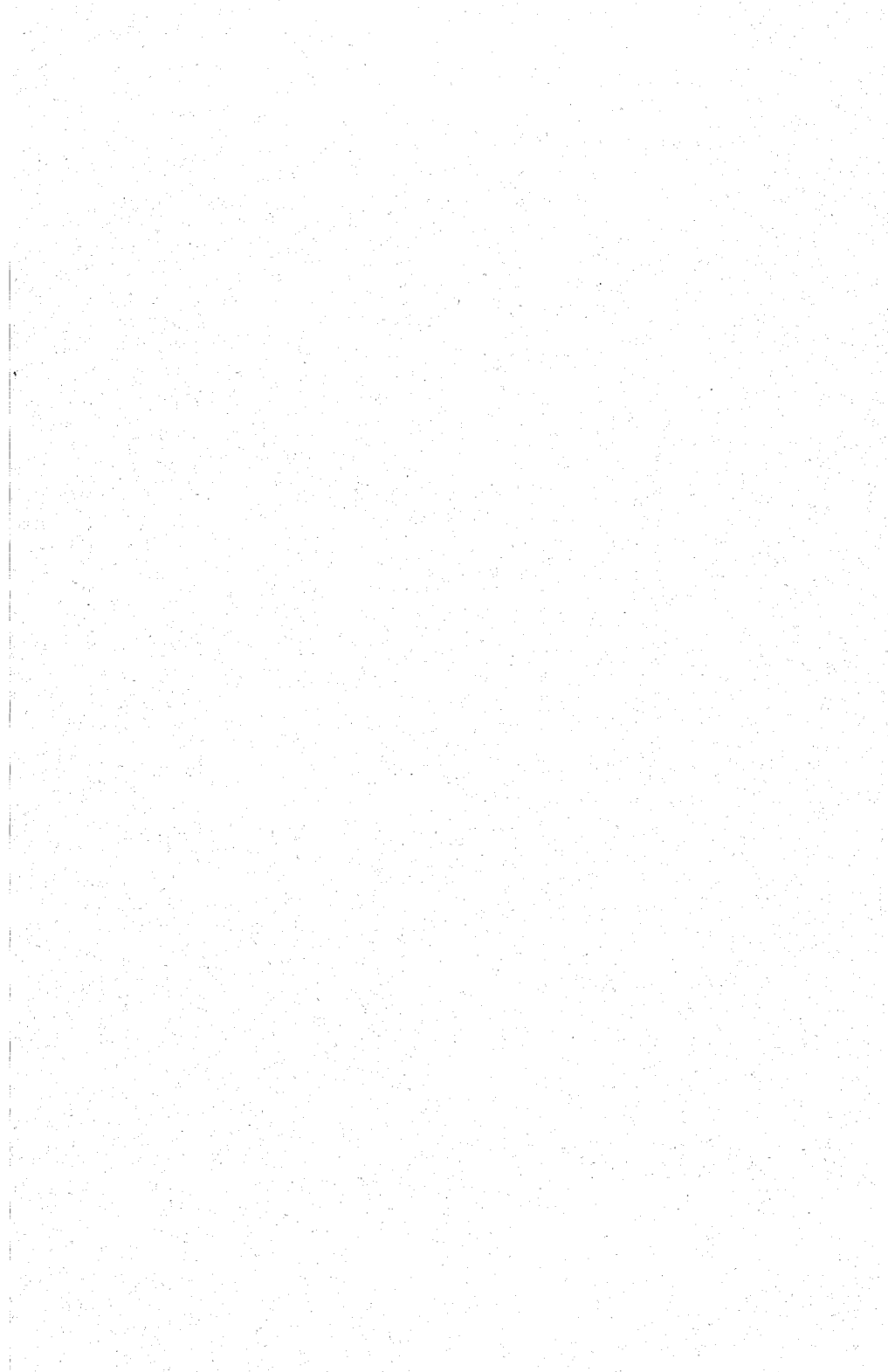


Perspectives in HISTORY

ALPHA BETA PHI
CHAPTER
PHI ALPHA THETA



JOURNAL OF THE ALPHA BETA PHI
CHAPTER OF PHI ALPHA THETA

**Perspectives
in
HISTORY**

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FOREWORD

It is a great year in the life of Phi Alpha Theta International History Honor Society. This, our tenth anniversary, has been marked by a special event which we hosted on our campus. This event, the 1995 Phi Alpha Theta Regional Meeting, was hosted by our chapter in honor of our tenth anniversary. We now mark the end of a glorious year for our chapter, with the publication of this issue of *Perspectives*. I believe that this volume represents all the ideals that our chapter strives to uphold. Within this issue you will find articles on a number of diverse subjects. Everything from European History to American History, Military History to Political History, and African-American History to Women's History, is contained within this volume of our journal. Even the book review that we have published represents an unusual subject, Children's History.

As President and Editor of our chapter I would like to make it known that I am extremely proud of our chapter and of this journal. I would like to thank all the officers and members who have made this an excellent year and welcome all the new members who will be taking over the reins of leadership.

This foreword would not be complete without saying a few words of thanks to some of the non-students who made this year a good year. First are all the past members who volunteered for the Regional Meeting on April 8, 1995. It is their continuing dedication to our chapter that makes Alpha Beta Phi such a fine chapter. Next would be the Department of History and Geography under the guidance of Dr. Michael C. C. Adams. Thanks to the commitment received from Dr. Adams and members of the faculty, Phi Alpha Theta has grown and thrived at Northern Kentucky University. One of the main reasons that our Phi Alpha Theta chapter has received the recognition it has is due to the effort and dedication of our advisor Dr. James Ramage. His enthusiasm for history and caring attitude toward students has made Alpha Beta Phi Chapter one of the best chapters in the nation. I would like to say one last word of thanks to Heather Wallace and Alissa Ogle for all the time they have given toward the publishing of this issue of *Perspectives in History*.

Thank you for taking the time to read our journal. As you read through these pages of history, I hope you are able to see the work and effort that have gone into these articles and the scholarship of the past and present that they represent.

L. W. Brian Houillion
Editor and President

The Black Prince

by
L.W. Brian Houillion

“Le Prince noir ne connaît pas la haine” is the beginning of a song that was sung by French school children until around the turn of the twentieth century.¹ This musical line is a piece of surviving folklore which glorifies the heroics of Prince Edward of Woodstock, better known as the Black Prince. The Black Prince is known to history as one of the greatest generals and warriors of all time. His biographer, Chandos Herald, ranks the Black Prince with three of the greatest leaders in history: Julius Caesar, King Arthur, and Charlemagne.² William Shakespeare wrote of him in his play, *King Richard II*, as a fearsome fighter and a noble leader. He wrote, “In war, was never a lion rag’d more fierce, in peace was never gentle lamb more mild, than was that young and princely gentleman.”³ The Black Prince, though a mighty warrior and a hero of legend, lived less than fifty years and never became King of England. His story is comparable to the life of Achilles, the Greek hero, who won great honor but died young. Even with an early death, the Black Prince was able to accomplish many deeds, which could only be recited in a full length book. Due to the quantity of information, this paper will deal with how the Black Prince won fame as a general and a warrior.

Edward, the first son of King Edward III of England, was born on June 16, 1330 in Woodstock, where Blenheim Palace Park stands today. His father, the king, was seventeen years old and his mother a week short of sixteen. Because of the closeness of ages, between the king and the prince, young Edward “was able to grow up and remain on the best of terms with a father whom he sincerely admired and loved.”⁴ Edward’s birth was thought to be an omen of better times to come. His father had just deposed Mortimer, the lover of Queen Isabella, Edward III’s mother, and the Queen herself.⁵ They had ruled England after arranging the murder of King Edward II. During Edward’s youth, his father had embarked on several campaigns, mainly against the Scots, whom he defeated at Halidon Hill in 1333 and secured control of the lowlands in 1336.⁶ Due to the constant absence of his father, young Edward was in the charge of his mother for the majority of the time. Through this contact with his mother, Edward was able to meet Sir Walter de Mauney, who probably influenced the young prince’s zeal for feats of arms.⁷

Sir Walter de Mauney, or Manny as he was called, came to England with Queen Philippa, Edward III’s wife, from Hainault, as her meat carver. This meat carver, however, had knightly qualities of a “heroic soldier.”⁸ Manny was knighted in 1331 for honor won during the fighting in the Scottish Wars.⁹ This involvement with

L.W. Brian Houillion, 1994-1995 President of Alpha Beta Phi Chapter and Editor of *Perspectives in History*, delivered this paper at the 1994 Phi Alpha Theta Regional Meeting at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky. It is a condensed version of a larger research paper.

Manny filled the Prince's idle time, whether at the Court, with his mother, or while staying at Woodstock.¹⁰

The prince, besides his education in weaponry from Manny, was taught by some of the finest tutors in Europe. Dr. Walter Burley, an Oxford graduate and a Doctor of Theology from Paris, was one of the prince's early tutors. Dr. Burley was the top scholar and commentator on the works of Aristotle of the time.¹¹ Beside tutorial instruction, the prince was believed to have been one of the first attendees at The Queen's Hall, a college founded by his mother and her chaplain, Robert be Eglesfiend, in Oxford in 1341.¹²

John Harvey, the author of *The Black Prince and his age*, states that "the life and working career of the Black Prince has to be seen mainly in the light of an external struggle, one between the King of England, his father, and the defacto King of France."¹³ By the birth of the prince, war was brewing between France and England. In 1328, the King of France, Charles IV, died leaving no heir to the throne. Edward III of England, son of the dead king's sister Isabella, was his closest living male heir and claimed the throne.¹⁴ The French peerage were determined not to allow a King of England to sit upon the throne of France. To prevent this situation from occurring, the barons "trumped up a completely unhistorical law of the Salian Franks,"¹⁵ which states, "no woman, nor by consequence her son, could succeed to the throne of France."¹⁶ Instead of Edward III, the barons chose Philip of Valois, a first cousin to the deceased king. Charles IV's wife was pregnant at the time of the king's death. If a son was bore to her, it would take the throne under the wardship of Philip. She gave birth to a daughter and Philip ascended the throne as King Philip VI of France.¹⁷

This controversy, along with the confiscation of English Aquitaine by King Philip VI, eventually led to war between the English and the French. Several skirmishes were fought and England gained a great deal of French land, but domestic trouble and problems with Scotland forced England to withdraw a major portion of its involvement with France. A French threat to Bordeaux, under English control, brought the full attention of England back into the war. The English planned for a force to land in Normandy to cut the French lines and to attack the French army from the rear. A 3,500 man force, led by the sixteen-year-old prince, left Portsmouth on July 11, 1346 along with the rest of the English army bound for St. Vaast-la Hogue. On July 18, an army of 20,000 men, under the direct command of King Edward III, moved forward to meet the French.¹⁸

The intent of the English forces had become known to King Philip VI, but he did not believe the English would really put their plan into action and land in France. He was not prepared to face such a large army. The English army took St. Lo without resistance and then turned east toward Caen, the capital of Lower Normandy. Caen was soon captured as well. Spies informed Edward III that Philip VI was trying to encircle the English with an army of 60,000 hastily risen troops. Edward III decided the English would make their stand outside the city of Crecy. With the sea to their backs and the sun in the French army's eyes, the English were prepared to make their heroic stand. The French attacked first with Genoese crossbowmen. The English

longbowmen easily routed the overmatched Genoese who turned and fled. Philip VI ordered his troops to kill the retreating Genoese.¹⁹

Young Prince Edward was the commander of the southern division of the English force. The king was determined to allow his son to prove himself in combat and to win great honor. The prince was aided by some of the greatest English warriors of the age including Sir Thomas Holand, Sir Reginald Cobham, Sir John Chandos, and Richard de Beaumont, the Earl of Warwick. During the battle the prince was unhorsed, but was saved by de Beaumont, who was acting as standard bearer. De Beaumont sent a messenger to Edward III to inform him of the situation and to send aid. According to most chroniclers, the king declined to send aid and replied, "If God be pleased, I will this journey be his and the honor thereof, and to them that be about him. Let the boy win his spurs."²⁰ However, according to Desmond Seward, author of *The Hundred Years' War*, a chronicler, Geoffrey le Baker, reported that the king sent twenty knights to aid the prince. The knights supposedly found "the boy and his mentors leaning on their swords recovering their breath and waiting silently in front of long mounds of corpses for the enemies return."²¹ The English were victorious and the prince won the honor that his father wished him to receive.

Following this battle, the French began to call Prince Edward, "Edouard le noir" or Edward the Black. Thus, his nickname, the Black Prince, was created. The color black did not imply that the prince had an evil or vicious character, but instead it referred to the color of his armor.²²

After the Battle of Crecy had been won, the English army continued to march to the city of Calais which was defeated and taken for English possession. The king and the prince returned to England and on April 23, 1348, Edward III founded the Order of the Garter, based upon the Arthurian Round Table, to celebrate the English victory. There were twenty-six founding Knights, who were split into two groups. The first of these two groups was headed by the king and the second by the prince.²³

By 1354, the French were once again aggressively attacking the English holdings upon the continent. They soon had retaken much of their previously lost land, including Aquitaine.²⁴ The English replied to this offensive by launching a two-pronged attack upon France through Normandy. One of the armies was under the command of the Black Prince. The Black Prince's force swept unimpeded through the countryside. It eventually came to the prince's attention that the King of France, John II, son of the now deceased Philip VI, was planning to intercept the English forces with a large army of his own. When the Black Prince decided that confrontation with the French was unavoidable, he marched his troops to within two miles of the city of Poitiers, set up camp, and prepared for battle.²⁵ The French reached the fields, upon which the English were camped, late in the evening and were forced to camp for the night as well. The English positioned themselves in a strong position which gave them protection through the night. The following morning King John II was anxious to begin the battle. The French army was divided into three divisions of about 16,000 men each. The Duke of Orleans led the first division, the Duke of

Normandy, the second, and the third was under the command of King John II. Before the battle was to begin, King John II ordered a reconnaissance mission. The spies returned to report that with God's help the French would easily be victorious. The English only numbered 7,500 men: 2,000 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 1,500 foot soldiers. Their position was on the other side of a lane from the French, behind long hedges which protected their archers. The only route of attack was through their middle. King John II asked the head spy what he thought was the best plan of attack. According to Froissart, a chronicler of the event, the spy replied, "Sir, on foot, except for 300 picked men-at-arms, the most expert and bold in your army; they must be extremely well mounted, in order to break the line of archers. Then your battalions must follow up quickly on foot and engage the men-at-arms [English] hand to hand. This is the best plan I can think of; if anyone can suggest a better, let him do so."²⁶ The king accepted this plan and ordered the men to "shorten their lances, for better manageability, and to remove their spurs as they were to attack on foot."²⁷ The king was about to order the attack to commence, when the Cardinal of Perigord, from Poitiers, rode up to the king. The Cardinal, upon King John II's permission, spent the day attempting to reach a peaceful settlement between the two armies. Negotiations failed and the battle would begin the next morning.

The English were in the same position as they had been the previous night, with the exception of 300 men-at-arms and some mounted archers whom the Black Prince had ordered to post themselves upon a nearby hill which overlooked the position of the Duke of Normandy's division. The French began their advance. The battalion of mounted men-at-arms, known as the Marshall's division, attempted their attack through the English longbowmen. The English archers shot with such accuracy and in such great volume, that the Marshall's division was unable to penetrate the English defense. The Marshall's division, whether thrown from their horses, killed by archers, or unable to persuade their horses into the cloud of arrows, were routed and forced to retreat. The retreating division encumbered the advancing division of the Duke of Normandy. This caused mass confusion. Also, at the same time, the English troop of archers rode down the nearby hill and attacked the flank of the Norman duke's division. This caused even more confusion and the French troops did not know which way to turn and run.

With the mounted men-at-arms routed and the Duke of Normandy's division in a bind, the Black Prince decided to go on the offensive. He attacked a battalion under the charge of the Duke of Athens, the Constable of France. This engagement caused the loss of many French lives. He then attacked a German battalion and easily defeated it. Froissart reports that King John II was "unalarmed by all that he saw and heard, and having ordered his men to dismount, he put himself at their head and ordered the banners to advance on the English, and the battle raged fast and furious."²⁸ King John II "proved himself a valiant knight; and if a quarter of his army had acquitted themselves as nobly, the day would have been his," reported Froissart.²⁹ Eventually the English were too much for the French, and King John II was forced to surrender. The King and Dauphin of France were both taken prisoners

along with seventeen counts.³⁰ Between 5,500 and 6,000 French soldiers were killed and the English took twice the number prisoners as they had in their own troops.³¹ The English had won, mainly due to the commanding abilities of the Black Prince and the courage of the English troops.

