement became null and void just one week later. On October 30, the *Big Stone Gap Post* published an article describing the region of Southwest Virginia as “the worst afflicted of any part of the state.”⁴⁰ Later articles attributed this to the rural nature and the excessive levels of poverty within the region. An article on November 20 described the depressing state of affairs in many counties of Southwest Virginia. According to the reporter, it was difficult for volunteers to reach the poor in many

37 “Stop Influenza”.

38 “Preparing to Combat with Influenza Epidemic,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 16, 1918, accessed November 8, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-16/ed-1/seq-1/>.

39 “Influenza,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 23, 1918, accessed November 8, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-23/ed-1/seq-1/>.

40 “Pneumonia Killing 30 Percent,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 30, 1918, accessed November 8, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-30/ed-1/seq-1/>.

rural areas because of the inadequacy of railroad lines. Also, due to the horrific mortality rates associated with the Spanish Influenza, these rural areas experienced a shortage of coffins and undertakers. Finally, this reporter relayed accounts of neighbors abandoning the sick because of excessive fear of the virulent influenza.⁴¹ In other poor areas in the region, reports circulated that hungry dogs often snapped at pallbearers carrying the corpses of influenza victims.⁴² These accounts not only showed the extent of the affliction upon impoverished areas, but they also demonstrated the social stigma attached to the Spanish Influenza in the United States.

National, state, and local authorities gathered support for the treatment of the Spanish Influenza by appealing to the patriotism of civilians for volunteerism during the disease crisis. As stated in *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, "enthusiasm [for the war] was successfully substituted for preparation and efficiency in the battle with the flu."⁴³ Dispersed among World War I liberty bond advertisements in the *Big Stone Gap Post*, local Board of Health officials in Wise County requested the assistance of fellow civilians in the fight against the flu. On the front page of the *Big Stone Gap Post* on October 16, 1918, the Central Committee on the influenza epidemic in Wise County pleaded for help by comparing public health assistance to military service: "to all those, both men and women, who have so longed for the glamor and glory of service in France, let us say that the opportunity has been brought home to you to show just how truly you desire to sacrifice yourself on the altar of your country."⁴⁴ One week later, on October 23, the *Big Stone Gap Post* published an annotated version of Surgeon General Blue's precautionary measures and home remedies against the flu. In another appeal to American nationalism to prevent the further spread of the Spanish Influenza, the editors of the newspaper stated the Surgeon General "believes that a patriotic service will be per-

41 "Flew on the Wings of Death to the Hills," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Nov. 20, 1918, accessed November 8, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-20/ed-1/seq-1/>.

42 "You Ain't No Better Than We Folks Is," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Nov 27, 1918, accessed November 8, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-27/ed-1/seq-4/>.

43 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 115.

44 "Preparing to Combat with Influenza Epidemic".

formed if the public heeds to his advice.”⁴⁵

Also related to the patriotic appeal by public health officials was the circulation of anti-German sentiment in regards to the spread of the flu throughout the United States. According to historian Tom Quinn, “foreigners were blamed for spreading the disease deliberately—a paranoid fear induced by the rising death toll” associated with the Spanish influenza.⁴⁶ Susan Kingsley Kent expands on this idea: “the war served as an obvious metaphor [for the flu] in which Germans and germs were equally feared.”⁴⁷ One of the most interesting inclusions in the news coverage of the outbreak was the insinuation that German soldiers purposefully spread the disease to the United States as a weapon of war.⁴⁸ Anti-German sentiment also emerged following the decision by the Provost Marshal General of the United States Army to cancel the October draft of 142,000 men on account of the flu epidemic.⁴⁹ This directly affected many young men throughout Southwest Virginia, who were hoping to participate in the international war. The *Big Stone Gap Post* briefly displayed this belief in a short quip about the influenza inhibiting war efforts on October 16: “Spanish influenza must be pro German, if one can judge by the way it is holding up the October draft contingent”.⁵⁰

The request for nurses in Southwest Virginia mimicked the patriotic call for general volunteerism among civilians during the Spanish Influenza pandemic. Just as was evident throughout the entire nation at this time, Wise County lacked adequate numbers of nurses and physicians to treat the sick. Therefore, the local Influenza Committee in Big Stone Gap requested the help of any and all available women in medical care: “Let every woman who can volunteer for public nursing in the crisis that is surely coming, and prove herself worthy of the greater sacrifices of those noble ones abroad, to whom our danger would hardly seem a grievance”⁵¹ On October 30, the local chapter of the American Red Cross also called for “largely increasing

45 “Surgeon General,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct 23, 1918, accessed November 13, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-23/ed-1/seq-1/>.

