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NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

# *Perspectives in History*

VOL. XXIII, 2007-2008

PHI ALPHA THETA  
ALPHA BETA PHI CHAPTER



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JOURNAL OF ALPHA BETA PHI  
CHAPTER OF PHI ALPHA THETA

# *Perspectives in History*

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# PERSPECTIVES

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## Letter from the President

Between the covers of this volume you will find the apex of historical composition at Northern Kentucky University. Research and writing, revising and rewriting combine with a real passion for the study of history in order to produce the works which you will read herein. As such, the Alpha Beta Phi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and I are proud to present this Twenty-Third volume of *Perspectives in History*.

This journal is also a reflection of all the behind-the-scenes hard work of many individuals. To our journal editor Amanda Campbell and our assistant editors Ashley Talbott and Erica Wagner, THANK YOU for all of your toiling and labors of love that allowed this journal to come into being. Thanks go out to the faculty and staff of the Department of History and Geography. You are a continued source of help and professional example. Becky Middleton, Jan Rachford and Marina Logsdon, our devoted office workers, are always ready and willing to relieve any crises that may come our way— with all that we do, they keep us organized and sane! Thank you, ladies, for being able to be counted on. Our faculty advisors are, of course, the backbone for this group. Dr. Jonathan Reynolds, you have taught us the meaning of hard work combined with humor. It is this unique perspective that helps us to be the stand-out chapter that we are. Your encouragement to students to get out there and “do” history—not to remain a merely passive spectator—is an invaluable tool that I am sure we will take with us in our varied future endeavors. Dr. William Landon is our resident averter of nervous breakdowns. His “open-door” policy and empathy towards students is the greatest help a group could ask for. Professor Bonnie May—what can I say? She is the mother of all things PAT and we literally could not be the group we are without her. I personally could not have done it without her. She provides unwavering support, knowledge of the inner-workings of PAT, and of course baked goods.

Our Advisors enable us to be successful at the diverse range of activities in which we participate during a given school year.

What do freezing cold water, veterans, Shakers, and fifty 5th graders have in common? They represent community service projects and individuals who are so integral to the vitality of our area—we dedicated a great deal of our time and energy engaging our community during 2007-2008. This year we continued our dedication to serving the community by participating in an Adopt a Veteran program through Active Day Veteran's Home in Ft. Thomas for the holidays, cleaned up a restored Shaker home, participated in the Polar Bear Plunge to benefit the Special Olympics and helped 5th grade students at Kelly Elementary study for their achievement tests. We also continued our tradition of having the best bake sales on campus, raising over \$300 at each, and our book sale in March which raised approximately \$800. We used these funds to sponsor activities such as our monthly movie nights, in we which show a variety of films with historical themes, including *Munich*, *Michael Collins*, *13 Days*, *Cry Freedom*, *Letters from Iwo Jima*, and *Barbarians at the Gate*. Thank you to Dr. Burke Miller who led discussions on the historical significance and accuracy of these films.

Once again Phi Alpha Theta helped support the History and Geography Department's Majors' Meetings by volunteering to do what we do best—stuff folders! We also were on hand to answers questions from students and to let them know about all the wonderful opportunities their major offers. In October we helped host a History, Geography and Social Studies Alumni Reception, complete with a lecture by Dr. Michael Adams. We worked with Dr. François Le Roy and Professor Bonnie May to help sponsor the ever-successful Military History Lecture Series, which included such distinguished lecturers and excellent topics as: The Effects of the 1967 War on Israeli and Palestinian Societies by our own Dr. Sharon Vance; The Carpetbaggers: B-24 Airdrops to the European Resistance on World War II by Don Fairbanks at the Tri-state Warbird Museum; and World War I and its Effects on 20th Century History by the National Executive Director of Phi Alpha Theta, Dr. Jack Tunstall.

Students also had an opportunity to present their original research this school year at the Phi Alpha Theta National and Regional Conventions. Members Rigel Behrens and Timothy Trenkamp traveled to Albuquerque, NM in January for the Biennial National Convention, and members Amanda Campbell, Elizabeth Dzurenka, Martin Henderson, Timothy Trenkamp and Stephanie Woodburn presented papers at the Annual Regional Convention at the University of Louisville in March. These conventions give us professional experience and they allow us to be effective representative for our excellent chapter and for NKU.

Along with our continued help with Kentucky Regional History Day in April and our field trips to important local centers such as the Underground Freedom Center in February, PAT also participated in the new and very exciting, International Studies Week. Study Abroad has become a very important theme to those involved with our chapter. This past year, no fewer than eight students traveled out of country for short or long term stints. As historians, I believe that studying in a culture is an amazing way to augment



cultural and historical studies. During International Studies Week, we held an international bake sale, serving food from across the world—everywhere from Germany to Africa to the Middle and Far East. PAT also joined forces with the French and German clubs to show the film *Joyeux Noel* about the Christmas truce between the forces of World War I. I hope this is a tradition in the making and we can continue to improve and expand our commitment to studying internationally.

I would be remiss in not thanking the main force behind all the activities and events mentioned above: the members of our Alpha Beta Phi chapter. I am in awe of everything you do—all the time you dedicate and the sacrifices you make in order to drive this group forward. Specifically I would like to thank our officers who served this year: Elizabeth Dzurenka as historian, Chad Stephens as treasurer, Sean Pace as secretary, Amanda Campbell as *Journal* editor, Ashley Talbott and Erica Wagner as assistant *Journal* editors and Christopher Dunn as newsletter editor. Thank you so much for taking the initiative to step up and serve PAT in this capacity. Appreciation also goes to those serving in the upcoming school year: Stephanie Woodburn as president, Ryanne Schroder as vice president, Amy Tröstle as secretary, Michael Rinschler as treasurer, Toby Bernert as historian, Martin Henderson as *Journal* editor, Sara Patenaude as assistant *Journal* editor and Christopher Dunn as newsletter editor.

This year was one of renewing old traditions, establishing new ones, and through it all maintaining our dedication to academic excellence and community service; next year promises to be yet another continuation of the legacy that is our Alpha Beta Phi Chapter. This journal you are about to read is a reflection in words of who and what we are.

Stephanie Woodburn  
President  
Alpha Beta Phi Chapter  
Phi Alpha Theta



# PERSPECTIVES

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## Foreword

What was my initial reaction to being chosen as the editor of the Twenty-Third volume of *Perspectives in History*, the annual academic journal produced by Northern Kentucky University's Alpha Beta Phi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, History Honor Society? I must admit that I was wondering what I had been thinking running for such a position. I was nervous and scared that I would not be able to produce the same level of excellence that my predecessors had. I was also quite elated that I had been chosen for such a wonderful job. During the editing process I was exposed to many wonderful areas and interests in history that I may have never explored without this opportunity. I was very pleased to discover that we received the same level of wonderful academic research that we have always been blessed with in the past. However, that also meant that instead of finding good papers I had an even harder job, deciding which of the good papers would make it into the journal.