The Peace of Bretigny, which declared an end to the hostilities between France and England, after the Battle of Poitiers, made the region of Aquitaine an English territory, and with a halt to the fighting it put a large number of soldiers out of work. One of the Black Prince's first problems, as reigning Prince of Aquitaine, was what to do about these unemployed soldiers who were roaming the countryside looting and pillaging. He forcefully put down the bands of marauders, even if they had once been English troops under his command, and let it be known that he would not allow such practices to occur in his kingdom.³² The French dealt with these marauders in a different way. They hired all these soldiers, no matter what nationality, and sent them to Spain to aid Henry of Castamara to overthrow his half-brother, Don Pedro, King of Castille.³³

Don Pedro was the legitimate son of King Alfonso XI of Castille. Henry was an illegitimate son of Alfonso XI, but he was older than Don Pedro. While alive, Alfonso XI spent more time and cared more for Henry and his mother than he did for Don Pedro and Queen Maria. Upon his death, the kingship was awarded to Don Pedro, which angered Henry who believed his father had wanted him to be king. When Don Pedro was enthroned he ordered the murder of Henry's mother, to avenge Queen Maria's hurt pride, and forced Henry to flee the country.³⁴ Ten years later, Henry returned to Castille with the aid of the French and usurped his half-brother and claimed the throne of Castille.³⁵ Don Pedro fled from Spain and was granted asylum in Aquitaine.³⁶ The countries of Castille and England had had an alliance since 1362, four years before Don Pedro's overthrow. The Black Prince, hoping to make good this treaty, offered to aid the deposed Pedro in reclaiming his throne. Money and land were promised to the prince and his officers for their services in this venture.³⁷

John Harvey describes the beginning of the invasion thus: "on St. Valentine's Day, 14 February, the army of 30,000 troops left the town of San Juan del Pie del Puerto, and began the twenty mile ascent to the summit of the Pyrenees. By Tuesday, 23 February the whole army was through the passes and had bivouacked near Pamplona. This feat of crossing the Pyrenees in such a short time at the worst time of the year justifies the Black Prince's ability as a great commander."³⁸ The army continued its march toward Castille. Henry, upon becoming aware of the invasion, stationed his troops in the town of Najera on the Najerilla River, a tributary of the Ebro River. His position blocked Castille from the invading force and put the river at his back, to avoid attack from the rear. Here he believed he had the advantage. The Black Prince would have to attack down a narrow road, in tight formation, for a frontal attack. The prince, however, was not going to play into Henry's hands. He turned his army off the road several miles before Najera and appeared from behind a hill, on Henry's flank, at day break on April 3, 1367. Although the Black Prince's

victories at Crecy and Poitiers were defensive victories, he showed in this battle that he was a brilliant offensive tactician as well. This attack from the side confused Henry's troops, and by noon his forces were fleeing the battlefield. Henry's troops suffered between 5,000 and 6,000 dead and 2,000 captured, while the Black Prince only lost four knights, forty men-at-arms, and twenty archers. It was a very lopsided victory.³⁹

After the victory, the Black Prince began to lose confidence in Don Pedro. The king was unable to pay the money he owed and was even more reluctant to turn over the promised territories. The prince and his troops spent the summer at Valladolid, while Don Pedro was trying to raise the money he owed. During this stay, the warm air of Spain carrying some virus, affected the Black Prince and his troops. It is here that it is believed that Prince Edward was exposed to the disease that would render him an invalid and eventually kill him.⁴⁰ With little faith left in Don Pedro's promises, the Black Prince decided to leave and return to Aquitaine.⁴¹

After the Black Prince's return to Aquitaine his health became worse. He was soon unable to ride a horse and too weak to bear weapons. In the meantime, Henry Tastamara, aided by the French, rose up again and defeated Don Pedro for the throne of Castille. Don Pedro was killed by Henry, whom the Black Prince had convinced Don Pedro to allow to live. For once the chivalry of the Black Prince caused more harm than good. The Black Prince's greatest victory had been undone and he was too sick to do anything about it.

The Black Prince was soon unable to walk or stand. Finally, on June 7, 1376, he felt that his time on earth was almost expired. He called to his side his trusted friends and issued them his last will and testament. The next morning, Trinity Sunday, Prince Edward of Woodstock awoke and said his prayer to the Trinity asking to be able to feast in heaven that night. His prayer was answered. Prince Edward, the Black Prince, died that night at the age of forty-five.⁴² The man, whom no army could defeat, was killed by the tiniest foe of all—a virus.

According to Thomas B. Costain, the author of *The Three Edwards*, "He [the Black Prince] became a national hero and nothing he did, not even the extreme savagery he displayed on several occasions, nor the financial disorder of his official as well as private life, disturbed or diminished the admiration the public had conceived for him."⁴³ The Black Prince was very heroic and chivalrous. He had possibly the greatest soldier of the time, his father, as well as the bravest, Manny, as role models.⁴⁴ Not only was he famous for his leadership and warrior prowess, but also for his open-handedness when it came to gifts and feasts. He spent great amounts of money on weapons, horses, and fine jewelry which he usually ended up giving to his close friends and allies.⁴⁵ The extravagance of the Black Prince is gone. Nothing remains of him except a "marble tomb, adorned with enamel shields" upon which lies, "an effigy, in life size, of the Black Prince clad in complete armour," in Canterbury Castle.⁴⁶ But the way the Black Prince wanted to be remembered is engraved upon his tomb:

All ye that pass with mouth shut
by where this body reposes,
Hearken to what I shall tell you
According as I know how to tell it.
Such as thou art, such was I,
And thou shalt be such as I am.
Of death I never thought
So long as I had life.
On earth I had great riches
With which I lived royally
Lands, houses, great treasure,
Clothes, horses, silver and gold;
But now I am poor and wretched.
Deep in the earth I lie.
My great beauty is all gone,
My flesh is all wasted away,
Very narrow is my house,
With me nothing but truth remains
And if ye now should see me,
I do not think ye would say
That I had ever been a man,
So wholly changed am I.
For God's sake, pray the Heavenly King
That he have mercy on my soul.
And all that shall pray for me,
Or make my peace with God,
May God put you in His paradise
Where no man can be wretched.⁴⁷

Endnotes

1. John Harvey, *The Black Prince and his age* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1976), 85.
2. Scott L. Waugh, *England in the reign of Edward III* (Cambridge, 1991), 129.
3. Desmond Seward, *The Hundred Years War* (New York, 1978), 113.
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7. *Ibid*, 61.
8. *Ibid*.
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11. *Ibid*.
12. *Ibid*.
13. *Ibid*, 49.
14. *Ibid*, 50.
15. *Ibid*.
16. *Ibid*.
17. *Ibid*, 50-51.
18. *Ibid*, 79-80.
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28. *Ibid*, 170.
29. *Ibid*, 170-171.
30. *Ibid*, 174.
31. *Ibid*, 161-174.
32. Harvey, *The Black Prince and his age*, 104.
33. *Ibid*, 105.
34. *Ibid*, 106.
35. *Ibid*.
36. *Ibid*.
37. *Ibid*, 107.
38. *Ibid*, 108.
39. *Ibid*, 109.
40. *Ibid*, 113
41. Costain, *The Three Edwards*, 351.
42. Henry Dwight Sedgewick, *The Life of Edward the Black Prince*, (Indianapolis, 1932), 285.

43. Costain, *The Three Edwards*, 341.
44. Harvey, *The Black Prince and his age*, 68-69.
45. Richard Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine* (New York, 1978), 239.
46. Sedgewick, *The Life of Edward the Black Prince*, 287.
47. *Ibid*, 287-288.

John D. Rockefeller: Businessman and Philanthropist

by
Marian Henderson Hogan

A scrapbook usually contains mementos of happy days gone by, and usually only flattering pieces are included. Edith McCormick, John D. Rockefeller's loving daughter, presented her father with an unusual scrapbook (the first of many) which contained not only clippings that were flattering to her father, but also clippings that, to most people, should not be displayed, but rather avoided. "Nothing was done to filter out or omit anything that might be considered to be embarrassing to her father."¹ He accepted it happily for it was the story of his life. The pages contained stories of Rockefeller's days as a youth, his building of the Standard Oil Company, and finally, news of his vast philanthropic acts. In order to gain a deeper understanding of John Davison Rockefeller, it is helpful to look at these three facets of his life.

Rockefeller, born on July 8, 1839 in Richford, New York, was named after his grandfather Davison and was usually called John D. at home. The first home in which he lived was a rented cottage. In 1843 the family moved to a farm near Moravia, New York. He and his siblings, three brothers and two sisters, loved to spend time with their father, William Avery Rockefeller, a large, towering man. He played the fiddle and taught them songs for entertainment. His energy and humor were appealing to the children. Rockefeller's mother, Eliza, was the disciplinarian.

Years after Rockefeller became a great businessman, Ida M. Tarbell wrote an article about his life. In this article she included information about Rockefeller's father. "To Tarbell he was an unsavory character. She passed on to her readers some marvelous gossip—that he had dealt in stolen horses and conducted other sharp practices, that he had provided for his family by peddling quack cures for cancer."² Most of her claims were true. In addition to claiming to have the cure for cancer, Rockefeller's father, sometimes referred to as 'Big Bill,' could be called a lady's man. In 1849, he was indicted under strange circumstances for the rape of Anne Vanderbeak, a hired girl who had worked in the Rockefeller household. After this incident he sold the Moravia home and moved his family north to Oswego, New York. In 1853 he moved the family to Cleveland, Ohio, claiming that the move was to provide the boys with more opportunities. In this same year, however, William began seeing a woman who lived in Ontario close to the location where Eliza and his children had lived. Perhaps he was attempting to ensure the secrecy of his mistress.

William Rockefeller began taking long business trips, leaving his family for

Marian Henderson Hogan, Historian of Alpha Beta Phi Chapter and Editor of *Perspectives in History*, 1993-1994, presented this paper at the Regional Meeting, April 19, 1994, at Cumberland College. Marian graduated in May, 1994 with a history major and plans to attend law school.

months at a time. "Years later the nation would find out that William Rockefeller had moved to South Dakota under the assumed name of Dr. William Levingston in a bigamous marriage with a woman some twenty year his junior, Margaret Allen."³ On occasion, Eliza struggled to feed and clothe her children. She tried to instill values in her children. "A stern and devout Baptist, she took her maternal obligations seriously and held her children to high standards for morality and duty."⁴

As the oldest son, John took on many house-hold tasks in his father's absence. Whether his nature made him solemn about his duties or his early responsibilities resulted in his serious outlook on life is difficult to estimate. He was an extremely conscientious and humorless boy. Rockefeller resembled his mother more than his father. He held her physical characteristics, paleness, small bones, thin face, blue-gray eyes and a slender nose. It was she who truly influenced him by being the disciplinarian and through her day-to-day caring. Because Eliza was a devout Baptist, Rockefeller and his siblings were expected to be pious. "His devotion to church came from her; she taught him early to give regularly and unobtrusively to church and charity. Like her and unlike his father, he was outwardly self-effacing and never sought the limelight."⁵ Even though William was not what could be considered a "normal" husband and father, Rockefeller seemed to hold no grudge. Unlike the press in later years, Rockefeller viewed his father as an impressive, brave gentleman with a bright smile. Rockefeller only pointed out one flaw—his father was not a Christian.

At the age of seven, Rockefeller accumulated a flock of turkeys. He sold them for a good profit and had enough money to lend a farmer \$50 at seven percent interest. He earned \$3.50 interest and was impressed that it was more than he had made in ten days of work hoeing potatoes. From this lesson, Rockefeller stated, "I am determined to make money work for me. I want to be worth a hundred thousand dollars, and I'm going to be."⁶

William felt that his sons John D., age fourteen, and William, age twelve, were ready to go to Central High School in Cleveland, a school with a solid reputation. Rockefeller's father had to meet a substantial board and lodging bill every week. "When John started his personal account book in 1855, his famous *Ledger A*, three dollars per person was the amount he entered for weekly board bills."⁷ Whatever the figure, the bill would have been large for two boys over a length of time. At the young age of fourteen Rockefeller began to make Cleveland his home, a home where he would build his fortune and practice philanthropy. Cleveland was a growing area that was fostered by a man-made waterway. It was a port both on Lake Erie and the Ohio Canal. Also contributing to Cleveland's growth was the railroad, which sped up transportation.

At the Cleveland school mathematics was Rockefeller's best subject. He found mental arithmetic to be quite beneficial in his business career. "Anecdotes about Rockefeller's school days portray him as taking little part in playground sports. When the other boys were engaged in spirited games, he was more apt to be looking on from the sidelines, often keeping score with a notched stick as his tally."⁸

He took his school work seriously. He wrote out his lessons as neatly as possible (he was always known for his extremely neat penmanship) and was said to have signed each assignment with "John D. Rockefeller."

Three school acquaintances played large roles in his life: Laura Celestia Spelman, her sister Lucy, and Mark Hanna. Laura (he referred to her as Cettie) became his wife eleven years later. Lucy never married and went to live with the Rockefellers and Mark Hanna became Rockefeller's lifelong friend. Hanna succeeded in business and went into politics, serving as a United States Senator, and becoming so powerful that he virtually hand-picked William McKinley for the nomination for president.⁹

Rockefeller, having been reared in a strict Baptist home, found happiness and a social life in the Erie Street Baptist Church. "He attended services twice on Sunday and prayer meeting on Friday nights. Within a year he had been baptized."¹⁰ The church congregation was composed mainly of hardworking families, which made Rockefeller feel comfortable. The church provided an opportunity for Rockefeller to socialize in such a way that would have made his mother proud, and Rockefeller continued to tithe as his mother had taught him. This helped to make the Baptists one of the wealthiest denominations.

Rockefeller left high school to enroll in Folsom's Commercial College. There is some controversy over whether Rockefeller actually graduated from high school. According to the high school there is no record that he actually graduated. Tuition at Folsom's was forty dollars. He learned principles of banking, methods of business transactions, and general commercial subjects. Bookkeeping was emphasized. Eliza wanted Rockefeller to become a Baptist minister, but William, not taken with religion, felt that his son had had enough education. At age sixteen he had completed his formal education. After school he was determined that he would not settle for a mediocre job; instead he wanted to strive to reach his potential. "I did not guess what it would be, but I was after something big."¹¹

He did not have business connections in Cleveland. His emergence as a businessman was not solely due to luck, but resulted from hard work, perseverance, and energy. He made a list of prominent businesses where he wanted to hold a job. Each morning he made his rounds to these businesses. Upon entering the establishments he would always ask to speak with the manager. After he had gone through the list once he would simply go back to the top and start again, never considering adding lesser businesses to the list.

The perseverance and determination paid off, as it always seemed to in his endeavors. After a month of rejections he was finally given an opportunity to work by Henry B. Tuttle, of Hewitt & Tuttle. "Henry B. Tuttle, the junior partner and in charge of the books, interviewed him and said come back after dinner, we may have a chance for you then."¹² When he returned he was informed that there was a position for him and he took it without even talking about wages. "Tuttle and the senior partner, Isaac L. Hewitt, were well known in Cleveland for their wholesale commission and produce company."¹³ Rockefeller considered this day, September

26, 1855, to be one of the greatest days of his life and celebrated it each year.

Within a year after Rockefeller had been hired Tuttle resigned from the business. Rockefeller was placed in charge of the office and was working alongside his employer. He soon became known as reliable in business. "People along the waterfront generally called him Mr. Rockefeller, although he was still in his teens. He worked as though he owned the firm."¹⁴ He scrutinized every bill, carefully adding the numbers. He was once challenged by the captain of a schooner who did not like the way he was handling his account. The captain felt that Rockefeller should pay for an approximate number of items instead of a definite amount. Rockefeller would not allow for "a margin of error" because he felt it would lower the standards of the company. Never raising his voice, his calm nature and persistence became his trademark in the business world. Meanwhile, he gained a keen understanding of the importance of transportation. He learned to negotiate settlements when shipments did not arrive on time or were damaged. He would remember these lessons later in his own business dealings.

After he had worked there for a while Hewitt offered to raise his salary to \$700 a year. Rockefeller had been doing all of the work that Tuttle had previously done and felt that his time was worth more and asked for \$800 a year. Hewitt found this proposal to be unacceptable and rejected it. Rockefeller resigned in the spring of 1859 to go into business for himself. "John D. once said that the three and a half years of business training he had in that commission house formed a large part of the foundation of his business career."¹⁵ One of the things he learned was how not to run a business. Not long after Rockefeller resigned, Hewitt went out of business.

In April of 1859 Rockefeller, almost twenty, opened a commission house with a partner, Maurice B. Clark, age twenty-eight. Rockefeller had saved \$800 dollars while working for Hewitt & Tuttle and his father loaned him an additional \$1000 (a debt which would be dissolved when he came to be twenty-one). Years later when Rockefeller spoke of Clark, he did so in a bitter tone, claiming that Clark constantly tried to make all the decisions, leaving Rockefeller only to bookkeeping because he was younger. Rockefeller always had to battle to have equal weight in the decision making. "Just as he had exaggerated the poverty of his youth, so he exaggerated Clark's failings. Yet Clark was able and contributed substantially to the business."¹⁶ In Rockefeller's eyes, he himself, was the brain behind the business. In the first year Clark & Rockefeller did well, especially for a new business. Their profits soared with the onset of the Civil War when the Union army needed large amounts of food and supplies. Rockefeller was in search of something big and Clark was simply wanting a comfortable income. These differences in goals were a bone of contention between the two partners.

An event occurred that would, eventually, change the American economy. Colonel Drake, a former railroad conductor, was drilling for petroleum. He had been trying to find petroleum for a long while but was running into difficulties. No one seemed to take him very seriously. People usually gathered it from the surface of streams or between rocks. Drilling for it was a new idea that would soon catch on

and change the world forever. When Drake finally struck oil crowds of people gathered to see it. "Men looked and hurried to buy adjacent land, made plans to dig wells. Seven days after this John Brown and his men attacked Harper's Ferry placing the news of the oil in the background."¹⁷

Clark's friend, Samuel Andrews built an outstanding refinery but knew little about business. He asked Clark and Rockefeller if they would help. Rockefeller agreed to become a silent partner in the company. Despite the threat of over-production, he finally reached the conclusion that with good management money could be made in oil, and he invested several thousand dollars.¹⁸ This was the beginning of Rockefeller's involvement in the oil business.

The Western end of the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad was completed early in July of 1863. Through a connection with the Erie Railroad it provided a direct route to New York City. "This railroad became the nation's greatest carrier of oil, offering stiff competition to other lines."¹⁹ Business, however, was not the only thing that was on Rockefeller's mind.