46 Quinn, *Flu: A Social History*, 141.

47 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 5.

48 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 5.

49 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 49.

50 “Spanish Influenza,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 16, 1918.

51 “Preparing to Combat with Influenza Epidemic,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct 16, 1918.

our membership” through the recruitment of more nurses in the area.⁵²

While the order for nurses during the Spanish Influenza pandemic was especially prevalent, the request for physicians was conspicuously missing. This can be attributed to the absence of a proper cure for the virus. Due to the inadequacy of an efficient antidote, the soothing care provided by nurses was in high demand during the plague of the Spanish Influenza. According to Susan Kingsley Kent, “with physicians unable to make much of a difference during the pandemic, nursing care turned out to be one of the most effective treatments.”⁵³ Scholar Alfred Crosby also tackled this theme, stating that “TLC—Tender Loving Care—to keep the patient alive until the disease passed away: that was the miracle drug of 1918.”⁵⁴ Similar to sick citizens throughout the country, residents of Southwest Virginia requested the aid of nurses in the area. On the front page of the *Big Stone Gap Post* on November 6, the local newspaper editors relayed a message from the Virginia State Board of Health regarding the recruitment of nurses. This article once again invoked nationalistic pride during World War I: “the need is most urgent and any nurses who can serve in this capacity should have the satisfying consciousness of performing a real patriotic duty.”⁵⁵ Tales of nursing heroism emerged in Southwest Virginia not long after the onslaught of the Spanish Influenza. On November 27, the *Big Stone Gap Post* featured a story about Miss Agnes D. Randolph, a state nurse from Richmond stationed within the mountainous region. According to the article, Nurse Randolph had to not only tend to three generations of sick in an eight-member family, but the city nurse also had to “clean up, cook, feed the pigs and chickens, get the cow from the hills and punish the children when they needed discipline.” Though her task was monumental, the nurse “felt she had received more than her reward” following an expression of gratitude from the family.⁵⁶

By the first week of November, Wise County officials believed their stringent precautionary measures against the Spanish influenza

52 “Chairman of Christmas Roll Call Committee Appointed,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct. 30, 1918, accessed November 13, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>.

53 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 14.

54 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 7.

55 “Nurses Now Needed,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Nov 6, 1918, accessed November 13, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-06/ed-1/seq-1/>.

56 “You Ain’t No Better than We Folks Is”.

had been successful. On November 6, the town council of Big Stone Gap thanked the temporary Central Committee created by the Board of Health to combat the Spanish Influenza epidemic in the county and dissolved the task force. According to the announcement, “on advice from the Board of Health, which believes that the crisis has passed, the council now deems it wise to relieve this committee of its duties.”⁵⁷ Five days previous, the Virginia State Board of Health had declared that restrictions on public places “may be lifted to a large extent in most communities in Virginia, depending upon the prevalence and severity of the epidemic in those communities.”⁵⁸ Based upon this report, the Wise County town council voted to reopen public schools on November 28, Thanksgiving Day.⁵⁹ However, this action was clearly premature, as the influenza virus resurged throughout the communities of Wise County in early December. On December 18, the *Big Stone Gap Post* announced the creation of an “Influenza Committee” by the auxiliary chapter of the Red Cross in Wise County.⁶⁰ This committee was established not only to replace the disbanded Central Committee of the town council, but also to address the reemergence of the deadly Spanish Influenza throughout the county.