I would never have been able to take on this task without the support of our assistant faculty advisor, Dr. William Landon. Without his guidance and incredible tenacity for the details of editorial work, I would have been lost and made many mistakes that were easily avoided. I am also grateful to my wonderful assistant editors, Ashley Talbott and Erica Wagner. They spent countless hours reading, editing, making suggestions and attending numerous meetings to discuss what our course of action should be. Ashley and Erica are to be applauded. I would never have met a single deadline if it were not for their steadfast help. I am also deeply indebted to our President, Stephanie Woodburn. Her hard work was a great help to me. Stephanie was especially helpful in letting students and faculty know that we were accepting papers for review. She was also kind enough to encourage me whenever I began to think I would not be able to do it or that a mistake I had made would finally be the one that could not be undone. She stuck with me through it all, good and bad;

and I am more grateful than words could ever accurately describe.

Of course, absolutely none of this would be possible if not for the outstanding support we all received from the Chair of the History and Geography Department, Dr. Jeffery Williams. He has made a terrific effort over the years to support Phi Alpha Theta and more importantly to foster the idea that we do not need to wait for graduate school to produce research that means something. I believe we are all grateful to Dr. Williams for that. I could not possibly leave out Jan Rachford and Rebecca Middleton who have been an invaluable help to me in more ways than I can count. I would not have even known who to talk to half of the time if it were not for them. They are the guardian angels of our Department and are always there to help us—sometimes before we even realize that we are in need of help.

Finally, I am most grateful to all the students and faculty who submitted papers to this year's journal. They are truly the most important piece of the puzzle, for without them we have no journal. I am deeply humbled by their level of creativity and their dedication to research. It is to these authors that we should look, if we want to see what the future of our discipline has in store. They will be the ones who propel history to new and inventive heights. I wish all of them the best in their future careers no matter where those careers happen to take them. Once again thanks to everyone who contributed to the 23rd volume of *Perspectives in History*, it would not have been possible without you.

Amanda H. Campbell

Editor



## PERSPECTIVES

### Selling a Dream: The Founding of Northern Kentucky University

*Melinda Sartwell*

#### Introduction

The tumultuous decade of the 1960s was a time of many changes. The “baby boom” generation was coming of age and flowing onto college campuses across the country. The Northern Kentucky area was no different, except it did not have a public four-year college to accommodate the deluge of students. The tri-county area (Boone, Kenton, and Campbell) was the second most populous region in the state of Kentucky, but it only had a community college and a Catholic college to serve its educational needs. Every other major population center in Kentucky had a public four-year college. Northern Kentuckians began realizing they were being left out.

The seed of change was planted in 1966 when local community leaders took it upon themselves to push for a college. Their initiative met with a lack of support, political fights, and disagreements at the local and state level. Making a college that existed only as a dream into a reality took dedication, determination and lots of hard work. The local leadership proved itself more than up to the task with the support of the new governor, Louie B. Nunn. Together, they started the process of building a college and changing lives.

#### The Need for a College

The University of Kentucky Northern Center began its existence in three rented classrooms in a Covington elementary school in 1948. In 1960, the region was blessed with the opening of a new facility in Park Hills. It served the needs of the local student body and served as a “feeder” to the main campus in Lexington, Kentucky, becoming part of the community college system in 1962. As the population grew, it became apparent that the facility in Park Hills would no longer accommodate all who desired to attend.

In May 1966, a survey team made a report to the Kentucky Commission on Higher Education recommending that the community college in Northern

Kentucky be expanded to a four-year state college, stating "In such an urban area...it is surprising to find such limited facilities and a lower percentage of high school graduates attending college."<sup>1</sup> However, the commission left this recommendation out of its report to Governor Edward T. Breathitt because its job was to detail a ten-year educational plan and "the proposed Northern State College was not an instrument on which a ten-year educational plan could be built."<sup>2</sup> There was also a concern that University of Kentucky president Dr. John W. Oswald, who had developed the community college system, might possibly try to block the creation of a new college. However, Dr. Oswald vowed to support the recommendations of the education council<sup>3</sup>, but in January 1967 this position was not evident when the University of Kentucky campus planner, Larry Coleman, stated: "Nothing whatsoever in the Preliminary Development Plan point to the development of a four-year college in Covington."<sup>4</sup> The University of Kentucky was also determined to expand at the existing site in Park Hills rather than build a new campus. The idea quickly met with opposition from local residents who stood to lose their homes to the proposed expansion. They were also concerned about increased traffic problems. There was also evidence of slippage in the hillside that served the already cramped parking area. Money had been spent to try and fix the problem, but to no avail. The University of Kentucky still insisted on using that location regardless of the protests. This prompted the Covington-Kenton-Boone Chamber of Commerce to establish its study committee in response to the university's plan in January 1967.

The committee consisted of Frank Middleberg, President of the Chamber of Commerce; Ben Baker, Citizens Telephone Co. and the Board of Education; Winston Johnson, Area Development for the Union Light, Heat & Power Company; Robert Loomis, civil engineer with O. G. Loomis & Associates; and Vance Trimble, editor of *The Kentucky Post and Times-Star*. These men were to recommend whether the college should be moved to a new location and also to study the possibility of a four-year college, even though the planning office from the main campus in Lexington insisted it had no plans ever to expand the local campus to a four-year program. This was primarily because UK depended on its community college system to supply students and the revenue their tuition generated.<sup>5</sup> Despite such opposition, in February 1967, the committee recommended that the Chamber pursue a new location for the college, citing the limited area to expand at the present location in Park Hills and the region's continued growth in population. The committee also acknowledged that "the need is here," but did not recommend that a four-year college be pursued immediately.<sup>6</sup>

In a letter to Governor Edward T. Breathitt on March 30, 1967, Chamber of Commerce president Frank Middleberg formally requested that the state Council on Higher Education conduct a study on the potential for a four-year state college for the Northern Kentucky region. With this formal request, the struggle for a college began that would gather support over the coming months from the citizens of Northern Kentucky. An estimated 75 percent of those who completed programs at NCC [Northern Community College] never completed baccalaureate degrees.<sup>7</sup> Most students at NCC had jobs and family

commitments, and no financial means to move to Lexington to finish their degrees at the main campus; or to transfer to a local college. Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More College) and the University of Cincinnati both had higher tuition that put them out of reach. These students would become a base of support for the local college effort.