He kept up with Laura Celestia Spelman, "Cettie," after their days as school-mates. Sometimes he stopped at the Spelmans' home after leaving the refinery. Their affections for each other grew and they became engaged. Cettie had more schooling and had traveled more than her fiancé. She was a talented pianist and singer. Her strong background made her qualified to teach for the Cleveland Board of Education. During their courtship Rockefeller kept a financial diary in which he recorded expenses from outings. The diary later included financial records of the wedding and honeymoon. They were married one day before Cettie's twenty-fifth birthday. The honeymoon lasted for one month, in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and at the end of that month Rockefeller promptly returned to business.²⁰

At the time Rockefeller entered oil it was a fast-paced business. Most investors wanted quick returns and would then go on to invest in other avenues. "If a man did not double his capital in a year he was disappointed, and that applied to both producing and refining. Everyone was frantically trying to cash in, impelled by the dread that the oil might disappear like a mirage."²¹ By the end of 1866 there were fifty refineries in Cleveland. Samuel Andrews was skillful at refining and made sure that very little oil was wasted. Rockefeller worked where he was needed at the refinery. Like most of the workers his clothing was covered in oil and the odor along with it. Rockefeller brought his brother, Will, into the business and he helped to develop strategies to eliminate the middle-man from the business.

After Rockefeller bought out Clark, he became partners with Henry M. Flagler. This was one of the best moves Rockefeller ever made. Flagler was from humble origins and left home at the age of fourteen because his parents could not afford to feed him. His desire for success was comparable to Rockefeller's. The serious-minded, introverted Rockefeller was drawn to Flagler who was pleasant and gregarious. The new company that emerged was Rockefeller, Andrews & Flagler. Flagler, who was nine and a half years older than Rockefeller, had already had much experience as a businessman. At age thirty-one, before the Civil War, he was well

on the way to a small fortune. He had invested in the salt industry in Michigan. Overproduction plus a decreased demand for salt due to the war's end made his business doomed for failure. Flagler lost almost everything and was nearly bankrupt. Some wealthy relatives helped him get back on his feet.

Flagler and Rockefeller, sharing similar interests, developed a strong friendship. Flagler used to remark that a friendship founded on business was better than a business founded on friendship. In later years Rockefeller made it clear that no one he was ever associated with through the years could take the place of his close friend and business partner. As time passed the business became stronger and lucrative. Rockefeller and Flagler spent many hours discussing ways to improve their company, the focus being ways to convert their company into a joint stock corporation. The original partners would remain in control. They chose the name of the new company, Standard Oil Company, standing for quality and excellence. "At the time of its inception the Standard Oil Company was not only the biggest oil operation in Cleveland, it also represented one-tenth of the petroleum business in the country."²² Rockefeller was once quoted as saying, "None of us ever dreamed of the magnitude of what proved to be the later expansion." One must suspect, however, that this dream was imbedded somewhere in the subconscious (or conscious) of Rockefeller's mind.

Rockefeller used the railroads to his benefit. "Early in the seventies when Rockefeller and his allies were distressed at the chaotic condition of the oil business, the railroads were suffering from their usual competition with each other for the business of carrying oil. From the Pennsylvania and other interested railroads emerged the South Improvement Company scheme."²³ The railroads worked with the largest refineries in each area and regulated rates. The railroads would continue to raise prices for other companies, but participating refineries would get large rebates. If a refinery chose not to participate they would be faced with extremely high prices and could not compete with those refineries that did choose to participate. Rockefeller made many trips to New York during the winter of 1871 to confer with railroad tycoons about the South Improvement Company and their plans. Rockefeller saw this as his opportunity to eliminate his competition and thus he became known as a "robber baron."

Rockefeller had become what some called, the most hated man in America. Many small company owners claimed that he was responsible for their demise. Rockefeller would call on his competitors (starting with the largest ones) and explain the process of consolidating with Standard Oil. If the company did not agree to the terms, Rockefeller would explain the alternative which would eventually result in bankruptcy. Rockefeller was quoted as saying, "We will give everyone a chance to come in. Those who refuse will be crushed."²⁴ Frank, Rockefeller's brother, refused to sell his business and was ruined. Rockefeller believed in making Standard Oil a dynasty just as he believed in attending church on Sunday. Those who adhered to his requests made fortunes and those who did not were bitter enemies.

When the press got wind of what Rockefeller was doing the public was outraged.

Mrs. Rockefeller feared for her husband's life. After Standard Oil Company had successfully acquired all of the Cleveland refinery business, Rockefeller continued. Some day he was going to control the entire industry. When approaching prospective refineries he insisted that it was for their own good. His plan was to "organize" the oil industry, which was badly needed. Rockefeller made all of the decisions, trusting no one. He did not even tell his colleagues in Standard Oil everything, claiming that if they did not know they could not tell.

There is no doubt that the rebate had an enormous effect upon the success of Standard Oil. "Lewis Emery, Jr., a lifelong competitor of Rockefeller, stated, "The milk in the coconut of the success of Standard Oil Company is transportation."²⁵ The railroads had been giving him special privileges that put him far above his competitors. These special privileges were called rebates which meant a refund or remission of payment. "As railroads grew in length, rebates increased in importance."²⁶

In 1899, the Interstate Commerce Commission reported to Congress that no one thing did so much to force small operators out of business and to build up those trusts and monopolies than did discrimination in freight rights. Many people have wondered why the railroads were so accommodating to Rockefeller. Below is Rockefeller's explanation.²⁷

It (Standard) offered freights in large quantity, carloads and train loads. It furnished loading facilities and discharging facilities at great cost. It provided regular traffic so that a railroad could conduct its transportation to the best advantage and use its equipment to the full extent of its hauling capacity without waiting for the refiner's convenience. It exempted railroads from the liability for fire and carried its own insurance. It provided, at its own expense, terminal facilities which permitted economies in handling. For these services it obtained special allowances on freight.

Railroads were still new at the time and the conditions which Rockefeller offered were tempting. Rockefeller did not invent the rebate, but he did use it more widely than anyone else. The rebate had actually been used earlier by the state senates of both Ohio and Pennsylvania. Though there was always a published rate, most would agree that it was negotiable. Rockefeller was a master at "negotiating" and he came to be one of the richest men in the world.

Occasionally, the Rockefellers would encounter those who felt that they had been wronged so badly that the courts should decide who was in the right. For example, one woman, Caroline Girty, felt that Rockefeller had taken advantage of her, financially, and asked that the *Ledger B* be made public.²⁸ The Marritt family sued the Rockefellers for fraudulent dealings regarding their iron mines on the Mesabi range and won \$940,000 in damages.²⁹ Usually, however, people who stood up to the Rockefellers did not win.

One "dilemma" that seems to plague most people of wealth is what to do with all of their money. Andrew Carnegie once said, "The man who dies rich dies

disgraced." Rockefeller, according to Carnegie, would have died disgraced. Nevertheless, Rockefeller's philanthropic gifts could never be considered disgraceful. Coming from a home that upheld religion and piety, Rockefeller was accustomed to gift-giving. His mother made sure that he knew the importance of helping those who were less fortunate (some find this difficult to accept due to the way in which he made his billions—at the expense of others). Rockefeller's *Ledger A* has records of his gift-giving from the age of sixteen. "By 1972 his gifts amounted to \$7,000 a year. By 1882 they amounted to \$65,000 a year; and ten years later they had reached the rate of \$1,500,000 a year."³⁰ For Rockefeller, philanthropy was similar to religion. Growing up he was taught that part of being a good Christian was giving to those who are less fortunate. The University of Chicago received vast amounts of money from Rockefeller. "In a speech given by Rockefeller at the University of Chicago's fifth anniversary he said, 'The good Lord gave me the money and how could I withhold it from Chicago?'"³¹ He became known for this statement and later said in an interview with *Woman's Home Companion* in 1905, "God gave me my money." He claimed that the power to make money was a gift from God.

The *New York Times* was ecstatic when they heard of Rockefeller's contributions to the University of Chicago.³²

John D. Rockefeller has given another million dollars to the university as a Christmas present. This brings the total of his gifts to the university to \$3,600,000, out of a total endowment of \$7,000,000. No such sum has ever before in the history of education been given for a single purpose by a single man.

Some say that tax-saving incentives were on Rockefeller's mind. However, the extent to which he pondered over which organizations should receive money and the thoroughness of his organization seem to illustrate that he did, in fact, have the good of the public at heart. ³³ Many people began to view Rockefeller as the man to go to for money. "A wild-eyed, poorly-dressed man, with a shuffling gait mounted the front steps of the Rockefeller home and rang the doorbell and asked if he could have a few of his millions." ³⁴

Obviously, there were many organizations that would gladly accept contributions from the Rockefellers. However, he decided that he could not give money to anyone who asked for it. Instead, he had a method for choosing which organizations were worthy of gifts. First, he felt that those organizations to which he gave should strive to build strength and not weakness. He felt that they should be working to a point where they could help themselves. Second, he wanted to give to groups that were working to reform an evil and not just suspend people in their present state of dependence. Finally, he wanted to give to groups that had already proven worthy and would have a good chance of surviving in the future.

Rockefeller enjoyed giving to colleges. For years he mainly gave to colleges of the Baptist denomination. He also had an interest in helping to educate African-Americans. He helped initiate the General Education Board. The main priority of

this board was to raise the level of education by raising the quality of instruction. "The object of this association was to provide a vehicle through which capitalists of the North who sincerely desire to assist in the great work of Southern education may act with assurance that their money will be wisely used."³⁵ Eventually, the federal government became involved and took charge. On June 14, 1901, The Rockefeller Institute was incorporated. The purpose was to foster medical research. This was the first such institute in America. "Rockefeller once told the doctors conducting research there, 'Don't hurry and don't worry. We have faith that you will make good and if you don't the next fellow will.'"³⁶ Another one of Rockefeller's most noted philanthropic acts was the fight against hookworms. Children in the south had been suffering from this for years and no cure had been successful. Those infected had gotten the worms by walking on infected soil (where a person already infected had transferred the eggs to the soil during elimination). The eggs hatched and entered the skin by boring through when stepped on. "According to Dr. Charles Stiles the cure was simple—a few doses of thymol to make the hookworm relax its grasp on the intestine, and then Epsom salts to eject them."³⁷

With the success of the Rockefeller Institute and The General Education Board, Rockefeller created the Rockefeller Foundation, his largest philanthropic enterprise. "The International Health Board, growing out of an early interest in hookworm disease on the part of The General Education Board, became an extensive division of The Rockefeller Foundation."³⁸ This foundation was an excellent way to insure that there would always be money for specific charities. There was a large sum of money placed in a savings account and the interest earned from it would be used. The principle was never to be touched.

A dichotomy exists pertaining to Rockefeller's philosophies, in that his "robber baron" techniques associated with business contrast sharply to his philanthropic religious activities. Rockefeller justified his robber baron acts by saying that he was merely trying to give some organization to the oil industry. He certainly did provide a great deal of organization, but those who did not wish to comply with his requests were left with nothing.

Rockefeller's philanthropy, on the other hand, has done a large number of people an immeasurable amount of good. The education, health break-throughs, and projects sponsored by the Erie Street Baptist Church (to which Rockefeller faithfully tithed) continue to benefit people today and will continue well into the future.

Rockefeller, being one of the first billionaires in the United States, had a lasting effect upon society. Boys in the cities saw the fine mansions and businesses. Boys on the farms heard of them and read about them in newspapers. The ideals of business leaders like Rockefeller became the ideals of the youth at the time.³⁹

Rockefeller's daughter, Edith McCormick continued making scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings for several years. Eventually, Rockefeller received more than ten large volumes per year. At the time of her death she had made over three-hundred. After looking at Rockefeller's life we can see why there were so many

articles written about him. He has been the most hated man in America, as well as, one of the most respected, for his philanthropic acts. This dichotomy seems almost acceptable after taking into account the contrasting lifestyles of his parents—one role model being eccentric and promiscuous and the other being the epitome of piety. Rockefeller inherited a few traits from each parent and used them to his advantage.

Endnotes

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Black Soldiers and Military Justice

by

Alfonza Wright, Jr.

In certain instances the failure to apply the principles of military justice was displayed against black soldiers and sailors who served the United States military service during World War I, World War II and in my own personal observation while serving in the Army. During the period before World War I, a great miscarriage of justice was engineered toward a group of black soldiers in Brownsville, Texas. "The Brownsville Raid" shooting incident, on August 13, 1906, was blamed on 167 black troops. President Theodore Roosevelt, in whom blacks—soldiers and civilians alike— had put their trust and loyalty betrayed the men by signing an executive order dishonorably discharging them from the Army.

Several events led up to the incident. First, the 25th Infantry, a black regiment, was sent to Texas, a southern state. These black men, mostly from the North, had previously served on the Great Plains, and the regiment had earned a reputation for effective service on the Indian frontier. However, the wisdom of sending a black regiment into a small town in segregated Texas was questionable. When the War Department ordered them to go on joint maneuvers with the Texas National Guard before permanently moving into Fort Brown in Brownsville, their officers and their Chaplain, Theophilus G. Steward warned against the plan. There had been a conflict in 1903 when the regiment was in the field with Texas guardsmen, and to operate so closely with white guardsmen again would be unwise. The War Department canceled the order for the maneuvers and sent the men of the 25th Regiment directly to Brownsville.¹

Jim Crow segregation was openly practiced in the South and in Brownsville, where about eighty percent of the 7,000 people were Mexican-Americans, and there were only ten black families. Black soldiers from the fort were not tolerated in the town's bars or other public facilities. It did not matter to the civilians that these black men were serving the country—they did not care. When the regiment arrived, two of the men opened a bar to provide beer and an opportunity to meet local women from the neighborhood in a casual surrounding. Even though the soldiers tried to be cautious, within a few days trouble began brewing in the white community.

On Sunday, August 5, 1906, a white man beat and pistol-whipped a black private for allegedly refusing to step aside on the sidewalk for the white man's two women companions. On August 13, an argument broke out on the ferry returning from Mexico on the Rio Grande River, and a white man pushed one of the black soldiers

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into the river. That same day a white woman claimed that a black soldier attempted to rape her and fled when she screamed. The Brownsville *Daily Herald* on the next morning printed a sensational, inflammatory headline about the alleged attempted rape that enraged the white citizens and prompted Major Charles W. Penrose, the battalion commander, to order the men kept within the limits of the post. That night, about midnight, a group of about ten or twelve unidentified individuals walked into town, shooting rifles and killing a white bartender and wounding a white policeman.²

The violence was blamed on the black soldiers, despite the investigation from the War Department conducted by Major Augustus P. Blocksom, Assistant Inspector General for the Southwestern Division and sent by President Roosevelt. Upon his arrival the IG representative heard statements from the local residents that were so ludicrous that they would be thrown out of today's judicial system. He accepted testimony from twenty-two witnesses, eight of whom claimed that they had seen black soldiers shooting. This was not the case, because the sentries stationed at all of the entrances and exits to the post prohibited them from leaving. The most ridiculous statement came from a witness who identified the soldiers as the raiders simply because he said that he heard their voices. It was further stated that the bullets matched the ones issued to the regiment for their Springfield rifles. The IG investigation sided with the white accusers. Blocksom recommended that the regiment be transferred immediately, and Roosevelt ordered them to Fort Reno, Oklahoma. Major Blocksom reported that some of the soldiers had done the shooting. The men were coerced to admit guilt, but they all denied having raided the town and a grand jury could not find enough evidence to convict them.³

Roosevelt studied Blocksom's report and other reports and sent General Ernest A. Garlington, Inspector General, to Texas, to deliver the ultimatum that the men must reveal the names of the guilty individuals or they would all be discharged. Garlington interviewed twelve of the men and recommended that they were engaged in a conspiracy of silence and should be discharged without honor. Roosevelt accepted the findings and released an executive order on November 9, 1906, the day after the Congressional elections, discharging all 167 men. This disregard of the principles of justice typifies the actions of the government in the entire affair.⁴

The soldiers did not protest or complain, but some cried as they turned in their rifles. Most of them had been in the army at least five years, and ten of them had been in the service fifteen or more years. They had been proud to serve in the army and to exhibit their citizenship. When they appealed to Booker T. Washington, he apparently made contacts for them, but when he made no public statement, blacks in general perceived that he did nothing. All that he was concerned with was being "one of the boys" in Roosevelt's circle of power; he did not want to rock the boat. Washington's failure to speak out was a factor in his declining influence.⁵

In December 1906, Republican Senator Joseph B. Foraker, of Ohio, launched an investigation and found that the evidence was flimsy, unreliable, insufficient and

untruthful. He pressed the Senate Military Committee to hold hearings intermittently from February, 1907 to February, 1908. The proceedings revealed that the War Department had employed two unreliable private investigators in one of the probes into the incident, and the two men working for Senator Foraker had been fired for incompetence. The Committee could not agree on anything except that the testimony failed to identify any specific individuals who fired the shots.⁶

Meanwhile, Roosevelt, after seeing the results of his drastic steps, revoked the section of the order barring the men from government employment and appointed a Court of Inquiry to decide which of the men could reenlist. After lengthy deliberation the court readmitted fourteen men: thirteen who had been in the barracks and one who was in the guard house during the incident. The other 153 men were left to be considered guilty for the next sixty years.⁷

Then in 1970 John Weaver's new book, *The Brownsville Raid*, argued that the blacks were innocent, that white citizens conducted the raid and conspired to blame the soldiers. Inspired by the book, black Democratic Representative Augustus F. Hawkins from Los Angeles introduced a bill in the United States House of Representatives to change the discharges to honorable. The House Military Affairs Committee wanted no part of the sensitive issue, but in September, 1972, Secretary of the Army Robert F. Kroehlke ordered the discharges of the 153 men changed to honorable, with no back pay. Hawkins refused to allow the issue to end quietly; he conducted a national search for survivors, and with the cooperation of the media found two men. Dorsie W. Willis, eighty-seven, was living in Minneapolis, and when informed that he had been vindicated at last, he commented: "None said anything because we had nothing to say. It was a frame-up straight through. They checked our rifles and they hadn't been fired." The other man, Edward Warfield, eighty-two, received his honorable discharge in Hawkins' office.⁸

Early in 1973, Hawkins introduced a bill for compensation of each survivor or his widow. Willis testified before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, still insisting that the men were not guilty. "It was unjust," he declared. "I was kicked out of the Army without a trial and my citizenship taken away from me." The amended bill passed and President Richard Nixon signed it on December 6, 1973. It provided a \$25,000 pension to each living survivor and \$10,000 to any widow who had not remarried. By now Warfield had died, but Willis was awarded the pension.⁹

If the due process of military justice had been administered, the black soldiers would probably have been acquitted. Historian Marvin Fletcher and others have suggested that Roosevelt may have acted so harshly in reaction to protests from his white supporters who were upset about his friendship with Booker T. Washington. At the time of the Brownsville affair, Roosevelt was being criticized for inviting Washington to dinner at the White House and for appointing Dr. William D. Crum to a federal position in Charleston, South Carolina.¹⁰ For whatever reason, the treatment of the black soldiers demonstrated that blacks were considered second-class citizens in the Army, segregated and discriminated against.