By January 1919, the deadliest wave of the Spanish Influenza was finally relinquishing its grip upon the inhabitants of Wise County. Public places not yet reopened were allowed to resume business in January following the lift on the influenza ban by the town council. On January 1, 1919, the local Amuzu Theater finally started showing films and productions again. To combat apprehension toward large public gatherings, the Amuzu Theater hoped to reassure guests by thoroughly disinfecting the cinema with “‘Formaldehyde Gas’ before and after every show.” Owners of the Amuzu Theater also proclaimed “that this theater has taken every necessary precaution for proper ventilation.”⁶¹ Many churches in Wise County were also allowed to resume religious

57 “Vote of Thanks,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Nov 6, 1918, accessed November 13, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-06/ed-1/seq-3/>.

58 “Nurses Now Needed”.

59 “Public School,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Nov 27, 1918, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-11-27/ed-1/seq-2/>.

60 “Red Cross Appoints Influenza Committee,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Dec 18, 1918, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-12-18/ed-1/seq-3/>.

61 “Amuzu Theater to Open,” *Big Stone Gap Post*, Jan 1, 1919, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-01-01/ed-1/seq-3/>.

services. Resentment toward the Boards of Health for closing religious institutions existed in many counties of Southwest Virginia. The *Big Stone Gap Post* published the contents of an open letter from a Christian churchgoer in the Scott County newspaper the *Gate City Herald* on New Year's Day. The editorial appeared in the newspaper on the same day the lift on the influenza ban was announced in Wise County. Titled "As to Closing the Churches," this editorial not only berated local officials for shutting down congregational religious services, but also blamed the scourge of the Spanish Influenza on the overall immorality of Americans in the early twentieth century.⁶²

The socioeconomic impacts of the particularly fatal strain of flu that attacked world populations in 1918 were visible in Virginia not long after the decline in infection. According to historian Tom Quinn, "by late October, industry and commerce around the world were severely damaged" by losses from the flu.⁶³ As reported in data released by the "Virginia Anti-Tuberculosis Association in co-operation with the medical and philanthropic authorities in Wise County," "there were 10,000 more deaths in Virginia in 1918 than in 1917, most of this increase was due to influenza and pneumonia."⁶⁴ These drastic demographic changes and the particularly violent nature of the influenza in the young adult population greatly impacted the primary sector of the economy and the retrieval of raw materials in Southwest Virginia. Officials in Richmond declared the mining and lumber industries in the region of Southwest Virginia particularly hard-hit by the flu epidemic.⁶⁵ On October 16, the *Big Stone Gap Post* broadcasted news from the tiny mining town of St. Charles, in Lee County, Virginia, the most southwestern county in the state. According to the report, "some of the mines in that section have been forced to close because there are not enough well men to operate them."⁶⁶ The closing of mines and lumber yards was not only nationally significant because it hindered

62 "As to the Closing of Churches," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Jan. 1, 1919, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-01-01/ed-1/seq-2/>.

63 Quinn, *Flu: A Social History*, 145.

64 "Free Clinics," *Big Stone Gap Post*, May 14, 1919, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-05-14/ed-1/seq-4/>.

65 "Flew on the Wings of Death to the Hills".

66 "Spread of Influenza," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Oct 16, 1918, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1918-10-16/ed-1/seq-2/>.

the war effort on the home front, but also locally significant because it impacted the lives of thousands of already impoverished individuals in Southwest Virginia.

The consequences of the Spanish Influenza of 1918 on the population were almost instantly observable in Southwest Virginia. Starting with the deaths of local boys stationed at military camps within the United States, the mortality rates of influenza quickly spread among the civilian population, especially young adults. Officials in Virginia cited evidence of this situation as early as January 1919, when the Spanish Influenza was still ravaging certain parts of the state. Based on reports from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, the state of Virginia initially recorded 5,999 victims from the Spanish Influenza in 1918. The majority of these were young adults.⁶⁷ This created a demographic crisis, which not only impacted economic industries in the region, but also created a large number of orphans within Southwest Virginia. Similar conditions were present throughout the entirety of the United States following the influenza pandemic of 1918.