During the 1967 gubernatorial campaign, Republican Louie B. Nunn promised his support for a state college for Northern Kentucky. After he was elected in November 1967, the Chamber started a letter-writing campaign with the intent of convincing the Council on Higher Education of the need for the college. Chamber members were busy enlisting endorsements from businesses and civic organizations, while at the same time urging the general public to write letters and voice their support for the college. A presentation was scheduled before the Council on December 15. There, the Chamber wanted to present a united front from the area in order to bolster the argument for a college. The letters poured in, and when the presentation date arrived, the delegation from the region delivered approximately 3,500 letters and endorsements to the Council.<sup>8</sup> The opening statements in the presentation summed up the emotional impact of the efforts:

"The thousand letters regarding Northern Kentucky State College from people 8 to 93....from all walks of life....some barely legible represent the extremes of the "highest hope" to "desperate need." These letters....as full of yearning and pathos as they may be....are but one indication of why we are here today."<sup>9</sup>

Frank Middleberg outlined the reasons a college was needed, focusing on the fact that the three-county area was second only to Louisville in population and that the increased birth rate from 1945 to 1960 provided a larger prospective student body with nowhere to go.<sup>10</sup>

The presentation of emotional and practical arguments for a college was rewarded on January 15, 1968, in a letter from the Chairman of the Council, William H. Abell, to Governor Louie B. Nunn, in which he stated:

The Council on Public Higher Education at its regular meeting in Frankfort on January 12, 1968 approved in accordance with KRS 164.020(7) a recommendation that a new four-year college be established in Northern Kentucky in the Boone-Campbell-Kenton County area as soon as practicable.<sup>11</sup>

The General Assembly was in session and acted quickly regarding the status of the college, introducing House Bill No. 255, which provided for the establishment of Northern Kentucky State College and a Board of Regents.<sup>12</sup> The bill passed both the House and Senate without a dissenting vote, and on March 14, 1968, with a delegation from Northern Kentucky present, Governor Nunn kept his campaign promise and signed the bill into law using 35 engraved pens that he gave to the delegates as souvenirs.<sup>13</sup> Northern Kentucky State College (NKSC) was now a reality on paper. The task of naming a Board of

Regents, a president, administrators, and funding were some of the challenges the future college now faced.

### Putting it all Together

Governor Nunn kept his promise to act quickly in establishing the college and named the twelve-member site selection committee in June 1968. Their job was to find a place to build the new school that would adequately serve the current population and also have room to grow. In July 1968, Governor Nunn named the first Board of Regents: Joseph Kohler, Charles O. Landrum, Elmer Haas, Kenneth Lucas, Charles Wiley and John R S. Brooking.<sup>14</sup> (See Photo 1) Dr. John DeMarcus worked in Governor Nunn's office and was given the job of consultant to the Board. These men had the monumental task of assisting the site selection committee, finding a president and administrators, hiring faculty, establishing a budget when there was no money, and perhaps the most controversial of all, merging with the existing community college.

The Board of Regents quickly realized that merging with the existing community college would be the quickest way to get the new college off the ground. It was also known that the state would not provide money to support two separate colleges in the northern Kentucky region. This led to another big problem: if the University of Kentucky was forced to merge the community college with NKSC, it would no longer provide the funding for the expansion and repairs for the Park Hills facility, mainly because UK did not want to lose its "feeder" campus; in fact, the dean of community colleges stood up in a meeting and stated: "I'd rather lose my right arm up to here (pointing at his shoulder), than lose this community college."<sup>15</sup>

In January 1969, the Council for Higher Education voted to merge the community college and NKSC, thus allowing NKSC to inherit the student body and bolster its chances for more funding. What was left was a difficult situation with the University of Kentucky. Its opposition to the merger was



(Photo 1)  
*Governor Louis B. Nunn and Regent Charles Wiley.*

Image courtesy of the Schlachter Archives of Northern Kentucky University.

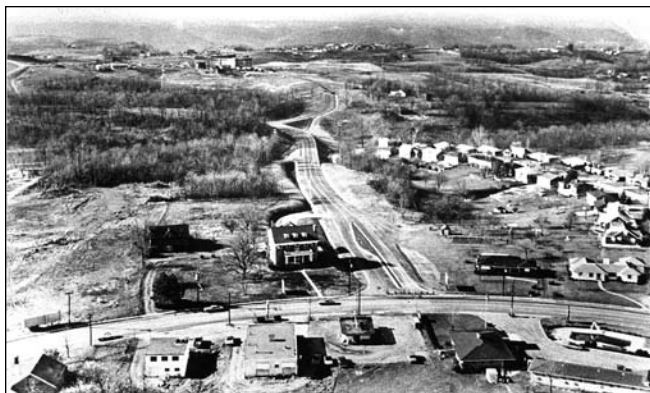


made even more apparent after the initial financial agreements were made. NKSC assumed the title to the existing building and the university would rent it for the 1969-70 school year, then merge into one school. The university then cut the operating money for the very same year, which in turn hurt NKSC at budget time because it had to ask for more money.<sup>16</sup>

Nothing can be built without funding, and that issue would cause a debate among the existing universities, which stood to lose not only state money, but potential students from the northern part of the state. Students who had the means to continue their education had to transfer to either UK or one of the other state universities, so it was logical that the state schools would fight to keep their incoming stream of students and funds from the state. The Board of Regents hoped to receive state funding in the 1970 appropriations and believed that incorporating the community college into NKSC would add some incentive to the state to give them funding and at the very least give them a building to use until a site could be found. But a lot depended on the state budget and whether NKSC would take money away from the other colleges. Government regulations only allot certain amounts of money to be shared by the state colleges and universities, and those schools did not want to have to share any of the pot with an upstart little school like NKSC. Editorials in the student papers at the University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University even went so far as to accuse NKSC of being a “detriment to the state’s higher education family” and that “higher education has become a tool for politicians to pacify and satisfy their constituents.”<sup>17</sup> The main point of the opposition by the other state universities was the fact that they would lose state funding for their own institutions by having to share with NKSC.

While the funding and merger debate was going on, the site selection committee was going about its task of finding a suitable building area for the college. The three counties involved, Boone, Kenton and Campbell, submitted sites in their counties to be evaluated. What followed was more controversy between county officials, prompting Governor Nunn to observe: “Always remember that the Licking River is wider than the Ohio; your biggest problem is going to be getting those people not to cut each other’s throats over which county they’re going to put it in.”<sup>18</sup> Boone County offered a site at the Richwood/I-75 interstate exchange that offered the accessibility of I-75, plenty of room for expansion and the fact that it was the most rapidly growing county in the area; Kenton County’s site was in the Crescent Springs area, close to I-75 and the largest county population of the three; Campbell County had acres of undeveloped farmland near a little town called Highland Heights, at the crossroads of two planned interstates; I-275 and I-471. Rumors abounded about where it was going to be, prompting suggestions for other sites and citizens showing up at city council meetings to object to a college being in their neighborhood.<sup>19</sup>

The state education council recommended that an outside consulting firm be brought to evaluate the sites. This firm, Robert Heller & Associates, based in Cleveland, Ohio, could properly judge the sites based on geological and accessibility factors. It could also conduct the study objectively without political influences. In a report dated March 31, 1969, the company recommended that



(Photo 2)  
*The NKSC  
 Entrance; an  
 aerial photo taken  
 over U.S. 27  
 facing west.*

Image courtesy of the  
 Schlachter Archives  
 of Northern Kentucky  
 University.

the college be located in Campbell County, citing its room for expansion and accessibility from the two future interstates as the deciding factors of the decision.<sup>20</sup> (See Photo 2) The study also recommended that NKSC either merge or at least share the site with NCC in order to make better use of financial resources. The report concluded with projections for future student populations, estimating that NKSC could possibly have 2,600 students by 1975; the actual enrollment in the fall of 1975 was 4,888 students.<sup>21</sup>