The demonstration of total disregard of the principles of justice against black soldiers was dramatized a few years later in Houston, Texas. The 24th Infantry Regiment, the sister regiment of the 25th and the only other black regiment in the army, had fought at the Battle of San Juan Hill under Theodore Roosevelt, and in the Philippine insurrection, and in the Poncho Villa expedition in Mexico. They served with honor and expected to be sent to Europe when the United States entered World War I. Instead, they were posted on guard duty at home, and twenty-five of their experienced non-commissioned officers, including all of the first sergeants but one, were transferred to officers training for blacks in Des Moines, Iowa. And, incomprehensibly, after the Brownsville affair, the third Battalion of 654 enlisted men and eight white officers were stationed in segregated Houston. They were there less than one month, when on August 23, 1917, a riot far worse than in Brownsville occurred.¹¹

The national news was filled with accounts of lynching and violence directed against black people. Will Stanley was lynched at Temple in 1915 and seventeen-year-old Jessie Washington in 1916 in Waco. On July 2, 1917, white mobs destroyed homes and killed over forty blacks in East St. Louis, Illinois, and the men of the Third Battalion collected \$146.60 and sent it to the victims. The men became role models for the sizable black community, and they took pride in being in the Army. But on the streetcars and throughout the town they were reminded of their second-class status. The most difficult insults to take were from the white carpenters in camp. They continually taunted and degraded the men on guard duty, calling them "niggers."¹²

The Houston police department had a history of brutality against blacks and it was not surprising what set in motion the events of the riot. On the morning of August 23, Lee Sparks and Rufus Daniels were patrolling the black district of San Felipe on horseback. They were two of the worst bullies in the department, notorious for breaking up dice games and arresting prostitutes. Sparks was the worst, constantly "baiting" young blacks into situations in which he could abuse his authority. In an alley off San Felipe Street the two policemen saw two black teenagers rolling dice, and charged in pursuit. One of the youths ran into the home of Mrs. Sara Travers, a black mother of five children. Sparks dismounted and entered the residence, where Travers was ironing. He ran into the back yard, fired several shots, and returned to search the house. Mrs. Travers, scantily clad in what she called a "dress-skirt," and "ol' raggedly" blouse, objected the intrusion. Sparks called her names, slapped her and placed her under arrest. Without permitting her to dress, he and Daniels took her in handcuffs to the call box on the corner to call a patrol wagon.¹³

At the street corner, Private Alonzo Edwards of the Third Battalion attempted to act as a go-between and pleaded on behalf of Travers that he would pay her fine. Sparks interpreted this as being "an uppity nigger," and pistol-whipped Edwards and then arrested him for interfering with an arrest. Travers was released without charges, but Edwards was incarcerated in the city jail. Word of the episode passed

through the community and Corporal Charles W. Baltimore, a model soldier and off-duty provost guard, heard the rumor. He went to Sparks and Daniels and asked what had happened. The query led to a fight in which Sparks shot at Baltimore, chased and pistol-whipped, and finally arrested him for hindering the police in the performance of their duty.¹⁴

Major Snow sent his adjutant, Captain Haig Shekerjian, to the police station and the charges against both Edwards and Baltimore were dropped. Shekerjian returned to base with Baltimore, but Edwards was so bloody Shekerjian decided to leave him in jail overnight to prevent his comrades from rioting upon observing his condition. Meanwhile, in camp, a false rumor swept through the tents that Baltimore was dead. Attempting to calm the situation, Snow called a meeting of the first sergeants and had Baltimore brought in to prove that he was alive. Snow canceled a party scheduled for the men in town that evening and ordered the men confined to base. Snow and the white officers seemed unaware that the soldiers were getting tired of the treatment they were receiving; it was now time to take up arms and seek revenge.¹⁵

Snow was stepping into an automobile to leave for a night on the town when Sergeant Vida Henry, a native of Green County, Kentucky, stepped forward and said: "Major, I think we are going to have trouble tonight." Snow decided to look around, and at one of the company supply tents he discovered men carrying away clips of ammunition. He ordered a roll call and a search of the quarters for missing ammunition. But when the company commanders ordered the men to turn in their rifles, some began a mutiny by refusing. Then, someone in Company I yelled: "Get your guns, boys! Here comes the mob!" Suddenly many men began wildly firing their rifles into the air and toward the town, supposedly shooting at some non-existing white mob.¹⁶

When the firing stopped, Sergeant Henry sacrificed thirteen years as an obedient soldier and assumed command of the mutineers. With a voice of authority, he ordered the men to fall in and follow him into town. About one hundred joined in, and for two hours they marched through Houston, killing fifteen whites, including four policemen, and two soldiers they mistook for police. Twelve whites were wounded, one of them a policeman who was mortally wounded. Henry committed suicide with his rifle, and three other black soldiers died. The riot ended when over 800 Illinois National Guardsmen stationed near the city sealed off the area by 11:00 P.M.¹⁷

The Army investigated the riot and conducted three court martials. In the first 63 men were charged with violating four articles of war: Article 64: disobedience of a direct and lawful order; Article 66, mutiny; Article 92, murder; and Article 93, unlawful discharge of a firearm in a public place, endangering the lives of civilians. A court of thirteen white officers found 54 guilty of all charges and of those men, the thirteen considered key leaders were sentenced to be hanged. The other 41 were sentenced to hard labor for life.¹⁹ The hangings were carried out immediately and without notification of the press or review by the War Department or the President.

Throughout the nation, blacks could scarcely believe the news; it was Brownsville repeated. W. E. B. DuBois condemned "the shameful treatment which these men, and which we, their brothers, receive all our lives, and which our fathers received, and our children await; and above all we raise our clenched hands against the hundreds of thousands of white murderers, rapists, and scoundrels."¹⁹

In the second trial, 15 black troops from nearby Camp Logan were charged, and five of them were found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. In the third, 40 additional soldiers from the 24th Infantry were tried, and 23 were convicted of murder, with 11 to be hanged. However, before another round of executions took place, the War Department responded to protests by the NAACP and other groups and issued General Orders Number 7 suspending death sentences by court-martial pending a review by the judge advocate general and the president. Woodrow Wilson commuted the sentences of ten of the condemned, and let stand the other six, who were hanged. The NAACP collected about 50,000 names on a petition for pardon of the men in prison, and by 1930 only a few were still incarcerated. The last man was released on April 5, 1938.²⁰

In the excellent book, *A Night of Violence, The Houston Riot of 1917*, Robert V. Haynes concluded that the city officials and the War Department were chiefly to blame. The city officials should have halted the police brutality, and the War Department should have known better than to station black troops in Houston. As in Brownsville, immediately after the incident the blacks were transferred out of Texas. During the roll call that fateful evening, just before the mutiny began, Snow was pleading with some of his men to stay calm when Corporal James H. Mitchell asked if they could be moved out of Texas. "We are treated like dogs here," he said. Snow replied that he lacked authority on the matter.²¹

It seemed unjust that Snow nor the other officers were court-martialled; at the time the blame was placed only on the blacks. Police Chief Clarence Brock was removed, but a panel of citizens cleared the Houston police of any wrong-doing. Sparks continued abusing people, and on duty the following Sunday killed a black civilian.²² In the period of rising expectations that developed among blacks during World War I, the Houston Riot showed that a double standard of justice still existed in the military.

In the Navy, black sailors were treated as less than men or persons. This was demonstrated in World War II in the Port Chicago, California disaster, yet another disregard of the principles of justice. Blacks had served in the Navy since the American Revolution, but after World War I they were excluded and replaced by Filipino stewards. In 1932, blacks were recruited again, but only for menial duties. Then in World War II manpower shortages led to the enlistment of blacks into the general service in the Navy, in segregated units, with very few black officers. One of the duty assignments this slight elevation in status gained was loading ammunition.²³

White enlisted sailors loaded bombs and other ammunition at some facilities, but at Port Chicago, about thirty-five miles north of San Francisco, the most important

loading base on the Pacific Coast, the task was assigned to blacks. The 1,481 black enlisted sailors were organized into work divisions of about 125 men each. Most of the men were young draftees, many in their teens. When loading a ship, the division would be divided into five work gangs, with one-half of the gang on the pier and the other in the hold of the ship. Moving ammunition from boxcars on the pier into the ship, they worked three seven-hour days, had a duty day; then worked three days and took one day of liberty. In three shifts the loading continued around the clock. The men operated the ship's crane to load the bombs, but lifting the bombs and boxes of ammunition from the box cars and placing them on nets or pallets on the wharf and stowing them in the hold was heavy, back-breaking labor. The men had boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, but they were not trained in handling ammunition. The white officers, many of them reservists, also lacked training. The longshoreman's union warned that it allowed winch drivers to load ammunition only after years of experience, and that using untrained sailors was dangerous. The union offered to train the men, but the Navy refused. Not only were the men untrained, to speed up productivity their officers organized races between the divisions, and as the men raced against each other, Port Chicago became an accident ready to happen.²⁴

In addition to unsafe working conditions, the black sailors were constant targets of racism. In Mare Island Naval Station, which included the base of Port Chicago, disciplinary actions were common against the men. They also complained about the lack of promotion and absence of recreation facilities. The town of Port Chicago was unfriendly to blacks and there was no military transportation to San Francisco, only a commercial bus. A group of the men sent a letter to the NAACP requesting outside help, but none was provided. Their letter was placed in a file with other military service complaints. The men tried a work slowdown, but they had no effect. They were scared stiff, realizing that at the rushed-up pace a major disaster was imminent. When they voiced their concerns to the white officers, they were answered with either great ignorance or a lie—they were assured that the bombs could not explode because the detonators were not installed.²⁵

On July 17, 1944, at 10:20 P.M., it happened. A massive explosion occurred at the pier. The *E. A. Bryan* was blown to pieces and the *Quinalt Victory* broke apart and sank. Three hundred and twenty men were killed, two hundred of whom were black enlisted sailors. When some of the survivors who were off duty were interviewed, one man said: "I was reading a letter from home. Suddenly there were two explosions." The first blast threw him against the wall. "Then the next one came right behind that, Phoom! Knocked me back on the other side. Men were screaming, the lights went out and glass was flying all over the place." Another man jumped up from his bunk and looked out. "That's when the flying glass hit my face and entered my eyes," he recalled. He lost one eye in surgery that night and eventually lost sight in the other. When it was all over, bodies and body-parts were everywhere.²⁶

Two hundred black sailors volunteered to help clean up the disaster. They did it without hesitation and with pride. These were their brothers. After the cleanup,

Admiral Carleton H. Wright commended the men and gave one a medal. A Court of Inquiry was held, and the white officers were admonished to discontinue the competitions, which was only a slight slap on the hand. The unstated assumption was that the men loading the ships were to blame. The survivors were in a state of shock, jumpy and highly nervous; they needed and expected a thirty-day leave to recover and receive treatment for their wounds. No leave was offered. All the Navy cared about was loading the ammunition again, but the men could hardly bring themselves to return to the work. Joseph Small, born in Georgia and having grown up in New Jersey, was a winch operator. He recalled that because of the rushing he had just missed killing a man nearly every day. "I didn't want to go back into this to go back to work under the same conditions, with no improvements, no changes, the same group of officers that we had, was just—we thought there was a better alternative, that's all." ²⁷

On August 9, the pier was restored and an order was given to load a ship. The order was given to 328 men, but the majority did not obey. The young ensigns called headquarters and repeated the order; this time 258 refused and were arrested and confined on a barge tied along the pier for three days. Tension increased amid threats that the men would be charged with mutiny. A fight occurred with one of the guards and Admiral Wright told them that he did not believe the report that they wanted to go to sea. "I don't believe any of you have enough guts to go to sea," he shouted, and then threatened to have them all shot for treason. Finally, he ordered the men to fall into two groups: those willing to work and those refusing to obey. Joe Small and forty-three others gathered in the group that refused and they were arrested. Later, six other men who had not reported for duty were added to the group, and on September 14, 1944, their trial began at the naval base at Treasure Island Naval Station in San Francisco Bay. On October 24, after only eighty minutes of deliberation, they were found guilty and sentenced to dishonorable discharges, following prison sentences of from eight to fifteen years.²⁸

Once more the black community was enraged. The NAACP sent its special counsel Thurgood Marshall, later a Supreme Court justice, to the trial as an observer. "These men are being tried for mutiny solely because of their race and color," he declared. He pointed out that the men were not guilty of mutiny; they were just understandably frightened and untrained. The Navy refused to reverse the decision, but did reduce some of the sentences. In June, 1945, with Lester Granger of the National Urban League as advisor, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal announced a new policy of integration in the Navy's training programs. In January, 1946, forty-seven of the men were released from prison and returned to active duty. Two remained in the hospital and one was held for bad conduct. Lester Granger believed that the release reflected "the anxiety of Navy officialdom to justify its racial record." Eventually the men earned and were given honorable discharges, but the mutiny convictions still stand.²⁹

The conclusion to this is another epitaph in the journals for black soldiers in the military. The Port Chicago rebellion was a crucible. It was a searing test of the

character of the enlisted men who became involved in the work stoppage. They faced a two-edged sword; to go back to work was dangerous and unacceptable, but to refuse work was to risk imprisonment and even death. They believed that their hope lay in a collective refusal to work, yet collective action could be, and was, construed as mutiny. The men grappled with this terrible dilemma and were torn by conflicting hopes and fears as they struggled to forge a response to what had become an intolerable situation. Each had to decide not once, but several times whether to resist or to comply with their orders. In effect, the Port Chicago rebellion was an attempt to transform a number of individuals into a self-conscious collective.

When I reflect on the miscarriages of justice worked upon the black soldier or sailor, it is still appalling to me. The Anglo-Saxon system of military justice is still in practice; the principles are still demonstrated in the 1990s. At a major military base in the early 1990s the Army participated in applying unequal justice with unequal punishment based on the man's color and not his crime. I worked in the Trial Defense Service, a subdivision of the Judge Advocate General branch, as the Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of that section. There I was able to observe up-close and first-hand how the Army military system administers punishment to its soldiers.

I could not help but note the contrast of two cases: a black male sergeant and a white male sergeant first class. The cases were very similar as to the nature of the crime—they both involved the use of controlled drugs. The black man used it for himself but was caught using a government vehicle to transport himself to purchase the drug. Subsequently, the car was stolen, etc. At his court martial, his first sergeant, his company commander, and his section leader testified on his behalf, but he was still sentenced to reduction to private, thirty-six months confinement and a dishonorable discharge. Up to that time, he was a soldier of unblemished record.

The white sergeant first class was a licensed practical nurse who endangered the life of a patient to obtain his drugs, cutting the plastic tubing which administered morphine to a patient in order to divert it, then refilling the container with a saline solution. The patient experienced no relief from pain; in fact, the shock from the increased pain would make his condition worse. When this sergeant was tried he had no character references; yet he was given only one grade reduction and a fine. Since he had twenty-two years of service, he was allowed to retire instead of getting a punitive discharge.

In viewing these matters in the 1990s, it is obvious to me that there is still no justice for blacks in the Army, nor the military as a whole. The inequity is still prevalent, with little change. "Military justice is to justice what military music is to music."³⁰ Generally, blacks are not given the benefit of the doubt and are not even considered trustworthy. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "blacks should be measured by the content of their character; not by the color of their skins."³¹ Racism is still pervasive and exists to the fullest in the military. There is no equal justice for blacks in the military, nor will there be until there is monumental change.

I have been awarded high military decorations, with an award predicated toward

heroism, and so have many black soldiers and sailors. But no matter how much blacks perform in a normal manner, they are still viewed as mediocre and not up to the full standard of white military order. Black soldiers and sailors have always been loyal, dedicated to duty and they have placed their lives at risk, in harm's way, in good weather or bad, under extreme pressure. But like Rodney Dangerfield, we get no respect. Blacks have laid down their lives for the country, but when the fighting is over, they are the first to be given the "heave-ho." In observing the Lady of Justice statue, I see her as being blind justice in its finest form, especially in regard to justice for blacks in the military. Why, then are blacks treated differently no matter how much they succeed or accomplish? My question is: "When will the flogging end?"

Endnotes

1. Marvin Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891-1917* (Columbia, Missouri, 1974), 119. For surveys of African-Americans in the military see Robert W. Mullen, *Blacks in America's Wars: The Shift in Attitudes from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam* (New York, 1973) and Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History* (New York, 1974).
2. Ibid., 120-121, 124.
3. Ibid., 123-125.
4. Ibid., 125-126.
5. Ibid., 126-127.
6. Ibid., 134-135, 137-138.
7. Ibid., 130, 140-144.
8. Ibid., 144-145.
9. Ibid., 146-147.
10. Ibid., 150-151.
11. Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge, 1976), 11-16, 36, 60.
12. Ibid., 57-59, 63-67, 73-74.
13. Ibid., 92-95.
14. Ibid., 95-97.
15. Ibid., 99-109.
16. Ibid., 115-125.
17. Ibid., 127-170. See Haynes, *Houston Riot* for a detailed description of the riot.
18. Ibid., 212, 257, 271-272. Four of the accused were found guilty of disobeying orders and given prison terms and five were acquitted. Ibid., 271-272.