Local health officials in Wise County were well prepared for the following flu season after their experience with the unprecedented mortality rates associated with the strain of 1918. By the fall of 1919, the *Big Stone Gap Post* published numerous accounts on the increasing knowledge surrounding the pandemic of the previous year. Though contemporaries of the Spanish Influenza still did not yet understand the transmitting agent of disease, American epidemiologists had isolated the origins and waves of the deadly pandemic. On September 17, 1919, the *Big Stone Gap Post* addressed the impending flu season in depth. Editors of the newspaper reported that the influenza infection of 1919 would not be as lethal as the previous year's. An article in the paper also announced that physicians and epidemiologists realized that the virus did not originate in Spain, as previously thought. However, the most significant inclusion in the front page article on the Spanish Influenza was the brief statement on prevention: "the most promising way to deal with a possible recurrence of the influenza epidemic is, to sum it up in a single word, "Preparedness." And now it is the time to prepare."⁶⁸

67 "Youth was Shining Mark," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Jan. 29, 1919, accessed November 20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-01-29/ed-1/seq-1/>.

68 "Will the Flu Return?," *Big Stone Gap Post*, Sept. 17, 1919, accessed November

Tazewell County

Similar to Wise County, Tazewell County, Virginia, had comparable experiences with the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918-1919. Also located in far-southwestern Virginia, the County of Tazewell borders West Virginia along the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains. The local newspaper that served the area during the influenza pandemic was the *Clinch Valley News*, named after the Clinch River that flows through the region. Before the second wave of the Spanish Influenza even reached the United States, the *Clinch Valley News* was broadcasting the report of a deadly influenza outbreak in the German Army on the Western Front.⁶⁹ Initial evidence of the Spanish Influenza in Tazewell County emerged in Jewell, a small coal-mining town, sometime in the week preceding the *Clinch Valley News* weekly edition on October 4, 1918.⁷⁰

Not long after the emergence of the disease in Virginia, local health officials in Tazewell County enacted public sanitation measures to curb the spread of the flu. Relaying advice from the Virginia State Board of Health, the *Clinch Valley News* published “How To Save Yourself From Influenza” on October 11, 1918. These recommendations followed the guidelines generally associated with respiratory illnesses, and mentioned avoiding crowds, covering coughs or sneezes with a handkerchief, and remaining in bed for the duration of the illness.⁷¹ On October 25, the opening article in the *Clinch Valley News* included these same prevention measures, but also described symptoms, treatment, and precautions associated with the Spanish Influenza.⁷² Judging by front page location of the article, residents in Tazewell County were

20, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88061179/1919-09-17/ed-1/seq-1/>.

69 “Hun Offensive Falls Down,” *Clinch Valley News*, July 19, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-07-19/ed-1/seq-1/>.

70 “Pneumonia is Playing Havoc in Army Camps,” *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 4, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-04/ed-1/seq-1/>.

71 “How to Save Yourself from Influenza,” *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 11, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-11/ed-1/seq-2/>.

72 “Save Yourself and Others,” *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 25, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-25/ed-1/seq-1/>.

very concerned by the spread of the deadly virus.

The first few weeks of the Spanish Influenza pandemic in Tazewell County were relatively quiet. The virus was slow to infect residents in the rural locations of Southwest Virginia. The first casualties amongst locals did not even occur in the county—young male troops stationed at American military bases were the earliest Tazewell residents to contract the disease. According to information published in the *Clinch Valley News* on October 11, 1918, the deaths of three influenza-stricken Tazewell County soldiers were also the first casualties of World War I from the area. Sidney M. B. Coulling, William E. Peery Jr., and Sergeant Estil Hurt did not live to see action in the war. Instead, the three young soldiers died at army camps of complications with influenza from a secondary infection of pneumonia. Sidney M. B. Coulling's death reflected the swift and cruel nature of the Spanish Influenza. He died within two weeks of enlisting.⁷³ In the words of the *Clinch Valley News* editor, "now, in an unexpected way the war has been brought home to us in this dreadful epidemic, as deadly as German bullets."⁷⁴

In the first few weeks of October, Spanish Influenza was ravaging army camps throughout the nation and along front lines. However, initial flu infection rates were slow to emerge in Tazewell County. As of October 18, the influenza pandemic in Tazewell County was described as a mild form.⁷⁵ But by October 25, the *Clinch Valley News* stated, "influenza has been claiming heavy tolls at Richlands and vicinity."⁷⁶ According to newspaper accounts on that same day, "the epidemic of influenza is just getting a good start in Tazewell."⁷⁷ In order

73 "For Their Country's Sake," *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 11, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-11/ed-1/seq-1/>.