There was no president or administrators, faculty or curriculum. It was already mid-1969, and if the college was to offer classes in 1970, this problem needed to be solved. The search for a president seemed to be over when the Regents offered the position to Dr. A. D. Albright, who was the executive vice-president of the University of Kentucky. However, Dr. Albright declined the position in order to accept a fellowship in Belgium. The next offer was to Dr. Ronald Carrier of Memphis State University, but he declined also, leaving the NKSC program “in limbo” until a president was found.<sup>22</sup> On December 12, 1969, Dr. W. Frank Steely accepted the presidential position. Dr. Steely was the dean of the Clinch Valley College in Virginia and was a native Kentuckian. He brought with him a strong academic and administrative background, and perhaps most important, a no-nonsense straightforward approach to running a college. These skills would come into play when Dr. Steely came on board and promptly was embroiled in budget issues; he would spend the next few years fighting for every penny that NKSC could get from the state, knowing that NKSC was up against the larger universities and had to “play politics” in order to receive funding.<sup>23</sup>

The task of finding administrators and faculty would in essence become “selling a dream,” in the words of Dr. Ralph Tesseneer, who came on board as vice-president of academic affairs in July 1970 at the request of Dr. Steely.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Tesseneer was the dean of the graduate school at Murray State University but was intrigued by the challenge of building a university from the ground up and without answering to the multitude of rules and regulations that existed in established institutions. Dr. Tesseneer wanted to hire department chairmen first in order to have their input on requirements for the majors NKSC would offer. As an example of what NKSC was up against, Dr. Tesseneer took a

prospective biology chair (who wanted to see the labs) out to the “mudhole” in Campbell County and showed him the barn where the science building would be. NKSC had to sell all of the department chairmen on a dream, and they in turn had to sell their faculty on a dream as well.<sup>25</sup> One advantage that NKSC did have was that college campuses were full of liberal, free-thinking individuals in the 1960’s, and the opportunity to teach and not have to fight administration would prove to be a selling point in recruiting new faculty. On campus in the early days, photographs depict plenty of ponytails and beards, teachers thrilled with being able to go their own way.<sup>26</sup> Initially, the existing faculty from the community college was not thrilled with being merged into an unproven institution and losing the prestige of association with the University of Kentucky. Those with the patience to build from scratch stayed on; those who did not, left.

The first classes were held for freshmen and sophomores in June 1970 at the existing campus in Park Hills. Administrators had predicted a possible enrollment of 1,500 but when the doors opened, 1,600 eager students crowded into the small facility. The faculty consisted of 37 people, hardly enough to keep up with so many students. Dr. Steely’s office was across the street from the school in a former beauty salon. Temporary buildings (called the Colonies) were erected to house the overflow. The problem was that there were no chairs for these buildings and no money to buy any. Dr. Tesseneer was laughed at when he asked to borrow chairs from other universities, but Western Kentucky University came to the rescue and gave NKSC 250 chairs (NKSC even had to borrow a truck to get them), with about 200 more coming from Campbell County schools.<sup>27</sup>

The Regents hired a local architectural firm, Fisk, Rinehart, Hall, McAlister, and Stockwell (FRHM&S) to design the new campus in Highland Heights. The concept that was proposed depicted a modern look made of concrete, which went against traditional ideas of what a college should look like. There were several reasons for the design, laid out by Addison H. Clipson, design partner for FRHM&S, in a document dated December 15, 1970. The first was the data that was provided was “plugged in” using square footage, teaching space, number of students, etc., resulting in the space age type design that maximized space. It was also felt that architecture of the time was somewhat “chaotic” (having no apparent structure), and the idea was to make the campus uniform, so when expanded it would be consistent. The concrete was not necessarily cheaper as some people thought, but the forms that were used to shape the components could be used for future structures, thus saving money in time and labor. It also was to reflect the personality of Northern, which was deemed “no ordinary institution” by Dr. Steely and also fit in with the modern 1970’s style.<sup>28</sup> Dr. Steely had envisioned a Classical Revival type structure like most universities, but after much controversy, he was overruled.<sup>29</sup> The classic style was beautiful, but perhaps not practical in the sense that buildings now require air ducts, boiler rooms, and other facets of modern buildings. Clipson also noted that trade union wage agreements, a lack of trained craftsmen, and material costs ruled out using the classic style for the building design. What they were using was called “value engineering” or streamlining the materials

used for the greatest return on investment; that Clipson noted to be “maybe just a bit controversial.”<sup>30</sup>

Even with the streamlined design, funding was a constant problem. The state cut the budget for the first building, Nunn Hall, prompting Dr. Steely to go to Frankfort to push for the extra money, which eventually was granted.<sup>31</sup> If he had not succeeded in securing the money, Nunn Hall would have been half the size it became. The official groundbreaking for the new Highland Heights campus took place on March 31, 1971, with Governor Nunn in attendance to celebrate the fruition of a promise he had made to Northern Kentucky, declaring that “Northern Kentucky State College can be a magnet for progress. It can attain its potential as a center of culture. It can help attract new economic development. It can instill in young and old alike the sense of community that has been missing for too long.” It was a victory for the men who worked so hard to make it happen by “blazing an original trail for public higher education here.”<sup>32</sup>

### The Chase Merger

The dream could have stopped with that groundbreaking and the college could have remained a little school in the country. However, opportunity once again knocked for NKSC when the Salmon P. Chase College of Law suddenly needed a home in mid-1971. The Chase school had been an independent evening law school in Cincinnati since 1893. Independent law schools were quickly disappearing with support dwindling. The American Bar Association, through which Chase received accreditation, recommended that the school affiliate itself with a college or university in order to receive support. Chase wanted to stay in the Cincinnati area because it was the only evening school to provide legal training. Talks with Xavier University and Miami University fell through, and Chase was running out of options. Ken Lucas, a member of the Board of Regents for NKSC, had suggested as early as 1970 that a merger between Chase and NKSC should be considered. Dr. Steely initially was doubtful about the idea, but Mr. Lucas was persistent and convinced Dr. Steely that it was a viable option. The idea was bolstered by the fact that State Senator Clyde Middleton (a Chase student) supported the merger. The group met with Governor Nunn to gain his support, using the fact that Chase was self-supporting and had at least a million and a half dollars in assets. Further, the only two law schools in Kentucky, the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, could not admit everyone who was qualified because of space limitations. Northern Kentucky needed more lawyers, with only one lawyer per 1,350 residents, while Lexington and Louisville had one lawyer for every 400 residents.<sup>33</sup>

Governor Nunn supported the idea, and when Chase needed a new home, NKSC put its offer on the table. Chase officials were agreeable to the terms of the merger, but it had to be approved by the Kentucky Council of Public Higher Education. The director of the council, Ted Gilbert, was opposed to the idea, believing it would be detrimental to the other state institutions. NKSC still had the reputation as being nothing more than a “glorified community college” and allowing the merger with a law school would give it more

credibility, therefore taking a larger share of state funding.<sup>34</sup> The Attorney General of Kentucky, John Breckinridge, got involved in the controversy when he said NKSC had no legal right to award any law degrees. True to the pattern that had evolved since the early days, NKSC encountered opposition on every point. Even so, NKSC was awarded the merger with Chase in 1971. Breckinridge immediately sued to block the merger, deeming it against the law. The legal community had a considerable amount of influence at the state level and did not want another law school in the state of Kentucky. More lawyers meant more competition for clients and fees they would generate. State elections were coming up for 1972, with Breckinridge running for Lt. Governor and vacating the Attorney –General post. Luckily for proponents of the merger, the newly elected Attorney-General, Ed Hancock, supported it. The suit had been filed in Campbell County Circuit Court, and the final decision was delayed until Breckinridge was out of office so it would be appealed. The merger was approved, and on July 1, 1972, it became official, giving NKSC the recognition and influence to continue on its path to excellence.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

Northern Kentucky State College graduated its first class in 1973, a crowning achievement in the face of the struggle to even open its doors. Governor Nunn called it “the most lasting achievement of my administration.”<sup>36</sup> It has continued through the years to grow, officially becoming Northern Kentucky University on June 19, 1976, after Governor Julian Carroll signed it into law. The hard work and determination of those with the gift of vision and the tenacity to make it happen has paid off with the university achieving more in its short history than even the founders could have imagined. The “seat of their pants” way of operating brought the early administrators criticism, but if they had been more organized and gone through the channels of committees and regulations, success might have been delayed or not achieved at all.