19. Ibid., 274.
20. Ibid., 275-314.
21. Ibid., 119-120, 315.
22. Ibid., 304-305, 322.
23. Robert L. Allen, "The Port Chicago Disaster and Its Aftermath," *The Black Scholar* (Spring, 1982), 6.
24. Ibid., 7-11.
25. Ibid., 10-12.
26. Ibid., 14-15.
27. Ibid., 14-19; Robert L. Allen, *The Port Chicago Mutiny* (New York, 1989), 28.
28. Allen, "Disaster," 20, 22-23.
29. Ibid., 24-26; Charles Wollenberg, "Black vs. Navy Blue: The Mare Island Mutiny Court Martial," *California History* (Spring, 1979); Allen, *Port Chicago*, 139.
30. Robert Sherrill, *Military Justice is to Justice What Military Music is to Music* (New York, 1971), 1.
31. H. Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954-1992* (1993), 151-152.

**Franklin D. Roosevelt
and the Course to Pearl Harbor:
An Evaluation
by
Jill K. Kemme**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, like every American president, has been the target of both praise and blame. Whether it was his New Deal measures during the Great Depression or his leadership into World War II, he has been highly criticized and even accused of warmongering. At the same time, many people felt that he was the great hope through the Depression and the savior and guardian of democracy at the outset of World War II. He has been accused of provoking war, especially with Japan, by his contemporaries and by historians. Some have gone so far as to accuse him of deliberately exposing the Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor to attack. Others simply charge him with obscuring the realities of the United States' dangerous relations with Japan from the public until the Pearl Harbor attack exposed the rift in no uncertain terms. Unfortunately Roosevelt gave quite a lot of ammunition for such accusations. His public representations were often radically out of line with what was really happening in relations with Japan before Pearl Harbor. This discrepancy has been used to attempt to show that Roosevelt deviously maneuvered the United States into war with Japan while continuing to assert the promises to remain out of war which won him his third term. This investigation of the charges against Roosevelt will show that while some of the milder charges are valid, such as that he misrepresented relations with Japan, and that he won his third term on promises he knew he probably could not keep, charges of warmongering and of deliberate exposure of the Pacific fleet are essentially unfounded.

Long before the shadows of the depression and the second world war began to darken American skies, Sara and James Roosevelt welcomed their first and only child into the world. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born into the established patrician Roosevelt family of Hyde Park, New York on January 30, 1882. Young Franklin, though he could not know it at the time, was born into a life of wealth and privilege. His mother had gained, as a result of exotic travel in the luxury and comfort of money, a sense that anything was possible and that nothing was out of reach. She instilled her confidence in her son giving the same sense that anything was possible for him.¹ As Franklin grew up in Springwood of Hyde Park, his father's estate, his life was marked by a complete lack of unhappiness or anxiety, an observation recalled by his mother.² As a young boy, he rambled about the estate,

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walking and horseback riding and sailed his own boat by the time he was fourteen years old. One of the most obvious evidences of the ease and pleasure in which Roosevelt grew up is in the family vacation at Campobello, Maine. The Roosevelts enjoyed a cottage on the sea as well as picnics, hiking, swimming, sailing, resting, reading, camping and a host of visitors to the cottage. Still, he preferred Springwood where he discovered a love for bird hunting, trees, horseback riding, and stamp collecting.³

At age fourteen, Franklin left the security and comfort of Springwood to enter the trials of Groton preparatory school. He entered two years past the accepted entry age of twelve which put him at a disadvantage with his own age group and with his younger classmates. He was not athletic at Groton, nor was he at Harvard, which he entered in 1900. His lack of ability in sports left him at a disadvantage at both schools. He enjoyed a prestigious address and active social life at Harvard, but failed to reach the top of his class socially. He received recognition as a cheerleader at football games and as a journalist for the college newspaper, the *Crimson*, but in his senior year was overlooked for selection into the most prestigious club on campus, the Porcellian. He was selected, however to the only slightly less prestigious Fly Club.⁴

Also during his senior year at Harvard, Roosevelt fell in love with Eleanor Roosevelt, his own distant cousin. She was also from a wealthy and prestigious family of Dutchess County, New York. Franklin and Eleanor married on March 17, 1905, with Eleanor's uncle, newly inaugurated President Theodore Roosevelt, giving her away. They settled in New York city, and Franklin attended Columbia law school for two years. He did not graduate, but he passed the New York state bar and went to work for the prestigious New York law group Carter, Ledyard and Milburn. He left the firm in 1910 to pursue a career in politics.⁵ His first political office came as a result of Roosevelt's love of his own Dutchess County, Hyde Park and Springwood estate. He was nominated to the New York state legislature for Dutchess County as the first Democratic candidate in the state senate in New York in fifty years. He was immediately taken with reform politics and became the leader of the reform Democrats in the New York legislature. He went on to be appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy by President Woodrow Wilson, and in 1920, James Cox of Ohio chose Roosevelt as his vice presidential running mate. Although the two did not win, Roosevelt impressed others with his charm, winning personality, and capable performance as well as his abilities as a public speaker. By 1928, Roosevelt had been elected New York state governor, and was reelected to that post in 1930. As New York governor, Roosevelt embarked on a rigorous program of reform including social welfare, labor legislation, public power, administrative reorganization, and unemployment looking forward to his New Deal reforms. After four years as New York governor, he had demonstrated confidence, poise and ambition and was elected to his first presidential term.

He entered his first term with no coherent idea of how to combat the depression. He had however, developed an affinity for experimentation and compromise, and

his 1921 bout with polio and infantile paralysis instilled in him a new sense of maturity, humility and determination. Eleanor Roosevelt, in an account to biographer Gerald D. Nash, identified Roosevelt's illness as the experience which shaped her husband's character above all others. "It gave him," she said, "a strength and depth that he did not have as a young man."⁶ She identified that strength of character as the force which enabled him to lead the country with complete confidence through the depression and into World War II.⁷ His new determination and resolve helped him discover his answer to the depression: the New Deal. In the first "Hundred Days" of his administration, Roosevelt accomplished in rapid succession several relief measures aimed at the jobless, banking restrictions, and securities. By 1935, the second New Deal was established, and another rash of reform measures was enacted. His re-election in 1936 marked the height of his New Deal reform and by 1939, Roosevelt's attention had turned from economic relief to foreign affairs. War had come to Europe. Hitler had invaded the Sudetenland, annexed Austria, and taken Czechoslovakia; Poland was next, and Britain and France fulfilled their promises to Poland and entered the war. Americans could not fail to recognize the strength and danger of Hitler's designs, yet had no desire to be drawn into the conflict. Their President knew this well, and when the time came for campaign and re-election in 1940, he catered to the intense isolationist mindset of his public.

It is important to highlight Roosevelt's campaign promises and those of his Democratic platform because they serve as a frame for the accusations that emphasize the blatant discrepancy between these promises and the entry into the war. He entered 1941 as a third-term president, Charles A. Beard claims, under a covenant with Americans to stay out of war, and to conduct foreign policy to that end.⁸ The platform to which he committed himself stated: "We will not participate in foreign wars . . . except in the case of attack" and that all material aid available to the United States would be pledged to "liberty loving peoples" not inconsistent with United States defense.⁹ In a September 1939 Fireside Chat, he proclaimed neutrality and expressed confidence that war could be avoided.¹⁰ He assured Americans that "We will not participate in foreign wars, and we will not send our Army, Naval or Air Forces to fight in foreign lands . . . The direction and aim of our foreign policy has been, and will continue to be, the security and defense of our own land and the maintenance of its peace."¹¹ In addition, he promised "your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars" and "your President says this country is not going to war."¹² In a December 1940 Fireside Chat he promised that "our national policy is not directed toward war."¹³ His promises were clear and strong. He expressed what seemed to be sincere belief that America could and would remain at peace, and his expressions were a mandate to stay out of war, Beard states.¹⁴ If he sensed or saw any danger of war, or if any "drastic or unexpected alteration in the posture of affairs" occurred causing a change in the anti-war policy, Beard claims, he had an obligation to notify and explain such a change to the public.¹⁵ Americans should have been reasonably able to expect Roosevelt's promises to be kept, and Beard points out that "only by spurning the peace pledges of their party could

Democratic Senators and Representatives . . . enact into law measures calculated to take the U.S. into war."¹⁶

It must be noted that any citizen heeding Roosevelt's promises had also to hear and comprehend his warnings, which he expressed as clearly as he expressed promises. As early as 1937, in his "Quarantine Speech" on October 5, Roosevelt warned Americans that "Innocent peoples, innocent nations, are being cruelly sacrificed to a greed for power and supremacy . . . devoid of all sense of justice and human considerations," and that "If those things come to pass in other parts of the world, let no one imagine that America will escape, that America may expect mercy . . . will not be attacked and . . . will continue tranquilly . . ."¹⁷ Roosevelt unmistakably recognized and communicated openly to the public the threat of Hitler's and Japan's aggressions. As that threat became clearer, Roosevelt's warning began to take on the quality of a call to action for Americans. "The peace-loving nations must make a concerted effort to uphold laws and principles on which alone peace can rest secure," Roosevelt stated in the autumn of 1937.¹⁸ In the same speech he claimed "The situation is definitely of universal concern." Stating that the peace, welfare and security of all nations was being threatened, Roosevelt called on the moral conscience of the world to remove injustices.¹⁹

After 1930, Dexter Perkins points out, Roosevelt became convinced that "aggressor and aggrieved" were joined and that it was sound to assist the aggrieved.²⁰ Also, it was noted by Justice Felix Frankfurter in a 1945 Harvard Memorial Address that "There came a time when he could no longer doubt that he had to shift from . . . social reform to war leadership."²¹ Shortly after the 1940 election, in a private letter, Roosevelt said: "For practical purposes, there is going on a world conflict, in which there are aligned on one side Japan, Germany, and Italy, and on the other side China, Great Britain, and the United States."²² He clearly perceived the threat and probability of United States entry into the war. His public speeches reflected his determination to wipe out dictators and the "philosophy of force" in the warnings he gave. As he made such statements, he began stirring support as well as condemnation for aid to the Allies, especially Great Britain. He appealed to the public's sympathy for conquered nations, Allied belligerents and oppressed peoples in a December 1940 Fireside Chat, and he claimed that contrary to popular belief, wars involving Europe and Asia are "a matter of most vital concern" to the United States.²³ He also emphasized the need to keep Britain free and strong for America's own defense, which encapsulated the rationale behind his controversial Lend-Lease plan.

The early hints of Lend-Lease began with statements such as "We must be the great arsenal of democracy."²⁴ The need to aid Britain was emphasized as vital to America's safety: if Britain stood fast and victorious, America would be safe and peaceful; if not, America would be in grave danger. With the rigors of the campaign behind him, Roosevelt began his third term with the introduction of the Lend-Lease bill. The bill was presented as strictly a defense measure, but isolationist groups such as the America First group vehemently argued that it was a war measure. While

recognizing the disparity inherent in the bill, that loaned and leased materials would probably never be returned, and that it clearly violated international law by aiding a belligerent, Dexter Perkins insists an accusation of the President of deliberately misrepresenting Lend-Lease is unfounded.²⁵ Despite bitter debate in Congress and in the public, historian Thomas A. Bailey emphasized that public opinion actually strongly favored aiding the Allies.²⁶ The public's resolve to provide such aid had crystallized early in 1940 with the collapse of the democracies. Among the arguments and accusations targeted at Roosevelt and Lend-Lease were charges that it would lead to convoying and shooting incidents on the high seas. Roosevelt, however, assured the public that "Taking counsel of expert military and naval authorities, considering what is best for our own security, we are free to decide how much should be kept here and how much should be sent abroad."²⁷ He claimed that "The happiness of future generations of Americans may well depend on how effective and how immediate we can make our aid felt."²⁸ In a demonstration of resolve and determination, Roosevelt told the country that America must aid the Allies, and that such aid would be given because "We can not, and will not, tell them they must surrender."²⁹

Lend-Lease passed on March 11, 1941. What ensued was in effect American undeclared non-neutrality. Beard emphasized that under international law, it is an act of war for a neutral government to supply munitions, arms and implements of war to a belligerent nation.³⁰ Roosevelt responded to this same charge when leveled against him in 1941 by saying: "... we will not be intimidated by the threats of dictators that they will regard as a breach of international law ... our aid to the democracies ... such aid is not an act of war ..."³¹ When the obvious problem of how to safely deliver Lend-Lease supplies to Britain in German submarine-infested waters arose, the controversy turned toward convoying. The armed escorting of belligerent ships in delivering war materials was a breach of international law. It was feared and argued that convoying would lead immediately to shooting, and shooting to war. Critics of Roosevelt, especially Beard, cite Roosevelt's treatment of convoying publicly and privately as evidence of a "conspiracy" to enter war. The President termed convoy as an option never considered; the Secretary of the Navy expressly denied convoying was in use or being considered for use. Sponsors of Lend-Lease repeatedly assured the public that convoying would not be used. The truth is that the thoughts on Americans' minds—that it was foolish to send supplies to Britain only to have them sunk by the Germans—were on the minds of the administration also. While Roosevelt claimed no authority to establish convoys, he declared himself in favor of "lawful patrolling."³² Two weeks after Roosevelt announced the occupation of Greenland involving the protection of Lend-Lease shipments by the United States Navy, the Administration began preparing the public for convoying. Secretary of State Cordell Hull announced that a way must be found to insure delivery, and that meant convoys. By May, convoying was almost a given, and by July, a "secret" plan was in effect and expressly ordered by the President "escorting, covering and patrolling."³³ Lend-Lease led to the convoys which

Roosevelt denied and denounced. The tenets of his campaign pledges still ringing, critics were doubting Roosevelt's course. It is obvious that critics had reason to doubt Roosevelt. It seemed he was guilty of an outright lie. He promised Lend-Lease and convoying measures were purely defensive, and that convoying was not even being considered, but it was and it was used. He promised to keep the United States out of war, but he was enacting measures in violation of international law. Still, one must remember that there is no way of accurately accusing Roosevelt of deliberately designing Lend-Lease to provoke war. He was convinced of the danger to America, and he saw a way to defend her through aid to Britain. Misrepresentations, while suspicious, could have been due simply to an awareness of the intense isolationist spirit of the public at the time.

While the public and the Administration were debating and worrying over aid to the Allies, a much more serious conflict was ensuing between Roosevelt and his advisors and the Japanese government. Hints of the precarious balance of Japanese relations reached the public in 1941, but most were unaware of the dangerous state of affairs until they exploded in Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt's critics have eagerly rooted out every hint of provocation, discrepancy and questionable diplomacy in his handling of the pre-Pearl Harbor negotiations with the Japanese. The charge against him is the provocation of the Japanese into attacking the United States, so that he would have an unquestionable reason to ask for a war declaration.

The stage was set for conflict in 1931 when Japan engineered an explosion on the Japanese-controlled South Manchurian Railroad. Armed Japanese forces retaliated by taking over key positions in South Manchuria. As the Japanese continued to roll into Manchuria in October, the United States sent a representative to the League of Nations, which the United States had previously avoided. The Japanese took the step as "deliberately unfriendly."³⁴ When Japan attacked Shanghai, bombing thousands of men, women and children, the United States was appalled, and the American government refused to recognize the newly established Japanese puppet regime in Manchuria.³⁵ For the most part, the United States responded with paper protests, but in 1932, a proclamation note was sent to Japan warning that the United States would not tolerate any violation of American rights in Manchuria.³⁶ In 1934, the Japanese declared a sort of Monroe Doctrine for the Far East sealing their dreams of a "New Order in East Asia" or a "Co-Prosperity Sphere in Greater East Asia."³⁷ The cherished Open Door in China was being slammed shut on American interests, and in 1938, Japan openly declared the circumstances and conditions under which the Open Door operated dead. The United States responded in true isolationist fashion with a moral embargo which the Japanese ignored.³⁸ They recommended that the United States recognize the new order and receive a larger portion of trade. Unwilling to cooperate, the United States arranged a \$25,000,000 loan to the assaulted Chinese.³⁹ As the Japanese continued to make huge gains in their scheme for new order, Washington refused to recognize territorial changes brought about by force and insisted on the sanctity of the Open Door.

Roosevelt's policy until 1940 had been one of appeasement. He was afraid to

impose any sort of embargo lest the Japanese resort to the semi-defenseless Dutch East Indies for supplies. There was also the concern that the United States was not adequately prepared for defense.⁴⁰ Measures were confined to large loans to China, but by spring, thoughts in Washington revolved on the fact that American trade with Japan was providing the very supplies which made their imperialistic designs possible, and that materials vital to America's own defense were going to Japan. Public opinion supported the cutting off of supplies to Japan, and Roosevelt was under pressure from his Administration to impose an embargo. Henry Morgenthau Jr., in charge of emergency aid to Great Britain, was urging Roosevelt to cut off supplies entirely, while ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew was urging him to act carefully in regard to an embargo.⁴¹ Under great pressure, Roosevelt recommended the National Defense Act under which the first presidential order was the placement under license all arms, ammunition and implements of war, all raw materials listed "critical and strategic," and all airplane parts.⁴² It was significant that scrap metal and oil, for which Japan depended almost completely on the United States, was still flowing freely to Japan. Their advice to acknowledge their new sphere of influence in Asia was met with a refusal by Roosevelt's administration to enter into any new trade accord unless they end their endeavors by threat and force to initiate such a sphere, and by an expression of disapproval of Japan's demands of the Indies to yield products essential to their assaults. At this time, Roosevelt was greatly concerned that Japan would join the Axis powers, as they had not yet done so. The need for an agreement was apparent.⁴³

Ambassador Grew presented the American position to the Japanese foreign minister, but May and June passed without any agreement. The fall of France in June 1940 sent a wave of imperialistic excitement through Japan: Japan could now invade French Indo-China. While keeping an eye on possible conquests made newly possible by France's defeat, Japan courted Germany's assurance to recognize and support their control in Asia. At the same time, demands were presented to the United States that aid to China end, allowing Japan to focus on further imperialistic endeavors.⁴⁴ Japan's aims at this time can be summarized as such: to end the conflict in China as soon as possible (made possible only by the end of American aid); to move South in such a way as to avoid war with other powers; to maintain a firm attitude toward America and to form a political combination with Germany; to take stronger measures against French Indo-China, Hong Kong and foreign aid to China looking to the prevention of any further aid to China; and to extract from the Netherlands East Indies vital war material.⁴⁵ When it became clear to Roosevelt that this was the course which Japan would unalterably follow with the support of the Axis powers in the Tripartite pact, he announced on July 25, 1941 that all exports of scrap metal and oil would be subject to license. The Tripartite pact clearly indicated that the Axis powers would recognize and support Japan's control in East Asia. Conscious of the sensitive nature of such a measure with respect to Japan, the measure was presented to them and to Americans as purely a general measure targeted entirely at the United States' own needs. Japan was not convinced.