74 "The War Brought to Our Doors," *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 11, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-11/ed-1/seq-2/>.

75 "The Influenza Spreads Fast," *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 18, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-18/ed-1/seq-1/>.

76 "Pounding Mill News," *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 25, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-25/ed-1/seq-1/>.

77 "Strict Quarantines Should be Established," *Clinch Valley News*, Oct. 25, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-25/ed-1/seq-4/>.

to prevent the further circulation of the flu virus, many areas in the county prohibited large public gatherings “to escape the death toll that has been taking in so many communities.”⁷⁸ Following recommendations from the US Surgeon General, the Town of Tazewell Board of Health took precautionary measures and closed all public places on October 11, 1918.⁷⁹ This included not only schools, but also theaters and churches. By October 18, the Virginia Board of Health estimated that there were at least two hundred thousand cases of the Spanish influenza in the state.⁸⁰

Following the greater dispersion of the Spanish Influenza in the fourth week of October, Tazewell County officials pondered stricter ordinances to prevent the further spread of the virus. On October 25 in an editorial titled “Strict Quarantines Should Be Established,” an anonymous author rallied for the implementation of “rigid precautions,” such as a town quarantine restricting all visitors.⁸¹ Though this suggestion would have possibly contained the virus to the outskirts, placing a quarantine on an area as large as Tazewell County was quite infeasible. Therefore, the quarantine was never implemented. Unlike Wise County officials who imposed stringent laws on society, such as fines for spitting in the street, the officials in Tazewell County relied mainly upon public health recommendations and the honorable sanitary actions of individuals.

Just as all regions of the United States, Southwest Virginia was also affected by the lack of available nurses and physicians to treat the Spanish Influenza. Due to America’s involvement in World War I, most health care providers were stationed overseas or at major military bases. This inhibited the treatment of Spanish Influenza victims among the civilian population within the continental United States. Calls for volunteer nurses appeared in most newspapers across the country, including the small local ones published in Southwest Virginia. Members of the Board of Health in Tazewell County released information regarding the need for nurses in the region as early as October 18, only a few weeks after the first cases of influenza were reported in the area.⁸² By November 8, the futile appeal for nurses in the *Clinch*

78 “The Influenza Spreads Fast”.

79 “The War Brought to Our Doors”.

80 “The Influenza Spreads Fast”.

81 “Strict Quarantines Should be Established”.

82 “The Influenza Spreads Fast”.

Valley News reflected the desperate disease situation that had developed in Tazewell County. Citizens of the small town of Raven pleaded to the local Board of Health to send medical aid as their town physicians were all off supporting the war effort. Their reports included statistics of two deaths per day within the miniscule rural population.⁸³

Unlike the *Big Stone Gap Post*, the *Clinch Valley News* also briefly addressed the Spanish Influenza in the African American community of Southwest Virginia. The only mention of non-whites during the flu pandemic in Tazewell County occurred on November 1, 1918. According to local reports in the *Clinch Valley News*, the black population of Tazewell County appeared to be affected by the Spanish Flu in the same fashion as whites.⁸⁴ The brief statement regarding the epidemic among different races in Tazewell County is significant because few sources exist that describe the Spanish Influenza among the African American population. In addition, historians and epidemiologists of the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 continue to ignore the context of the virus among minority populations even more than local perspectives.

By early November, Tazewell County health officials assumed the brunt of the second wave of influenza was subsiding. On November 1, the Tazewell County Board of Health prematurely reopened all public places, including schools.⁸⁵ This inopportune action greatly affected infection rates of Spanish Influenza throughout the county. Based on the increasing publication of sickness and deaths in the “Local News” section of the *Clinch Valley News* in the papers of November 8 and November 15, the Board of Health clearly responded too quickly to the slight decline in infection rates in late October.⁸⁶ By November 29, the flu was once again raging throughout the county, and the local newspaper described at least fifteen new cases of disease.⁸⁷ On Decem-

83 “Raven,” *Clinch Valley News*, Nov. 8, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-11-08/ed-1/seq-1/#>.