Northern has become a nationally recognized institution, not only in academics, but also in athletics and its involvement in community service. The region has grown tremendously in the last 35 years, and Northern has grown with it, currently boasting an enrollment of over 14,000 students of all ages. Northern has truly become an integral part of the entire tri-state metropolitan area, bringing quality education, culture and pride to the region, a testament to believing in something and working for it; and in the words of Dr. Ralph Tesseneer: “Don’t ever tell me that you can’t sell people dreams; you can.”



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## ENDNOTES

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- 7 Frank Stallings, *Groundbreakings, Northern Kentucky University's First 25 Years*, 2.
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- 16 Dr. W. Frank Steely, *Northern: Birth of a University*, 30.
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- 26 DeMarcus interview.
- 27 Tesseneer interview.
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- 30 Addison H. Clipson, *Northern Kentucky State College Academic Building: A Statement in Design Philosophy*, December 15, 1970.
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## PERSPECTIVES

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### Roman Influence on Machiavellian Political Thought

Hank Smith

Niccolò Machiavelli is probably best known today as author of *The Prince*. However, his political views were laid out more fully in his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*. The *Discourses* contain Machiavelli's commentary on Titus Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, a famous Roman historical work that centered on the founding of Rome and the Republic. Furthermore, while they are forever linked with the Italian Renaissance, the *Discourses* not only dealt with subjects of antiquity but also with Machiavelli's contemporary political analysis. Not simply a commentary on ancient governments, the *Discourses* were also an attempt to bridge the gap between the pagan world and Machiavelli's contemporary times. Machiavelli was just as influenced by the political turmoil of his world as he was by the political success of the past. He lamented the fact that while the influence of antiquity could be seen everywhere in Italy in almost every aspect of life "the works of greatest *virtù* which Historians indicate have been accomplished by ancient Kingdoms and Republics, by Kings, Captains, Citizens, Lawgivers, ... to be more readily admired than imitated, or rather so much neglected by everyone in every respect that no sign of that ancient *virtù* remains."<sup>1</sup> His *Discourses* was an attempt to illustrate what made Rome so successful and how the applications of those principles could serve to stabilize the current political climate. It is in this light that this paper will examine the *Discourses*. It will also attempt to show how Machiavelli used Livy to illustrate what made a successful republic and therefore explain how the absence of those principles contributed to the political troubles facing Italy in his own time.

Accomplishing this requires a narrow focus; specifically, on Machiavelli's concept of republicanism. Machiavelli, following the Roman example, defined a republic as a government made up of elected officials—Roman citizens—who operated under, and were restrained, by a constitution. Within this definition, there are a number of nuances that must be dealt with. For example, this

paper will examine the disunity between the Senate and the people of Rome, Rome's military structure, ideas of Roman *virtus* and fortune, and finally Roman religion. Before getting into these subjects however, it is helpful to look briefly at Machiavelli's treatment of Livy's histories and his criteria for selecting Rome as the Republic to emulate.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind that the *Discourses* are a blend of history and instruction. Machiavelli's purpose was "to provide an understanding of political action for present use by an examination of the past."<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli was more concerned with the political climate of his own day than he was with the historical details of Rome. He used examples from Livy to build an idealized view of Rome that can be used to show the flaws that caused the political troubles of his own time. This is not to say that Machiavelli deliberately ignored the historical aspect of Livy's writing. Rather, he took certain liberties with parts of the history so that he could build his arguments. Characters from Livy function more as symbols and archetypes than actual historical persons. Machiavelli stressed these symbolic characteristics in Livy's Romans to make them examples for his readers.<sup>3</sup> Machiavelli always used people as moral examples of what to do or what not to do and as a result the historical figures he mentioned wound up looking very much like a cast of heroes and villains the likes of which you might find in a comic book today. While they are true historical figures and their presence in the historical record lends authority to his arguments, Machiavelli stressed the aspects he needed to in order to make his point, and downplayed things that may have conflicted with his ideas. In some cases, he went so far as to lend historical authority to characters who may never have existed, except in myth, as might be seen in his coverage of the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus.<sup>4</sup>

To understand Romulus in the context in which Machiavelli used him, it is important to keep in mind Machiavelli's ideas on the founding of a government and how that event of creation could set the republic on a road to either success or failure. Setting up his argument with a description of the three types of good government and the three types of bad government, which were described nearly identically by the Greek historian Polybius—who wrote his own history of Rome in the second century BCE—Machiavelli argued that each type of government was flawed from the beginning and doomed to repeat a certain cycle.<sup>5</sup> Monarchies provided protection and instituted laws, but soon degenerated into Tyrannies. Tyrannies were overthrown and replaced by Aristocracies in which the nobles would begin to fight each other for more and more power until eventually they exhibited the same tyrannical exclusion from power as the tyrant had previously, devolving into an Oligarchy. From there, the people would overthrow the government and a democracy would take over which would very shortly turn into anarchy since the people would be running things and individuals would think only of themselves and what they wanted. This would then have led the people to seek the protection and stability of a monarch and start the whole process again. Each form of government was doomed to collapse because no form of government could provide for everyone involved.<sup>6</sup>

At this point Machiavelli also followed Polybius's reasoning closely in deciding that it was only through a mixed constitution that a state could enjoy long term stability. With this understanding, the foundation of any government becomes vitally important and as such Romulus became of central importance to Machiavelli's work. Despite the fact that Livy warns his reader that the tales of Romulus and the founding of Rome contain much more that seems like poetic fable than historical fact, Machiavelli treated Romulus throughout his *Discourses* as a solid historical figure.<sup>7</sup> Machiavelli read Livy and likely would have recognized this warning as historically sound but for his own purposes he needed a real life, flesh and blood Romulus to lend credibility to his own arguments. If Romulus, unlike another possibly mythological figure Lycurgus of Sparta, did not at one moment give all the laws needed to keep Rome free and stable for a long time, he was still responsible for laying the foundations of a government that was able to develop into a republic. But if Rome did "not have a Lycurgus who so established it in the beginning that she was not able to exist free for a long time, none the less so many were the incidents that arose in that City because of the disunion that existed between the Plebs and the Senate, so that ...if the first institutions were defective, none the less they did not deviate from the straight path which would lead them to perfection."<sup>8</sup> This "perfection" entailed the sharing of power between King and noble, with an eye towards protecting liberty. That allowed Rome, when it later threw off its kings, to fall back on those same ideas to form its own republic. In place of a King, the Romans instituted two consuls with kingly powers while maintaining the Senate.<sup>9</sup> At that point in Roman history, Machiavelli noted that the Greek city-state of Sparta still had the superior government in that the people were not yet involved in the Roman government. But despite that and the fact that Sparta maintained itself for a thousand years Machiavelli chose Rome as the perfect republic to emulate. The question must be asked, why did he argue this point so stringently? Part of the answer to this question lies in the way in which the Roman people obtained their voice in the government and it is to this topic that discussion must now turn.