Roosevelt was bombarded with pleas from the Netherlands and Britain that Japan would now seek control of the Indies for oil, but Roosevelt did not yield. Japan sent three formal notes of protest that they were being singled out, but again, Roosevelt did not yield. Meanwhile, Japan drew closer to Germany and increased demands on Indo-China and the Indies.⁴⁶

It should be noted that the restrictions placed by Roosevelt so far were essentially non-discriminatory, but it must also be pointed out that Japan relied heavily on the United States for oil and scrap iron. To them the restrictions were very discriminatory as their war machine was in danger of coming to a halt. At this point, the Battle of Britain was of utmost concern: if Britain was victorious, Japan would not be so bold, if not, Japan could be expected to continue more forcefully into other territories as it had into Indo-China and the Dutch Indies. It is worth noting also that during the events described above, Roosevelt was campaigning and issuing promises of peace to the anxious country. While he was making promises, the Japanese Premier, Konoye, was conducting overtures to Roosevelt to try to alleviate tension, but was under duress by militarists in his government who were unwilling to consent to any conditions the United States may have accepted. The impression one gets from most sources is that neither Japan nor the United States wanted war. America was unprepared mentally and defensively for a Pacific war, and Japan would risk losing its new order and its ill gotten conquests.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, relations proceeded rapidly toward armed conflict as 1941 progressed. On April 13, 1941, Japan signed the Tokyo-Moscow Pact and then made new demands for bases in French Indo-China. Roosevelt responded by freezing Japanese assets; Great Britain and the Netherlands followed. The Japanese were dumbfounded; they were virtually cut off from oil supplies and could only sustain their war effort for twelve to eighteen months. They realized they had either to give up their new order scheme or seize oil reserves in the Indies.⁴⁸ According to historian Herbert Feis, "the step had been taken which was to force Japan between making terms with us or making war against us."⁴⁹ The United States would no longer be providing the resources for Japan to continue its imperialistic philosophy of force.

Beard claims that by freezing Japanese assets, Roosevelt was pursuing a course directly toward war. Knowing what a blow it would be and that he left little room for compromise, he went ahead with the fateful measure. Beard claims also that the public had been unforgivably uninformed until the freezing of assets exposed the rift between the two countries. Roosevelt insisted that it was not a measure directed toward war, but simply a construct designed to prevent Japan from using financial assets in the United States "in ways harmful to national defense and American interest."⁵⁰ Although critics insisted that the sharp measure was a design to lead America directly into the war, public opinion was in support of it.⁵¹ It was at this time that Prince Konoye began requesting a personal meeting with Roosevelt; Perkins cites this as an indication that the severance of economic relations did not necessarily mean all hope was lost. That the meeting never took place has been a

prime target for those who accuse Roosevelt of warmongering. Why did the meeting not take place? Why was Roosevelt unwilling to negotiate? These questions lingered in the minds of doubters, and it is important to investigate the ill-fated attempt at conciliation.

According to Herbert Feis, Konoye and his invitation were not trusted by Roosevelt. Konoye had a bad record and had "too often been either the author or tool of deception."⁵² Despite his doubts, Roosevelt assured Konoye that he wished to meet but had other more pressing duties at the time. Beard, however, cites the president's hesitance as merely playing for time, citing his previous statement that he thought he could "baby the Japanese along" for a while. He claims that if the president really wanted to remain out of the war, he would not have demanded so much of Japan and would have been more conciliatory.⁵³ The demands to which Beard refers were the gist of a joint warning orchestrated by Winston Churchill and Roosevelt in an effort to avert war with Japan for a little while longer. The warning stated to Japan that if their government moved any further in the Southwestern Pacific, the United States would be forced to take counter action, even if such measures led to war. Originally, Roosevelt felt the warning was too stiff. He feared the consequences of too severe a warning, which may have had an effect opposite of what was intended.⁵⁴ Roosevelt and Churchill thought that by issuing such a warning, Japan would be temporarily deterred from further conquest. Beard claims that if Roosevelt could say that he thought he could hold off war with Japan with the warning, then he knew the two countries were heading directly toward war. Why did he not let the public know? And why, when Konoye promised that Japan would consent to America's main principles, did Roosevelt not treat with him? Again, Roosevelt did not trust Konoye and insisted that he and Japan support their promises with actions. Two months passed before the prospect of a Konoye-Roosevelt meeting waned.

During the above negotiations, Roosevelt read the warning statement to Japanese ambassador Nomura, who felt it was exceedingly sharp, although Roosevelt followed it with an assurance that he wished to continue talks. Afterward, Japan set forth more demands to the United States, summarized as follows: the United States and Great Britain were not to obstruct settlement with China and were to end all aid to China; they were to close the Burma Road and Japan was to retain the right to maintain troops at points in China while the United States was not to set up bases in the Far East.⁵⁵ The terms set forth would have allowed Japan to emerge rewarded for their philosophy of force; they would have allowed Japan to control China and to retain the opportunity to move farther South in conquest. American demands would have meant Japan withdraw from China, accept defeat, and give up past gains and future imperialistic designs.⁵⁶ When notified in an October 2 note that America found no basis for a settlement, Japan drew up its last proposals for an agreement. Proposal A dictated the principles previously rejected by Roosevelt, expressed agreement to important aims of the United States, such as that there be economic equality in the Far East, and that Japan withdraw from China, but demanded that

Roosevelt threaten China with the withdrawal of aid if it did not make peace with Japan. If Proposal A was unsuccessful, Proposal B, for a temporary truce between the two countries, was to be offered. It is unclear why Roosevelt eventually rejected the proposed truce. That all the proposals and demands communicated from Japan to its ambassadors were being deciphered by "Magic," the broken Japanese code, gives some insight. Roosevelt knew beforehand of Japan's last proposals, and he knew that they were just that: last offers of agreement. He also knew that the Japanese had decided that if no agreement was reached by November 26, that Japan was going to go to war against the United States. Their demands were clearly unacceptable to Roosevelt, as were Roosevelt's to them. A truce to China and other victims of Japan's aggressions meant abandonment, and they made their protests loudly to Roosevelt. In any case, the truce was refused and replaced by what many have called an ultimatum.

On November 26, Roosevelt served Japan with a memorandum: Japan was to join a non-aggression pact with all countries concerned in the Far East and was to withdraw completely from China. Feis emphasizes that these terms left Japan four choices: agree to America's policies and give up all it had gained and planned to gain; refrain from moving any further South and carry on war with China without needed oil; retreat from China a little and see what the democracies conceded in return; or go to war with the United States.⁵⁷ They obviously chose the fourth option, and by the time they had received notice of America's position, the forces which would bomb Pearl Harbor were already in motion.

A week and a half after the memorandum of November 26, Americans were wondering how in the world Pearl Harbor could have happened. Some people, like Charles A. Beard, blamed Roosevelt. Historians have zoomed in on a recollection by an administration official present in the November 25 war council meeting as proof-positive that Roosevelt engineered an attack by the Japanese. In the meeting, the main concern was how to "maneuver" the Japanese into firing the first shot.⁵⁸ Critics focus on a statement made by Roosevelt just prior to the final memorandum as evidence that Roosevelt was concealing a well-orchestrated war plan from the public. On December 2, 1941, when Roosevelt knew the Japanese were undoubtedly going to enter war with America, he said to the public: "the United States is at peace with Japan and perfectly friendly, too."⁵⁹ On November 27 Roosevelt asked his cabinet if they thought America would support him if the United States struck Japan first; they told him yes.⁶⁰ While Beard cites the above statements as a misrepresentation to the public, he states also that Americans knew relations with Japan were at a deadlock and near a breaking point. How misinformed were they? What good or evil would the inevitable extreme reactions of the public have done had they known every detail of Roosevelt's diplomacy? Roosevelt's statement to the public that America was at peace with Japan when he knew well that war was imminent was a rather blatant lie, and one must be careful when justifying falsehoods, but much of Roosevelt's misrepresentation can be attributed to a genuine fear of stirring up opposition. He may have sincerely meant it when he

promised to keep America out of war. Perhaps he believed he could. He had a sense from childhood that anything was possible, and he had a well of determination and faith from combating polio. With these strengths behind him, he set himself against what he perceived to be a serious threat to the country. One need only examine some of Roosevelt's early speeches to understand his resolve to eradicate dictatorships and to preserve democracy: "No dictator, no combination of dictators, will weaken the determination by threats of how they will construe that determination;" "I believe that the Axis powers are not going to win this war;" and "I have the profound conviction that the American people are now determined to put forth a mightier effort . . . to meet the threat to our democratic faith."⁶¹ These statements were made during his campaign in 1940. Certainly one could argue that he made them only to win an election. There is no doubt that they helped him win. The question asked was "what happened to the promises?" It must be emphasized that just because the United States entered the war after its leader promised it would not, does not mean that leader fully intended on such a course. Affairs appear much different from the seat of the president, and as Perkins points out, it is inaccurate to put thoughts into the president's head in order to accuse him of wrongdoing. Perhaps Roosevelt won the 1940 election on promises he did not really believe he could keep, and he certainly did misrepresent some of his policies, such as convoying and negotiations with Japan, but this student believes that Roosevelt acted out of an awareness of public opinion, which caused him to hide the truth, and a sincere belief that his leadership into the war was necessary to the preservation of America's own democratic way of life, and of other less powerful countries dependent upon the United States for help against aggressors.

Endnotes

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50. Beard, *Roosevelt*, 178.
51. Feis, *Pearl Harbor*, 239.
52. Ibid., 260.
53. Beard, *Roosevelt*, 498.
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55. Ibid., 264.
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Robert F. Kennedy: Attorney General

by

John Steinbrunner

The name Robert Francis Kennedy conjures up many images in the public mind. Wealth, power, greed, controversy, and tragedy seem to encircle this name in a great haze. Here for the world to see is a man who has been both idolized as a great reformer, working for the simple man's cause, and denounced as just another opportunistic politician. There are those who remember the Robert Kennedy who seemed to pursue Jimmy Hoffa, and other members of the Teamsters Organization, with a wild zeal, in a land where "innocent until proven guilty" is the accepted credo. And, if you ask others, they will recall the Robert Kennedy who tried to reorganize the Justice Department and break up J. Edgar Hoover's lethargic search for "commies." And yet others will recall, with a passion, the Robert Kennedy who fought so diligently for the rights of blacks and oppressed peoples everywhere, and who gave such a moving speech the day Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed. "In memories, in histories, in bull sessions, he has turned into a legend, a man of so many faces, voices, and identities that no one can keep track of them all."¹

But who was the real Robert F. Kennedy? Who was this younger brother of John F. Kennedy, one of the most recognized presidents in American history? Was he a calculating and cold-hearted politician, or a passionate leader struggling for a better world? For both these aspects are part of the Kennedy legend, a legend that is as confusing as it is timeless.

It is said that there is a grain of truth in every legend. If this is so then perhaps the truth lies hidden in the mists of Robert's own mythos. Robert Kennedy was, in fact, all these things and much more. Like any human being, he was a complex individual who, at some time or another, was as calculating as he was passionate, as tough as he was sensitive, and, perhaps, as under-handed as he was moralistic. Robert Kennedy's career spanned the political spectrum. He served as "an acolyte of Senator Joseph McCarthy" in the Senator's obsessive search for communist infiltration.² He worked under Senator John McClellan on a commission investigating corruption and organized crime in labor. He was one of John F. Kennedy's campaign managers, and became his Attorney General. After John's death and the presidential election of 1964 he would become a senator and, in 1968, would take that fateful step, and decide to run for president of the United States.

In all his endeavors Kennedy sought to create what he perceived as a just world. But what exactly was Robert's idea of justice and how did he go about enacting his own particular brand of this abstract and confusing concept? This paper will attempt

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to find the answers to these questions by studying Robert's career as Attorney General from 1960 to 1964. It was during this period that a great deal of Kennedy's reputation was formed and the mythos begun. As *The New Republic* once noted, in an adulatory article on Robert Kennedy, we must take "...note of the years in which he earned the deserved reputation as one of the two or three best - if not the very best - attorneys general of this century."³ In studying his role as Attorney General the paper focuses on Robert's struggles against what he perceived as the evils of organized-crime, and his work to secure civil rights for all Americans.

It is, perhaps, valuable to begin such a study with a brief synopsis of Robert's early years. Robert Kennedy was born on November 25, 1925, in Brookline, Massachusetts. Born into wealth, he was the son of Joseph Patrick Kennedy who made his "...fortune in the 1920s in Wall Street and Hollywood...."⁴ Robert was the seventh of nine children and was removed in age from his older brothers, Joe Jr. and John, by ten and eight years respectively. As the book, *Robert F. Kennedy: The Brother Within*, points out, "...Robert was the little brother in the middle of five sisters."⁵ This, perhaps, led to Robert's early drives to be as competitive as possible in an attempt to match his much older brothers. "Almost everyone who watched Robert Kennedy grow agrees that the amazing resolve he exhibited in adult life was born of his attempts...to keep up with his older brothers."⁶

In 1943 Robert enlisted in the Naval Reserves and entered V-12 training at Harvard. In 1945, of his own request, Robert was released from officers' training and assigned to the United States destroyer, *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.* Disregarding the name of the vessel itself, one must wonder if this was not one more attempt to match the accomplishments of his brother John. Robert served briefly before being honorably discharged on May 30, 1946.⁷

In this same year, Robert returned to Harvard and listed government as his field of concentration. It was while he was here, at Harvard, that he began to exhibit some of the self-righteousness that would infect his work in later years. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. points out, in his book, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, Robert often visited the St. Benedict Center to hear Father Leonard Feeney speak. Feeney was a hard-core individual who preached a doctrine of "no salvation outside the church." As Schlesinger notes, "this vastly irritated Robert Kennedy, who put up an argument, angrily abandoned the center and shocked his mother by denouncing Father Feeney at the Kennedy dinner table."⁸

While at Harvard, Robert's grades were, at best, adequate. In the book, *The Brother Within*, he is quoted as saying, "I didn't go to class very much...I used to talk and argue a lot, mostly about sports and politics."⁹ Robert's main interest at Harvard was football, a sport he was not really built for, and yet he pursued with a dogged determination that he would later become publicly known for. In his senior year, "...he broke his leg in practice but characteristically told no one and kept on trying to play till he collapsed on the field."¹⁰

Robert Kennedy graduated from Harvard, with a B.A., in 1948. Soon after this, with the help of his father, he received a job as a correspondent for the *Boston Post*.

This job provided him with opportunities to travel abroad.¹¹ These trips, through Europe and the Middle East, provide an excellent series of examples of another trait Robert would become known for—impetuosity. At one point, while in Cairo, he decided to travel to Tel Aviv, something he was warned against because of the turmoil in that area, at the time. “This had the usual effect. On March 26...they flew to Lydda airport and traveled to Tel Aviv by armored car...along roads menaced by Arab guerillas.”¹²

Upon his return he entered the University of Virginia Law School. While attending Virginia, he married Ethel Shakel and graduated about a year later in 1951.¹³ Soon after this, he began working for the Department of Justice where he served briefly in the Internal Security Division before transferring to the Criminal Division. He got his first real taste of criminal investigation when he was assigned to a case against two Harry S. Truman officials who had been accused of corruption.¹⁴

In 1952, Robert made his debut into the political world by campaigning for his brother John’s senatorial bid. It was while working for his brother that he began to acquire a reputation as a cold-hearted, ruthless, all-business type. Victor Lasky describes one such situation in his book, *Robert F. Kennedy: The Myth and the Man*:

A celebrated local politician paid a visit to the newly opened Kennedy headquarters and was amazed to discover that no one, not even the candidate’s manager, knew who he was. “You’re asking me who I am?,” the pol shouted, “You mean to say nobody here knows me? And you call this a political headquarters?”