84 “Notes of North Tazewell,” *Clinch Valley News*, Nov. 1, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-11-01/ed-1/seq-1/>.

85 “The Lid is Taken Off,” *Clinch Valley News*, Nov. 1, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-11-01/ed-1/seq-1/>.

86 “Local News,” *Clinch Valley News*, Nov. 8 and Nov. 15, 2013, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-11-15/ed-1/seq-1/>.

87 “Local News,” *Clinch Valley News*, Nov 29, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-11-29/ed-1/seq-4/>.

ber 6th, editors of the *Clinch Valley News* confessed their mistake: “the statement made by the papers recently that the ‘flu’ had abated, seems to have been somewhat premature.”⁸⁸ One week later, the mayor of Tazewell, A. C. Buchanan, stated in the *Clinch Valley News* that “it was probable the schools and other places would be closed [again], owing to the rapid spread of the influenza.”⁸⁹ An editorial published on the same front page described the common sentiment held by citizens of Tazewell to “better err if at all on the safe side” and reclose public places.⁹⁰ However, the Board of Health and Town Council of Tazewell County refused to reclose schools, churches, and businesses within the area. The editor of the *Clinch Valley News* clearly respected the beliefs of citizens within the county, and included a critical statement following the public health announcement: “Whether the authorities have proceeded wisely or unwisely, remains to be seen. Whether precaution is better than cure, however, is not a question at all. Time will tell.”⁹¹

As in Wise County, the local government in Tazewell County appealed to inhabitants’ patriotism to volunteer in the treatment of the flu. Alfred Crosby describes the exceptional level of civic volunteerism in the treatment of the Spanish Influenza as a “by-product of the war spirit.”⁹² One aspect of information shared between the *Big Stone Gap Post* and the *Clinch Valley News* was the inclusion of false rumors surrounding the emergence of the influenza in the United States. Crosby also states that “the people of the US were stark raving patriotic” in the year of 1918.⁹³ Similar to inhabitants in Wise County, many Tazewell County residents believed the influenza was spread to the United States as a by-product of the German war effort. Nationalistic appeals

88 “Influenza Still Raging,” *Clinch Valley News*, Dec. 6, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-12-06/ed-1/seq-4/>

89 “Schools May Close Again,” *Clinch Valley News*, December 13, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-12-13/ed-1/seq-1/>.

90 “Better Close Down,” *Clinch Valley News*, December 13, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-12-13/ed-1/seq-1/>.

91 “Decline to Close Schools,” *Clinch Valley News*, December 13, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-12-13/ed-1/seq-1/>.

92 Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 116.

93 Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic*, 46.

were present in the *Clinch Valley News* not only during the continuation of both World War I and the height of the pandemic, but also after the armistice in November and the decline of the deadliest wave of the Spanish Influenza. During the final wave of disease in March 1919, the *Clinch Valley News* equated citizens ignoring flu prevention methods to the unpatriotic rejection of the League of Nations.⁹⁴ As evidenced in articles within the local newspapers of the *Big Stone Gap Post* and the *Clinch Valley News*, patriotic appeals to follow influenza prevention and treatment methods were particularly effective among the population of Southwest Virginia.

The economy of Tazewell County in the early twentieth century was primarily based upon mining and railroads. Thus, the ravaging flu of the 1918-1919 season greatly affected production outputs and industrial transport and shipping. Effects of flu on the economy of Tazewell County were visible early after the onset of the epidemic because of the prevalence of mining industries within the area. Multiple publications of the *Clinch Valley News* in the fall and winter of 1918 reference the impact of the Spanish Influenza pandemic on local mines. For example, editors of the *Clinch Valley News* mentioned the consequences of the influenza pandemic among coal miners within the small town of Jewell on October 4.⁹⁵ This date is significant because it is the same day as the initial announcement of infection within the county. Two weeks later, the ramifications of the great influenza infection rates among the coal mining population were presented as front page headlines in the local newspaper. On October 18, in the article “The Influenza Spreads Fast,” the *Clinch Valley News* discussed the hindering of coal production within the region. According to reports by the Fuel Administration, coal retrieval within Appalachia “report[ed] reductions, ranging from 15 per cent to 50 per cent of the regular out put [sic].” By December 6, the *Clinch Valley News* released information that mines within the local area might shut down due to a lack of healthy workers.⁹⁶ The

94 “A Revolt Against the Doctors,” *Clinch Valley News*, March 28, 1919, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1919-03-28/ed-1/seq-2/>.