Unlike the Spartans, the Roman government was not formed from the beginning with a place for the peoples' voice in their government. The people of Rome, by contrast, had to demand their part in the government. In most instances it would be assumed that the people would rise up and overthrow their government and send it along to the next part of the cycle of governments that has already been discussed above. But it must be remembered that Rome had already broken the mold by this point. When the Romans expelled their last king they had not installed an aristocratic government in place of the monarchy, as the cycle would suggest. They had instead retained the powers and authority of a king in many respects in the form of the two Consuls. These Consuls ruled jointly to keep power from falling into the hands of one man, and were elected for a limit of one year to limit their power.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the Consuls were elected from the ranks of the Senate further encouraged the sharing of power as many Senators could look forward to their own turn as Consul<sup>11</sup>. The Romans had already learned how to share power in order to keep the stability of government that a strong king, or Consul in this case,

provided while at the same time limiting the drive of a King to guard his power or a noble to envy that power. The people would demand a share in government and would have to force their way into the mix, but the lessons already learned would serve to keep the government from collapsing.

Human nature being what it is, Machiavelli pointed out that once the nobles had nothing to fear from a king, the harmony between the nobles and Plebs which was formed through having a common enemy in the king began to fade away. Those in power began to look down on those without, and Machiavelli stated “they begun to vent upon the plebs that poison which they had kept within their breasts, and in every way they could they offended them”.<sup>12</sup> The plebs therefore began to resist this degradation any way they could. The people in the Roman state did have their own type of power, although not the official power in the form the nobility had. Their power came from the dependence that any state has upon its populous. While it was the nobility who controlled the wealth of the state, it was the people who generated that wealth in much the same way that the nobility commanded the army and held the top ranks but the people were the rank and file. The people began to run “tumultuously throughout the streets, locking their stores, all the Plebs departing from Rome, ...or they would not enroll their names to go to war, so that to placate them it was necessary (for the Senate) in some part to satisfy them.”<sup>13</sup> To see how dangerous this could have been to the Roman state, just envision a scenario today where every private citizen of the United States left their jobs and migrated elsewhere, while every soldier below the rank of Captain simply walked away from their military bases and disappeared into the countryside. The consequences would be disastrous today, and would have been equally so in ancient times. The Senate of Rome understood that such actions would result in the loss of their power anyway since there would be no way to sustain the state. Rather than take the chance that this could have happened, the Senate agreed to the formation of the Tribunes<sup>14</sup>. “And if the tumults were the cause of creation of Tribunes, they merit the highest praise, for in addition to giving the people a part in administration, they were established for guarding Roman liberty,” according to Machiavelli.<sup>15</sup> They had power to veto laws that would be detrimental to the plebs as well as the ability to take any issue directly to the people for vote. As might be expected, even though the Senate had agreed to this, it was a constant source of friction between the nobility and the plebs in Roman government. This resulted in the near constant bickering between the Senate and the people which many of Machiavelli’s contemporaries saw as the reason the Roman republic ultimately fell. In this Machiavelli strongly disagreed, and argued that the disunity between the nobles and the people was the cause that Rome lasted as long as it did as a republic.<sup>16</sup> Taking it even further, Machiavelli maintained that it was the absence of such tumults that made republics of his day weak. An Italian of his time have wondered exactly how such infighting could be good for a state and perhaps many modern readers would agree. To make his point, Machiavelli used examples from Rome, Sparta and his own Italy.

For Machiavelli, government was partially a matter of balance and tension usually focused on envy of one class over the power of another. This was of

little concern to a state like Sparta. The laws of Lycurgus had fashioned the state into something that had virtually eliminated envy or fear among the common people towards the upper classes.<sup>17</sup> Spartan nobility went through the same rigorous military training as the common people with only the heir to the kingship exempt. In this way everyone, noble and commoner alike, had equal stake in the success of the state since everyone was a part of the military. A same part of that militaristic training was to instill a disdain for luxury and comfort so that the common people had nothing to envy in the wealth of the noble "because equal poverty existed here and the Plebs were lacking ambitious men, as the offices of the City were extended to few Citizens, and were kept distant from the Plebs, nor did the Nobles by not treating them badly ever create in them the desire to want them."<sup>18</sup>

This view of Sparta is historically accurate in many ways, but misleading in some areas. The idea that Sparta was in some way an isolationist society in which all people were treated fairly was more an idealized stance than a historical one. While the Spartans may not have lived with much fear of oppression from their government they did live with a constant fear of uprising. This fear came in the form of the Helots.<sup>19</sup> Helots were the slave labor on which the Spartan state was founded. These slaves did all the day-to-day work in Spartan society leaving the Spartans citizens free to devote themselves to their military traditions. They were arguably the reason for Spartan isolationism as well as the cause for Spartan obsession with military training. They vastly outnumbered the Spartans and so any move to go to war abroad for an extended time left Sparta in danger of revolt. Machiavelli makes no mention of the Helots in his *Discourses*. It may be that since they were not citizens of the state that he felt they did matter much in the big picture. It could also be that mentioning this kind of oppression would damage the arguments he was attempting to make about liberty and freedom in government. In any event the overall result of Sparta remaining an isolationist state remains the same regardless of the reasons. From the strict viewpoint Machiavelli seemed to take in limiting discussion of Sparta to its actual citizenship, Sparta's low population did make it somewhat immune to many of the internal problems he saw facing Italy. By its own strict laws and regulations, and "not accepting outsiders in their Republic," Sparta was able to avoid some of the issues Machiavelli was seeking to counter in Italy.<sup>20</sup>

One of these problems was the factional element of politics.<sup>21</sup> He had himself experienced this in his dealings with the Medici family in his home Florence. Machiavelli's Italy was constantly in danger of conflict and changing governments and one of the major reasons according to Machiavelli was that Italian politics of his day had no way built into the system to relive the tensions between the classes. The only way for a person to protect himself or to stop people from doing him wrong was to join with others of like mind. The result was the growth of factions, which constantly came into conflict with each other and led to large scale armed conflict as each faction sought to guard its own interests<sup>22</sup>. Machiavelli could not deny that tensions existed so he looked for a way to alleviate those tensions in a better way and found his answer in Livy's Rome.