As the politician continued to be abusive, Bobby angrily told him to get the hell out.¹⁵

In 1953 Robert worked briefly for the Senate Subcommittee on investigations under Joseph McCarthy. Robert Kennedy was zealously patriotic and a firm believer in the evils of communist aggression.¹⁶ However, he soon became disgusted with McCarthy’s hit-and-run tactics and resigned in less than a year.¹⁷

He would become chief counsel of the Senate Investigations Committee, and in 1957, chief counsel of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor and Management Field.¹⁸ Robert’s work for this committee would make a lasting impression on him and would lead to a great deal of the work he would do as Attorney General. He would go on to document his work for the Rackets Committee (as it would become better known) in his book, *The Enemy Within*. This book abounds with Robert’s linguistic righteous indignation against the evils that corrupt labor practices inflict on the common man. As Telford Taylor points out, in his review of this book, the “author’s style and sense of proportion are not impeccable...the characterizations are anything but subtle...Mr. Kennedy may well be criticized for some of the things he did not put into his book.”¹⁹ Keeping this point in mind, as well as the fact that we would all portray ourselves as the good-guy, if given the chance, the book does reveal something of Robert’s moral outlook on

crime and corruption. "...[T]hough the great majority of Teamster officers and Teamster members are honest, the Teamsters union under Hoffa is not run as a bona fide union. As Mr. Hoffa operates it, this is a conspiracy of evil."²⁰

With the coming election of 1960, Robert turned his attention to his brother John's bid to become president of the United States. He became John's campaign manager and served his brother well, going out to the people to earn much-needed votes. After John Kennedy was elected president he asked Robert to be his Attorney General. Reluctant, at first, Robert eventually succumbed to the pressure his brother applied and accepted the position. It would be the start of a very active four years for Robert F. Kennedy.²¹

Robert Kennedy, in his years prior to being appointed Attorney General, had formed some very definite opinions on justice. Upon entering the duties of his office, he quickly set to work to achieve these ideals. At the top of his list, presumably because of his work in the Rackets Committee, was organized-crime. In his first speech as Attorney General, presented to the University of Georgia Law School, Kennedy wasted no time in bringing this issue to the fore. At the same time, Robert also set the tone for his term in office. In this speech he cited three major concerns that he believed threatened the integrity of the United States. The first of these was organized-crime, the second was a public apathetic to the damage organized-crime was inflicting on society, and the third was the struggle for civil rights.²² In this speech Kennedy called on the people of the United States to stand up and be counted, and pleaded for a new respect for the law. "Respect for the law - in essence that is the meaning of Law Day - and everyday must be Law Day or else our society will collapse."²³

Robert Kennedy saw organized-crime as a widespread and rampant problem in this country. He believed strongly in a "...private government of organized-crime, a government with an annual income of billions, resting on a base of human suffering and moral corrosion."²⁴ To him, organized-crime threatened the American way of life by leeching on the foundations of our society. He cited gambling, narcotics, extortion, prostitution, and corrupt labor relations as the tools through which the underworld made their money and bled society of its wealth.²⁵ To Robert, the mob had even come to exercise power over the legal premises of our land. "There is the racket's leader, seeking protection from the law, and there is the public official who offers it...daily betraying his position of honor and trust in his community."²⁶

To Robert Kennedy, there was also a much deeper effect that the crime syndicates had on our country. He believed that the existence of these organizations was destroying the very moral fiber of our nation. "It is not the gangster himself who is of concern. It is what he is doing to our cities, our communities, our moral fiber."²⁷ To Robert the problems delved far deeper than the simple legalistic variety. He believed that society was rapidly coming to accept this situation as the norm, and were becoming apathetic to the issues at hand; the very attitudes of the people were being corrupted by this dilemma.

Tolerating organized crime promotes the cheap philosophy that everything is a racket. It promotes cynicism among adults. It contributes to the confusion of the young and to the increase of juvenile delinquency.²⁸

In dealing with organized-crime, Kennedy felt that the relative ignorance of the common people on this subject was one contributing factor to the crime syndicate's success. "The American public may not see him, but that only makes the racketeer's power for evil in our society even greater."²⁹

In coming to grips with these problems, Kennedy found the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be seriously unprepared. Under J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI had devoted the bulk of its vast resources to the investigation of communist subversives. In doing this, they had neglected such things as criminal investigations in the complex world of the crime syndicate.

Kennedy set to work immediately to right this situation. Soon after entering office, he began organizing and coordinating various departments that could be of some use in the fight against the mob. Starting with the Internal Revenue Service and the Narcotics Bureau, he began the huge task of arming the government for its new legal battle.³⁰ As Schlesinger points out: "For the first time all the federal groups that knew anything about the underworld came together in the same room and exchanged information."³¹ Robert then placed this coalition under the control of the organized-crime section of the Justice Department, effectively quadrupling its size.³² In charge of this new section, Kennedy placed Edwyn Silberling, a man described as having "a formidable legal background."³³

Silberling organized a staff of fifty lawyers to work out in the field with state district attorneys and other law enforcement officials.³⁴ Along with this, Kennedy added a personal touch to these efforts, spending a great deal of time with the men he had assigned to this task. "Under Kennedy, for the first time agents...in each major city were assigned to travel with and brief the Attorney General."³⁵ These were men who were young, open to new ideas, and motivated. "The first article of their faith was that with ingenuity and persistence, justice could be achieved within the system."³⁶

At the same time that Kennedy was restructuring the Justice Department, he began an effort to motivate the indifferent Federal Bureau of Investigation. In an attempt to give the FBI a set of legal tools it could utilize with clear authority, Robert sent eight proposals to Congress that would define the FBI's jurisdiction. In September of 1961 Congress passed five of these proposals.³⁷

"Under Kennedy's pressure the national government took on organized crime as it had never done before."³⁸ Infamous gangs in Rhode Island and New Jersey were all but destroyed, and convictions from all over the country escalated. In 1961 there were ninety-six, in 1962, one hundred and one, and in 1963, they had three hundred and three convictions.³⁹

Any study of Robert Kennedy's work against organized crime leads one to see that he had a great drive to fight what he saw as a very clear menace to American

society. Some would call him obsessed, others would see that he had a clear vision of the way things were and the way that he thought they should be. The same could not be said for his early role in civil rights.

As Schlesinger points out, Robert Kennedy was not overly concerned about the movement when he first took office.⁴⁰ It was not that he was unsympathetic to the cause, it was just that he did not understand the true gravity of the situation. Though the Kennedys were of Irish descent, and their grandparents had been discriminated against when they had immigrated to the United States, Robert was of an age that he would have been fairly removed from such problems. "I don't think that it was a matter that we were extra-concerned about as we were growing up."⁴¹ Because of this he had no real appreciation of the suffering the blacks had undergone, and could not understand their impatience. Events, though, would transpire to bring an understanding to Bobby. In the meantime he would have to go through somewhat of a baptism of fire.

Kennedy believed firmly in the power of leading by example. He referred to this several times in the speech he gave at the University of Georgia, on Law Day, in 1960. It was, he claimed, the responsibility of his generation to prove to the world that the United States truly stands by the credo that all men are created equal.⁴² In keeping with this principle, Robert had a study done to find out how many blacks were employed by the Justice Department. He found the numbers to be sadly lacking and set to work to institute a program to encourage the hiring of more blacks within the Department. He then tendered his resignation from the prestigious Metropolitan club on the grounds that their policies were racially discriminatory.⁴³

Kennedy believed the key to the civil rights movement to be in the expansion of voter registration among the blacks in the South. In keeping with this, he would begin to pressure Hoover to conduct studies of black voting patterns, especially in the southeastern states. Meanwhile, the famous freedom rides were taking place to protest segregation in Greyhound bus terminals. In May of 1960, violence would break out as the freedom riders were attacked by outraged mobs in Birmingham, Alabama. The situation became so desperate that Robert was forced to send 500 federal marshals to the state to try and instill some order.

The situation was further complicated, for Robert, when Martin Luther King, Jr., decided to go to Birmingham. Kennedy had him escorted from the airport by fifty federal marshals. Soon after this, 1500 blacks assembled at the First Baptist Church, in Birmingham, to hear King speak. There again seemed to be the chance of a violent confrontation; this time Kennedy put the airborne troops at Fort Benning on alert.

On May 29, Robert asked the Greyhound bus company to end segregation in their bus terminals. Four months later, this proposal was enacted. Along with this, the Department continued to pursue the voting issue and brought voter registration suits to court. In 1962 the Voter Education Project came into existence.

Through these early years, one theme would seem to hold true. Kennedy worked to obtain civil rights for the people of the United States, but he did not do so at the expense of social order. His strategy had, up to this point, been to placate southern

resistance, rather than to confront it. This would backfire on him, in 1961, in a situation that seems to be indicative of Robert's early efforts in the civil rights field.

On January 21, 1961, a young black man, named James Meredith, applied for registration at the University of Oxford, in Mississippi. He was promptly denied admittance. Through the course of the next nine months, Meredith would wade through the judicial process. In September, the Supreme Court ordered his admittance to Ole Miss. The governor of Mississippi publicly stated that he would resist this decision. In September, James Meredith was escorted to the University by fifty federal marshals. They were turned back by angry mobs several times. On September 30, Meredith finally arrived at the school. The building he was in was quickly surrounded and besieged by the protesters. During the course of the night, as John Kennedy gave a television speech, celebrating the breakdown of yet another racial barrier, the crowd attacked the building. Robert ordered in airborne troops to protect Meredith. Because of miscommunications, it would take the army most of the night to get there. Fortunately, the marshals were able to hold the mob off, but not without the loss of life. Meredith was registered, and would go on to graduate from Ole Miss, but it was apparent that Robert was not in control of the situation.⁴⁴

When studying the areas of organized-crime and civil rights, and the way that the name Robert Kennedy is associated with them, one cannot help but notice a major difference, especially in the early years. When Robert took over the reins of the Attorney General's office he had already accumulated a wealth of experience in the field of organized-crime. He had a clear cut vision of what he believed needed to be accomplished and he went to work immediately to attain these goals.

In fact, he addressed this situation with such a zeal that he was accused, by some, of being dangerously obsessed. These people began to feel that Robert, in his zeal to attack the crime syndicates, was stretching legal tenets too far. They began to feel that he was abusing the law. This argument shows up as early as 1960, in an article written by Alexander Bickel, for *The New Republic*.

In this article Bickel cites examples from Kennedy's work on the Rackets Committee. He states that Kennedy, far from being an impartial investigator, used the hearings to publicly destroy people he had already passed sentence on. "The sum of it all is that Mr. Kennedy appears to find congenial the role of prosecutor, judge and jury, all consolidated in his one efficient person...we know that he played it lustily when no extrinsic restraint prevented."⁴⁵ Kennedy often lacked this restraint when deep into his drive to stop organized crime.

Victor Nevasky agrees with this interpretation of Kennedy's work. He points out that the IRS was primarily an agency for the collection of funds. Under Robert's tutelage, it came to be a formidable investigation body that radically stretched a great many laws in order to "get" their man. Combined with this, Kennedy was willing to go to almost any lengths in order to make an arrest. In one instance, Racketeer Joseph Aiuppa, a known gambler and gunman, was arrested and then prosecuted for violating the Migratory Bird Act, when it was found that he had shot more morning doves than the legal limit!⁴⁶

Related to this was Robert Kennedy's lax behavior on the subject of wiretapping—in particular, the tapping of Martin Luther King, Jr. Kennedy is on record stating that he believed in the necessity of the wiretap for modern criminal investigations, especially those concerning the mob. "I do not know of any law-enforcement officer who does not believe that at least some authority to tap telephone wires is absolutely essential for the prevention and punishment of crime."⁴⁷ Robert asserted that the wiretap can be a dangerous tool, and should be handled with a good deal of restraint. He presented several proposals that widened the number of cases in which wiretaps could be used while making the obtaining of permission to use a tap much more difficult.

Though Kennedy appears to have understood the inherent dangers of the wiretap, he seems to have in practice been very cavalier about permitting them. Nevasky points out that Robert never kept any record of the number of taps that he had granted permission for. So at any given point in time, Kennedy had no idea who was being tapped or when.⁴⁸ Both Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Victor Nevasky posed the question why someone as gifted as RFK would not have been more diligent on the subject of wiretapping, or even more importantly, electronic bugging.

Part of the answer lay in the fact that Robert had created a sense of urgency in the Justice Department. Urgency encourages those in the situation to bend rules and take shortcuts. Robert's investigations into organized-crime were in full swing and he did not want to sabotage their momentum. Quite simply, as Nevasky states, he did not want to know.⁴⁹ This was, of course, one more clear-cut example of Kennedy showing what some would call an alarming lack of restraint. "...[T]hough he was coming to understand the importance of the Bill of Rights, his sensitivity to civil liberties was less than his concern about organized crime. So he did not pursue the question as he should have."⁵⁰ It must also be remembered that a great deal of the things that Bobby made decisions on required that he factor Hoover into the equation. He simply could not afford to ignore Hoover. Because of this, Robert Kennedy would end up granting permission to the FBI, allowing them to tap Martin Luther King. This would later alienate many of the civil rights activists.⁵¹

In the area of civil rights, one gets far less a sense of the purpose that seemed to drive Kennedy in organized crime. The key was his sense of vision. Robert did not fully understand the situation, and so he had no formulated vision of what should be happening. "Leaders who develop clear vision can mentally journey from the known to the unknown, creating the future from a montage of facts, figures, hopes, dreams, dangers, and opportunities."⁵² Without this vision there was nothing for his colleagues or subordinates to go on. More importantly, without this vision, he had nothing to go on himself. As was said before, it is not that Kennedy did not feel a sincere sympathy for what was happening, it's just that he could not understand the depth of the feeling behind this movement. Intellectually, he knew the blacks wanted equal rights, and agreed this was the path to righteousness. But he was not sensitive to the passions that this movement inspired. Martin Luther King, Jr., at this time, lamented the fact that Robert Kennedy was an open person who genuinely

wanted to help, but had no real understanding of the situation.⁵³

The significance of these studies are that they show Robert Kennedy the human being. Kennedy's brand of justice was much the same as everyone else's. He held high ideals and when he saw a wrong he addressed it, sometimes zealously, as in organized crime. Sometimes it had to be tempered with politics, as in the tapping of Martin Luther King. And other times, it was misguided, as in his early work on civil rights. Despite any of this, Kennedy established a new energy in the Justice Department. One gets the impression that it was a time when anything could have been accomplished.

Kennedy also set some dangerous precedents. First of all, Kennedy was made the supreme bastion of the law. Law, as Alexander Bickel stated, needs to be tempered with fierce restraint. Kennedy was not one to exercise this restraint. Under his influence the Justice Department usurped a great deal of power and used any and all means to get the mobsters. He turned the basic premise that you are innocent until proven guilty around. He had entire lists of "guilty" men and then set out to find the evidence to support this. The fact that all those people on the list were, in fact, guilty is a tribute to Kennedy's growing knowledge of the underworld. However, such a situation can get out of hand and be used to hurt the innocent. In fact it goes against some of our most sacred legal beliefs.

At the same time that Kennedy was stretching his bounds, he was also ceding a great deal of power to Hoover. This was perhaps his greatest failure as Attorney General. He was never able to control Hoover and this greatly hindered the efficacy of many of his policies. If he perhaps could have accomplished this, then perhaps his feats would have been truly "legendary."

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Overcoming the Strikes: Black Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights

by
Stacey R. Williams

"You already have two strikes against you, so don't you realize your chances of getting that job are very slim." This warning is one so often spoken to Black women in their pursuit for something better. As a Black woman, I can relate to the frustration felt when opportunities for advancement suddenly become unavailable because first and foremost I am an African American and secondly because I am a woman. During my childhood, I remember listening in disbelief to adults' heated discussions about issues such as this affecting the Black community. But I soon realized that the reality in experiencing such things yourself is much more intense. Dealing with situations like this as well as other stressors from day to day would almost make a person lose hope. Gratefully while listening to these discussions I also learned of those who overcame the supposed "strikes" against them with great strength and endurance. Those women were the backbone of our existence and taught us as a community to be proud of our heritage, to never give up our struggle, and once we accomplish our goals to *always* reach back and help another brother or sister up.¹ Within this essay, I will attempt to demonstrate how Black women have struggled to overcome the "strikes" against them in the struggle for civil rights.

Ability has consistently characterized Black women, from the Queens of Mother Africa, through the bondage of slavery, until now; the ability to work with tools in antiquity and other things in later times; the ability to toil without letting up so that her family could survive and her people advance; the ability through good and bad times to laugh, sing, and create.² The system from which our African ancestors were captured and bought into slavery produced a woman whose self-concept, values, loyalties, and lifestyles, made it difficult to adjust to America.³ The individualistic and competitive social system of America was very different from the sharing and collective group life she had lived. Yes, some of them had been accustomed to slavery in Africa but it was never as inhumane and life-binding as American slavery.

To be a slave.

To be owned by another person, as a car,
house, or table is owned.

To live as a piece of property that could
be sold

a child sold from its mother, a wife
from her husband.

To be considered not human,

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but a "thing" that plowed the fields. . .
To be a slave.
To know, despite the suffering, deprivation,
that you were human, more human than he
who said you were not human.
— Julius Lester⁴

From the time they stepped foot off the ship, Black women went on mothering, and generations of Black and White children began their infancy on their laps, growing into adults and often relating to them as the primary mother figure.⁵ The White men carefully inspected the young Black women for sale, because it was almost expected of them to "sow their wild oats on the pallets of young house slaves, from whom they bore mulatto children."⁶ These babies were half Black and half White and were taught that they were better than their pure Black brothers and sisters. At times they were the means of freedom for their mothers and themselves. So the breeding capacity of slaves and their potential for the owners' sexual enjoyment were all part of the bidder's eagerness to get the strongest and most attractive Black women. However, there was a certain value for older female flesh - someone had to take care of the babies while their slave mothers were busy with other work. They were also known to be skilled in healing and this made them good nurses for the master's own children. This still did not bring as much excitement or competition to the auctions as that of the selling of young Black women.

Black women were not just breeders or caregivers, they fit into one of three other categories of slaves. The first was that of the "field hands." These were often the strongest slaves and those best able to stand the heat and bear the heaviest burdens.⁷ They were sent to plow, plant, and pick cotton. The second category was the "yard slaves," who possessed the skills in carpentry, furniture making, blacksmithing, sewing, and nursing.⁸ They lived in better conditions than the field hands. They worked in close contact with their owners, so they were able to know and incorporate some of the customs and habits of the "Big House" in their lifestyles while at the same time maintaining many African traditions.⁹ The third category of slaves were known as the "house slaves." This meant all those that worked in the "Big House," cared for the yards and gardens, drove the carriages, and performed the duties of personal servants.¹⁰ These women were often laundry women, seamstresses, housemaids, dairy-women, and cooks. Through their faith and their music and the recreation it brought them, they were able to retain their sanity and to keep alive some shreds of hope, which in turn kept them alive.¹¹

Many slaves attempted escape from this ugly and inhumane system of bondage. Among those who succeeded in escaping was a woman named Harriet Tubman. She was not content with her own escape, but devoted her life to leading others to freedom. She called herself a conductor on the underground railroad, but history calls her "The Moses of Her People."¹² She was just one of many Black women entrenched in slavery with those so-called "strikes against her," yet determined to

fight for the freedom of herself, her family, and her people. Slavery was just another test of Black femininity which Black women in time would overcome.