95 “Pounding Mill News,” *Clinch Valley News*, October 4, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-10-04/ed-1/seq-1/>.

96 “West Pocahontas News,” *Clinch Valley News*, December 6, 1918, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1918-12-06/ed-1/seq-1/>.

effects of the influenza pandemic among the mining population of Southwest Virginia exacerbated the impoverished situation of many residents within Tazewell County.

An additional effect of the Spanish Influenza pandemic discernible not long after the end of the final wave of the outbreak was the presence of a great number of orphans throughout Southwest Virginia. On May 30, 1919, the *Clinch Valley News* published an appeal by the Children's Home Society of Virginia. The article included a statement about the large number of orphaned children in the state due to the fatality of the Spanish Influenza pandemic: "the recent epidemic of influenza is sending hundreds of motherless or fatherless children to our doors."⁹⁷ The unusually high mortality rate among young adult victims of this particular influenza outbreak explains the large number of orphaned children in Southwest Virginia, as well as the entire United States. According to Susan Kingsley Kent, "the heavy toll influenza took on the adult population left scores of orphaned children in almost every community."⁹⁸

Similar to locals in Wise County, Virginia, residents of Tazewell started preparation for the impending flu season of 1919 much earlier than in previous years. By the summer and early fall, the *Clinch Valley News* was reporting prevention methods to diminish the severity of the imminent flu season. The experience with the deadly Spanish Influenza in the previous year led to the presence of unusually high amounts of precautionary measures published in newspapers. The immense number of articles related to public health measures reflected borderline paranoia within the population of the United States. On September 12, 1919, the *Clinch Valley News* warned of the potential return of the Spanish Influenza and reiterated sanitary practices, such as avoiding the common drinking cup.⁹⁹ By the official start of flu season in October, Board of Health members in Tazewell County advertised the statewide campaign for influenza prevention.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, public

97 "Facts," *Clinch Valley News*, May 30, 1919, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1919-05-30/ed-1/seq-1/>.

98 Kent, *The Influenza Pandemic*, 99.

99 "Will Influenza Return?" *Clinch Valley News*, September 12, 1919, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1919-09-12/ed-1/seq-1/>.

100 "Statewide Campaign for the Prevention of Influenza," *Clinch Valley News*, October 17, 1919, accessed December 18, 2013. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034357/1919-10-17/ed-1/seq-3/>.

health advocates not only of national, but also of state and local institutions understood the enormity of the disease circumstances of 1918 and were prepared to forestall a similar situation in the approaching months.

Conclusion

The Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 has been largely forgotten by the population of the United States. Whether this is due to the concurrent event of World War I or the immense anguish experienced by victims, this significant disease outbreak has essentially vanished from American history. Historian Nancy Bristow cites this exodus as “precisely an American tendency to rewrite the past to make it more tolerable.”¹⁰¹ The existing explorations into this historic event rely heavily upon an international or national context of disease as well as data from statistics on mortality rates. While mortality rates are an important aspect of the consequences of the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918, they fail to tell the whole story. The most valuable sources in the history of the Spanish Influenza are the personal reactions of individuals and the public health responses implemented by provincial authorities. The overall lack of historical scholarship on the local context of the Spanish Influenza buries thousands of personal accounts and perspectives. While exploring individual manuscript collections and local newspapers is tedious work, they do present an astounding glimpse into the distinctive reactions and events of the Spanish Influenza pandemic within specific localities. Overall, the Spanish Influenza of 1918 was a momentous event in American history that necessitates further research in order not only to understand the varied reactions of different communities in the United States, but also to comprehend the exhaustive consequences of localized disease outbreaks worldwide.

¹⁰¹ Bristow, *American Pandemic*, 193.

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