Unlike Sparta, the same tensions that existed in modern Italy also existed in Rome. Rome was able to sustain itself for four hundred years in the face of those tensions. The secret according to Machiavelli was the fact that Rome allowed for the release of those tensions in a way that kept the Romans' state alive through conflict rather than the conflict resulting in an overthrow of government. It helps to imagine a state like a teapot on a stove with class envy and tensions portrayed by the heat. In Sparta's case the stove is turned off and so the pressure inside the pot never rises. In Machiavelli's Italy the stove is on but there are no openings to allow the pressure to escape and so eventually the lid has to blow off entirely. Rome however had built in openings in the form of the Tribunes and its system of allowing anyone to accuse anyone else of wrong doing legally. The pressure can escape gradually rather than build to sudden explosion. In Machiavelli's view, the tumults and disturbances in ancient Rome were not symptomatic of a problem, but rather of a healthy state.<sup>23</sup> Each argument, each disturbance was a result of one side or the other asserting its influence. Furthermore, each conflict kept the fire of liberty alive in the state. The nobles controlled the courts and so had their power to rule reaffirmed in each case that was tried while at the same time the plebs who may be bringing suit against someone else reaffirmed their right to equal protection under law. In the same way the people could force laws though the Senate by threats of not enrolling for military service and thus furthermore solidify their freedoms. It was this type of avenue for the people to voice their concerns that Machiavelli thought needed to be present in the governments of his own Italy as the following passage illustrates:

We have seen in our time that troubles happened to the Republic of Florence because the multitude was able to give vent to their spirit in an ordinary way against one of her citizens, as befell in the time of Francesco Valori, who was as a Prince in that City ... being judged ambitious ... and a man who wanted ... to transcend the civil authority, and there being no way in the Republic of being able to resist him except by a faction contrary to his, there resulted that he ... began to enlist supporters who should defend him: ... those who opposed him not having any regular way or repressing him, thought of extraordinary ways, so that it came to arms. And where ... his authority would have been extinguished with injury to himself only, ... having to extinguish it by extraordinary means, there ensued harm not only to himself, but to many other noble citizens.<sup>24</sup>

One might look over these arguments and agree with Machiavelli while at the same time wondering why he did not put forth Sparta as the example to follow. After all, Sparta had, so far, been portrayed as having the superior initial government and a system that apparently rendered envy and tension nonexistent. The answer to this lies in the same problems that Machiavelli found in Venice. Odd as it may seem, it was in part Sparta's military structure that was lacking.

A reader of the *Discourses* may at this point shake his head and wonder at



this statement. After all, Sparta was justly famous for its military power. But still Machiavelli concluded that Sparta, like Venice, was not strong enough to hold their state together in the end. The reasoning for this is one of idealism versus practicality in Machiavelli's view.

Machiavelli argued that a republic must be either constantly expanding or isolated<sup>25</sup>. The ideal would be for a state to be isolationist in its approach since Republics only go to war to make subject another state or because another state wants to subjugate them.<sup>26</sup> To be isolationist is to hold your own power at home, and never be seen as a threat to anyone else. This route allowed a state like Sparta to avoid the conflicts that Rome experienced in her government because among other things a small republic does not need as many citizens. Sparta never had a large population because it simply was not needed to feed its military. Machiavelli believed it was easier to keep a small state happy than a large one. The problem was that a small isolationist state could never be prepared for changes if fortune caused it to have to expand.<sup>27</sup> And so Sparta, once it had expanded by necessity, was not equipped to hold its empire because its military had been built for other reasons than conquest. In the same way, Venice had never been a military state to begin with and had acquired its empire through wealth. Therefore, like Sparta, when an event came which required force to retain its influence, Venice simply could not do so.

Rome by contrast was better equipped to maintain its empire because it was expansionist. The cost of this was a larger population and more headaches at home, but Machiavelli thought it was the only way to ensure a state's success in practical terms. While Rome's expansionist characteristics gave it the potential to deal with chance the very occurrences that had caused the fall of Sparta and Venice. By Machiavelli's reasoning this potential was the key difference between Rome and the other republics he compared them to which, because of their limited ability to meet new threats or circumstances, were at the mercy of outside forces. To Machiavelli, being subject to any forces that were not internal to a republic was a fatal flaw. This belief transferred itself to Machiavelli's other principle concept of a successful republic military force, that of relying on citizen soldiers rather than on mercenary or even a professional force.<sup>28</sup>

To Machiavelli one of the major dangers to any state was the reliance on mercenary armies, stating that "experience has shown princes and republics, single-handed, making the greatest progress, and mercenaries doing nothing except damage."<sup>29</sup> This concept would not have been foreign to him since the various powers of his time were used to hiring mercenary forces in their wars. This was a danger since mercenaries were paid to fight and as such could never be wholly relied upon for two reasons. The first reason is an obvious one and is simply that since mercenaries fight for money a state could never be certain that they would not change sides for a better deal. The other reason was that since mercenaries were hired warriors then they would have had very little incentive to end a war.<sup>30</sup> The longer a war went on the better business was so to speak and so they would not be as likely to fight to bring a war to an end as native soldiers would.<sup>31</sup>

From this Machiavelli was very clear that he felt only an army composed

of its own people could be relied upon. But he was not really advocating a standing professional army. Instead he was calling for a reliance on a militia of civilian soldiers. By arguing for a militia force, Machiavelli was putting the idea forth that by using civilians to fight, mercenaries become useless. He also held the opinion that a militia force was more apt to fight enthusiastically than either a mercenary or a professional force. The justification for using mercenary forces by states was that they had no local forces available. According to Machiavelli, this is the fault solely of the rulers since any state strong enough to matter would have to have a large body of civilians available to be recruited. This reserve of manpower should never be overlooked even if the civilians were not used to war.<sup>32</sup> A wise ruler would simply train citizens to be effective fighters. The reasons Machiavelli argued that a militia was a better choice than a mercenary or professional forces were rooted in the reasons why a soldier would fight. A professional soldier had no ties to anything but the military. In a very real sense he was no longer a citizen and his loyalties lay not with his country but with his commander. Machiavelli feared this type of arrangement because:

a citizen being a command of an army for a long time, he gained it over to himself and made it his partisan, for that army in time forgot the Senate and recognized him as chief. Because of this Sulla and Marius were able to find soldiers willing to follow them against the public good. Because of this Caesar was able to seize the country.<sup>33</sup>

A militia force removed all the above dangers while at the same time providing soldiers who had a stake in ending the war. A soldier who had fields to tend to at home would not have the same desire a mercenary might to prolong the war. He would have wanted to finish things as quickly as he could in order to get back to his own work. By the same token, a soldier who had land or an occupation at home did not depend on his commanders for his livelihood the way a professional soldier did. Machiavelli found his prototype for this kind of soldier in Cincinnatus. Elected Dictator and entrusted to relieve a Roman Consular army under siege, Cincinnatus left his farm and took command of military force. Once the Consul Minitius and his army were saved, Cincinnatus laid down his power and returned to his farm.<sup>34</sup> In this way Cincinnatus personified the militia soldier who would fight the hardest to bring a quick end to any war with the least likelihood of wanting to cause harm to the state through civil war. These ideas, in conjunction with those concerning internal strife and the sharing of political power so far sounds well and good, but human nature being what it is, there are still questions to be dealt with. If the military consists solely of citizen soldiers, what motivation caused them to fight when called upon? Would not they have been apt to want to stay home and tend their own business since they were losing money potentially by fighting? For that matter, why would a people who had forced the creation of the Tribune and had the success it did in gaining its own voice in the government not simply eliminate the nobles and take control of everything themselves? There are two answers to these questions to be

gleaned from the *Discourses* and each is entwined with the other to a certain extent. The first to be considered is the peculiarly Roman notion of *virtù*.