No single prototype of Black femininity emerged from slavery. The Black woman entered Reconstruction with few role models indigenous to her environment that could fairly measure her worth. She faced the spectacle of being evaluated based on the White female Southern Belle image.¹³ This image was so imbedded in society that it became the measuring rod for determining the appropriate behavior, dress, manners, and all around "goodness" and "badness" of all women.¹⁴ At first there was among Black men a definite respect for the mental and physical aspect of women, but the White men instilled in African men the concept of "male chauvinism."¹⁵ They also instilled in Black men and women the image of White women as beautiful and these ideas became entrenched in the fiber of African life.

From tribes that produced strong, brave, regal, self-reliant women, accustomed to hard work, she came to a slave system, then to a tenant system, then to the slums and ghettos - to work that would test that strength for generations to come. And in this she and her daughters would live until this day in the shadow of negative comparisons with white women whose images as the "ideal woman" are embedded in the folklore and myths of America.¹⁶

Nothing in the Black woman's experience and none of her African heritage prepared her for such a life pattern.¹⁷ The newly freed Black woman emerged after slavery with a will to work and the skills of a domestic or farm laborer.

During Reconstruction, domestic work was the Black woman's principle occupation. Ever since the earliest days of "freedom" it has been the earnings of domestics that kept so many Black families surviving. Among all Black women who were in the labor market in 1973, 25.5% worked in the service occupations, (a census description for women who work in hospitals, hotels, commercial institutions washing, scrubbing, and cleaning) and among this group 17.9% worked exclusively in private households.¹⁸ While it is true that the number of Black female domestics are diminishing, this image of Black domestic is still woven in the very fabric of America.¹⁹ The most pervasive of all these images is the domestic as "Mammy" to the White family. In movies like "Gone with the Wind," the mammy was always expected to be an affectionate woman with an over abundance of love. This love was expected to be there, through thick and thin. In order to make sure there was enough bosom and lap, mammies were most often depicted as overweight. Mammy embodied all the stereotypes. Blacks and Whites fell victim to these stereotypes, born of fiction and myths, and it pleased owners and later employers to believe them.²⁰ There were attempts to make these images of Black women as mammies more positive. These images were often portrayed in movies, novels, and other literary forms. In these we see Black women balancing many relationships with dignity; working to keep their families cared for, and motivated to achieve better lives for themselves. Even though we have some honest attempts to deal

realistically with the Black woman and her family, we must remember that nothing has ever been easy for Black women, and no characterization has ever really done justice to their struggles. There was a need to provide positive images of their own and to begin working toward the betterment of their people. These decisions were the beginning of what would be called the Black Movement.

Although there is a great gap between the Black Movement and the Women's Movement one thing remains the same; in both we come face to face with a desperate need to change attitudes. This is seen as the most important change to be made but also the most difficult. It is through our attitudes that we shape reality, so we must be concerned and cautious of the thought patterns we encourage.²¹

For Blacks the Women's Movement proved to be very untimely and irrelevant to their people as a whole. It was untimely because it came at a time when the Civil Rights Movement was getting underway and it would cause the Civil Rights Movement to have to share the spotlight with another group who was probably in a better position than them to get what they wanted. At a time when Black students were in southern jails, when Black full-time working women were earning 57% of what their White peers were, the Civil Rights Commission concentrated its attention on the growing number of middle-class women who were forced to enter the labor market in low-skill, low-paid jobs.²² The United States House of Representatives even tacked the word "sex" to Title VII, which prohibited discrimination in employment. So this meant that Blacks had to play second best again, because White women would now be chosen before them in employment opportunities. White women seemed to gain a respect for their own abilities by their involvement in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other Black organizations. They benefitted from seeing Black women as a new kind of role model.

Because the Women's Movement was geared more toward White women it was of no relevance to Black women. Their issues were totally different and Black women saw them as the enemy. "For they know that racism is not confined to White men and that there are more White women than men in this country," wrote Tony Morrison.²³ Black women were too caught up in the race issues to be concerned about sexism at the moment, because racism for them presented a far greater obstacle. Their thinking was that before they could gain rights as Black women, the rights of Black men had to be assured and this contradicted the White women's views that all men were the cause of their problems. The influence of Black women was increasing and people like Ruby Doris Smith, Diane Nash, and Donna Richards Moses were in SNCC's inner circles.²⁴ Men usually held the top positions, but women were not shut out of the decision making.

It is felt that White women developed their feminism in Black organizations and then focused their energies elsewhere. Many Blacks felt that the Women's Movement and the National Organization for Women (NOW) had been built from the Civil Rights Movement because many of the White women in NOW had been involved in leadership roles in the SNCC organization.²⁵ They learned strategies needed to get their issues discussed and solved. They took all that they learned and

formed their own organizations. In fact the purpose of NOW (which consisted of primarily "mainstream" women: members of the state commissions of women; employees of various levels of government; business and professional women, etc.) was to act like an "NAACP for women."²⁶ Blacks felt that these women would become first priority because they were members of the dominant group, they had more resources and connections, and most of them were married to men with power and therefore they had the advantage. The Women's Movement was reaping the benefits the Black Movement had sown.²⁷

Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women, pointed out the difference between the Women's Movement and the Black Movement in saying, "Fifty years ago women got suffrage. . .but it took lynching, bombing, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Voting Rights Act to get it for Black women and Black people."²⁸ It is said that Black women must assume a cautious and thoughtful approach to any type of working relationship with White women.²⁹ History should be the road map for the future, so Black women can not ignore the lessons of over 350 years. It must be realized that until White women question the system of values from which they operate, the slave—mistress relationship will not be alleviated.³⁰ It is imperative for Black women to view their historical relationship with White women and put that relationship in context when analyzing situations surrounding the roles of Black women in contemporary women's liberation movements.³¹ In doing this they must also understand (as their female ancestors understood), that in order to better their situation, their first priority must be the betterment of their people; hence their involvement in the civil rights struggle.

It is no secret that Black women were actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement (another attempt to escape the chains that a system of inequality continues to place on her people). In fact, many would admit that the men led, but the women organized. They took civil rights workers into their homes, they showed up at more meetings and demonstrations, and more frequently attempted to register to vote.³² Black women, due to their membership in two subordinate groups that lacked access to authority and resources in society, were faced with two inequalities to overcome: racism and sexism. Black women were in structural opposition with a dominant racial and a dominant sexual group, therefore they were an important part of the struggle for equality.

Black women have played a variety of roles in the ongoing struggle for freedom and equality. But sadly their role in the Civil Rights Movement has received minor attention from historians, as well as Black men. Most studies have focused on the Black ministers—all of whom were men—who served as officers in most of the Black organizations. According to many of the women in the movement, the sexism and authoritarian views of leadership prevented women from assuming command of any of the movement organizations.

Black women exerted an enormous influence both formally, as members of SNCC and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), and informally, as spontaneous leaders and dedicated participants.³⁴ Many of the protests described as

led by men were initiated by women. For example, we often hear of Martin Luther King, Jr. as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, since he was appointed director of the organization coordinating the boycott, when actually the boycott was started by a woman, Jo Ann Robinson and the women's group she headed, the Women's Political Council.³⁵ Black women directed voter registration drives, taught in freedom schools, and provided food and housing for movement volunteers. Black women demonstrated a heroism no less than that of men. They suffered the same physical abuse, loss of employment, destruction of property, and risk of their lives.³⁶ Even though many were content with the traditional roles Black women played in the movement there were those who many would say were "ahead of their time".

Fannie Lou Hamer's rejection of the compromise offered the MFDP delegation at the Democratic National Convention in 1964 was representative of the courage of Black women whose pressure forced ministers in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and other organizations to persist in the face of White opposition to their demands.³⁷ Another "untraditional," but perhaps one of the most influential Black women in the Civil Rights Movement was Ella Baker. She convinced SCLC not to take control of SNCC, allowing the student-run group to remain independent of the other organizations and to adopt an egalitarian approach to decision making.³⁸ These two ladies showed how beliefs that may inspire the mobilization of thousands (even millions) have often been tested in out-of-the-way places by individuals who may never write manifestos, lead demonstrations, call press conferences or stand before television cameras.³⁹ Ella Baker said: "You don't see me on television, you don't see news stories about me. The kind of role that I tried to play was to pick up pieces or put them together out of which I hoped organization might come. My theory is, strong people don't need strong leaders."⁴⁰ This was a lady among many strong Black women who had and many still do devote their lives to the liberation of their people. Published accounts of Black women activists suggest that the movement gave women as well as men a sense of empowerment. For many, the significance of the movement lay not in the abolition of specific forms of discrimination, nor the impact of particular protest, but rather in its liberating effect on Blacks' sense of self.⁴¹ They felt the Civil Rights Movement gave them the power to challenge any line that limited them.

Thus, life for Black women has been one struggle for civil rights after another, from the bondage of slavery, to the bondage of an unequal system of America, "the so-called land of the free!" Even as they struggled for Civil Rights, they still had to face the sexist attitudes of all men and even more sadly their own Black brothers; whom Black women continuously supported, especially when the Women's Movement was coming down on both White and Black men.

Conditions have improved for a few Blacks, but Black women and Blacks as a whole are still struggling. This may be because more Blacks are becoming increasingly aware of the discrepancy between what had been accomplished in a legal sense and what had not been accomplished in the actual improvement of life

conditions for most Blacks.⁴² Even though laws have changed, peoples' beliefs have not and that is what they act on. Black women must begin to define themselves, instead of letting others do so, being careful to recognize their Blackness as well as their womanhood, but not letting these two identities restrain them. Becoming and being a strong Black woman requires strength, endurance, and the resourcefulness to survive without much help from any American institutions.⁴³ Being a strong Black woman means involvement in a constructive, cooperative relationship with Black men in building strong Black institutions and communities. A Black woman is neither superior nor inferior; she just does what she has to do. No matter how painful it is to hear a female called the "b" word by a male, see Black men marrying White women by the dozens, being the last hired and first fired, keep your heads up Black sisters and know that you are the descendants of a long history of strong Black women that overcame all the so-called strikes against them and demanded that *all* Black women be LOVED, HONORED, RESPECTED, AND PROTECTED.

Endnotes

1. Stacey R. Williams, *Personal Communication* (1994). In this paper, the reason for the capital "B" in Black is because the author wants to represent the cultural identity (i.e. African-American) and not simply a color.
2. Jeanne Noble, *Beautiful, Also, are the Souls of My Black Sisters: A History of the Black Woman in America* (New Jersey, 1978), 7.
3. Ibid., 27.
4. Ibid., 31.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 35.
7. Ibid., 36.
8. Ibid., 37.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 38.
11. Ibid., 37.
12. Ibid., 44.
13. Ibid., 45.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 28.
16. Ibid., 27.
17. Ibid., 48.
18. Ibid., 75.
19. Ibid., 76.

20. Ibid., 78.
21. Ibid., 87.
22. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York, 1984), 299.
23. Ibid., 307.
24. Ibid., 302.
25. Darlene C. Hine, ed., *Black Women in United States History* (New York, 1990), 583.
26. Giddings, *Impact of Black Women*, 303.
27. Ibid., 308.
28. Ibid.
29. Hine, *Black Women*, 588.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 581.
32. Vicki L. Crawford, ed., *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965* (New York, 1990), 2.
33. Hine, *Black Women*, 387.
34. Crawford, *Women*, 184.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 185.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 51.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 185.

42. Martin N. Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations* (California, 1994), 247.

43. Ibid., 310.

David Nasaw,
Children of the City: At Work & At Play
(New York, 1985).

by
Kimberly M. Vance

The idea of small children toiling endlessly in the dark workshop of some inner city is depressing and unsettling. The suffering and poverty of such circumstances is not the topic of Nasaw's work. The themes revolve more around the street community that created the children and what the children created for themselves. The traditional reformist interpretation of child workers is replaced by a study of how the children organized and adapted to the world around them. David Nasaw examines the social and working life of the early 20th century child worker using a different lens than that which saw only doom and despair. The reformers are portrayed as concerned, but maybe too concerned about the wrong things.

During the era considered, 1900 to 1920, children were in school during the early day. They had to work after school on weekends and during the summer. They took jobs that did not pay enough for an adult, but allowed a child to contribute to a strained family income and have spending money their parents could not afford. These children were very different from the 19th century children that were put to work to support the family. They did not work long hours in horrible mines and factories. They may not have had the best of living conditions and they were expected to help the family, but they were not indentured servants. The children sold papers and shoe shines and anything else people would buy. They used creativity and imagination to earn as much as they could in extra tips and items sold.

The children made use of the street as an area to play and as a place to gain money for things they wanted to buy. Once they were able to go out into the street to escape their crowded homes, they began to learn life lessons that were not taught in school. "They entered the life of an active, organized community with its own structures of authority, law, and order," Nasaw wrote (p. 158). There were few areas to play in the inner city, so the street was the only place to go. Space was limited even as far as they were concerned, so they formed themselves into groups, usually divided by the end of the block. These block groups became gangs that patrolled the possessed area. Children everywhere were aware of the territorial divisions and the consequences of crossing into an unfamiliar zone. The children of the gangs protected their property interests as well as each other. The rules were simple and the laws of the street accepted.

When the youngsters were not playing in or defending the street, they worked.

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Working often led them off the street and into downtown districts. There they became “newsies” or venders of all sorts of sundries. The reform-minded settlement house workers were concerned that the children would be unprotected and exposed to many treacheries. The children organized themselves to protect each other and avoid fighting over the right to sell in prime locations. They were loyal to each other, defending the rights of “property holders” and careful to look after the younger, less experienced children. Older children were observed helping the little ones learn how to sell. The pitiful little street waif was usually guarded by a protecting but unseen older sibling.

Female children were unlikely to be street traders, but learned much from the responsibility they took on at home. All of the children had parents who were not used to the changing customs in the city. Entertainment and new city ways were frightening. Some parents were not comfortable with English, and the children were sent to run errands. The female children often did the shopping in the family because they knew how to talk to the butcher and the baker and because mama was too busy to leave home. These little mothers were also responsible for the care of the younger children. They learned the lessons of motherhood very early.

The children learned to adapt to city life. They were exposed to the new forms of entertainment, the fashion and the culture of the streets. They learned to work for free time and money so that they could have a short reprieve from the dingy and dull life of the ghettos. When the children felt the ability to earn money was being threatened, they used the knowledge they had gained in the streets to organize. The “newsies” of Boston organized in 1901 to protest a change in the paper distribution process. They followed the lead of the adults they had seen working in the labor movement. The children united and formed an AFL union; their boycott was a success; and the “newsies” won the battle. The news boys of New York City went on strike in 1899. They were a vital link between the paper and the customer. The strike cut distribution so drastically that the two largest publishers in the nation were forced to bargain with children. The youngsters organized, elected officers and gained the attention of their adult employers. Their unions were usually short-lived, lasting only as long as the crisis at hand.

By living and working in a world that their parents did not control or even understand, the children of the city gained a rare independence. They were free from the interference of adult control when not in school or in the home. They became active members of the new social system around them. Attempts by reformers to gather them in organized playgrounds and clubs were not very successful. The children had become accustomed to doing things in the manner they enjoyed. They learned by exposure that business was done in such a manner and play was done in another. They could take items from junk piles and from railroad tracks to sell for profit, but they were loyal to each other. Reformers feared they were learning to be common criminals, but that was not the case; if anything they were learning skills that would help them survive as adults.

Professional historians reviewed the book in a positive manner. Joseph M.

Hawes compliments Nasaw for showing that children can be treated as historical actors that have an impact on the world around them.¹ LeRoy Ashby concurs that the author treats the children as active participants in their culture.² The focus of both reviews falls on the news strike of 1899, which Ashby considers a startling demonstration of collective power.³ Hawes felt that Nasaw was nostalgic and that his description of the events of the period was over-simplified.⁴ Both reviews mention the numerous photographs and first-person accounts by people who lived as children of the city.

The book is an interesting study of the lives of a generally disregarded group of people. The study of children is usually from an adult point of view, rather than an examination of how the children view life. It is very enlightening to read about children in a work that gives them some credit for being able to move the world around them. These children were not slaves to the industrial machine, but actors in the social change that turned our collective attention away from constant toil. The children did not have the best life; by today's standards the sanitary and living conditions were horrific. But they were better off than the previous generation and learning that life could improve is what made them work.

I came to admire the children because they were the first working class people that were learning how to live and not just survive. They were ahead of their time in their knowledge of what was valuable to people and popular entertainment. The crimes they committed would for the most part be considered pranks today. The children were adaptive to change, ingenious at work and progressive in thought.

My childhood was similar in that I played in a "gang" and we fought other kids. We sold lemonade and cooked up schemes to buy things our parents would not. We were different because we were nearly always closely watched by some adult. Our play was regulated. We learned what our parents wanted us to learn. The children of the city learned on their own that there were different rules for them than for their parents. They crossed racial lines, played with children of all religions and went about living life. Nasaw shows us that the children were not social deviants, but perhaps a herald of the future. They would go on to demand a life other than work. They learned to enjoy entertainment. They wanted their own children to have the fresh air and grass they missed. The lives they led allowed them to see that they could organize and demand a better lifestyle in the future. The children really were an important part of history.

Endnotes

1. See review in *American Historical Review* (1986) 91, 199 (by Joseph M. Hawes).
2. See review in *Journal of American History* (1985) 71, 709 (by LeRoy Ashby).
3. Ibid.
4. See both reviews.

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