The modern word “virtue” is not a good translation of the Roman concept of *virtù*. It includes a wide range of meanings, some of which would be directly at odds with the modern meaning of virtue. The Roman word is rooted soundly in a pagan worldview that the modern is not able to fully comprehend and translate. *Virtù* implies the idea of excellence of a man and his character in common with today’s virtue, but what constituted that excellence of character was very different in many respects. The pagan world had a different set of values than the Christian world. Ambition, the pursuit of glory through political and military means and a certain piety before the gods and the state were all mixed together in the concept.<sup>35</sup> Political advancement was tied directly into the ideas of military glory, and military glory was tied directly to the state.<sup>36</sup> The Romans would have lauded a man who led Roman armies to victories for the glory of the state but at the same time would be wary of the same man for becoming too caught up in his own press. An example of this is the triumph, a celebration that the Roman people granted to generals who had achieved a significant victory. The General would be paraded through the streets of Rome with his army while dressed in the traditional robes and red paint of the God of war to show his success, but at the same time a slave would stand behind him in his chariot and whisper in his ear constantly to remember that he was just a man.<sup>37</sup>

The scene described above goes a long way to explain the Roman views of what was acceptable and what was not. The pursuit of glory and advancement within the state were accepted and even encouraged, but any sign an individual was setting himself up above the state was viewed with deep suspicion. Under such a system it can easily be seen why a man might leave his fields and go to war in the name of Rome. It was his duty yes, but it was also a chance for him to show actively his character in his devotion to the republic and by extension its gods. To fight in battle was an opportunity for a Roman both for personal recognition and political advancement. In the same way the plebs might defend their right to liberty when they felt threatened, but they would never have sought to throw off the Roman government entirely. Rome was sacred in a very real sense. Not only because of its authority, but also because of the Roman concepts of *virtù* dictated that a man treat it so. This combination of the active pursuit of glory and the devotion to the state and its gods were taken by Machiavelli as vital. This Roman *virtù*, if adopted by Italians, would produce citizens who would fight willingly for the state while at the same time making sure that they caused no harm to the state. By tying ambition to devotion to the state as he argued the Romans did, the problem of an individual seeking his own power at the expense of the state could be curbed. These ideals as has already been mentioned were rooted in paganism, which leads directly to the other institution tied to the state that commanded the loyalty and respect of the man of *virtù*. That institution was the Roman religion.

Machiavelli’s views on religion in a state are central to his beliefs of government. It is one of the single most important dividing lines he used to

compare the success of the Roman state and the turmoil of what to him was modern Italy. Much debate has taken place about what Machiavelli actually believed in regards to religion. Some view him as extremely anti-Christian and wanting to return to the pagan religion of the Roman world, while others take the opposite stance. For all intents and purposes though, it seems simply from reading the *Discourses* that the individual doctrines of either religion did not concern him so much as the impact each had on the state. In stating "The Princes of a Republic or a Kingdom ought therefore to maintain their Republic's religions, and in consequence well and united. And therefore they ought in all things which arise to foster it (even if they should judge them false) to favor and encourage it," Machiavelli made no mention of doctrine and or even expressly named a religion.<sup>38</sup> The statement was general and his focus throughout most of his discussion on paganism and Christianity was on the effect each religion had on uniting its respective state.

In praising the Roman religion, Machiavelli says nothing about the actual practices beyond the examples of how, in his view, the Romans used religion to control the people.<sup>39</sup> He referred to several instances to illustrate this and at all times seemed to view the Romans as opportunistically taking advantage of certain events to suit their own purpose. It is not the reality of the events from a religious standpoint that concerned him so much as it was the perception of reality that allowed the Roman ruling class to manipulate the people to accomplish their goals. The story of how the Senate used the famine and plagues that hit Rome at the time the Plebs had seized control of all but one of the Tribunes as proof that the gods were displeased with the action and so regained control of the Tribunes. This fits well with stories of how generals used the auspices and auguries before battle to either move the people to accept battle or delay to paint a very cynical picture of religion. He echoed Polybius' blanket statement that the Roman elite had invented religion to control the people<sup>40</sup> with his comments on how Numa invented a meeting with a nymph to bring religion and laws to the Roman people not long after Romulus had ruled.<sup>41</sup>

All these examples point to a view that it was not the religion Machiavelli was defending as much as it was the effect that religion had on the stability of the state. By comparison, Machiavelli in his attack on the Christian church did not condemn Christianity outright but rather its leadership. To Machiavelli, Christianity in his time was having the exact opposite affect on Italy that the Roman religion had had on Rome. He blamed this on the fact that Christianity had gotten away from its foundations. He argued "if the Princes of the Republic had maintained this Christian religion according as it had been established by the founder, the Christian States and Republics would have been more united and much more happy than they are."<sup>42</sup> Where the Roman religion had remained the same throughout the Republic's lifespan and had as a result only served to unify the people under one religious identity, Christianity had taken the opposite route.

The idea that Christian values were in direct contradiction to the values of the state was a part of his reasoning. Christians held ultimate loyalty to heaven not their secular government and those values traditionally held to

get a Christian into heaven seemed at odds with the needs of the state.<sup>43</sup> These contradictions have led some to believe that Machiavelli was totally anti-Christian in his thinking but that need not have been the case. Vickie B. Sullivan seemed likely to be closer to the truth of the matter when she commented that Machiavelli was likely neither Christian nor pagan, although it does not necessarily follow that Machiavelli was attempting to recreate Christianity as a new religion based purely in the secular realm as she goes on to suggest.<sup>44</sup> Although her reasoning that ideas of “turning the other cheek” and “do good to those who despitefully use you”<sup>45</sup> would seem to eliminate Christianity as a religion that could have fostered the same commitment to the state’s needs as the Roman religion did is perhaps an over generalization of Christianity. Other scriptural verses could just as easily be used to convince the Christian to give his loyalty to his secular rulers. Christ told people to “render to Caesar that which is Caesars,” while Paul implored people to obey the laws of their state and made the argument that God sets governments up.<sup>46</sup> The very same line of reasoning had in fact been used to by the Romans to set up Rome as a holy city and the Christian emperor as God’s chosen ruler.<sup>47</sup> In any event, Christianity had by the time of Machiavelli shown that its doctrines could be made to fit into a militaristic ideal by way of the Crusades, and the idea of kings ruling with God’s favor is very akin to the Roman idea of loyalty to the state because the gods favored it. While Machiavelli may have considered some Christian doctrine to be a liability to the state, his main attack seemed to have been centered on the Church’s behavior in Italy.

Machiavelli stated that the church had fallen from its first foundation and become corrupt. He argued that because the leadership of the Church was corrupt, it caused all Italians to disregard religion and therefore removes the authority religion should have in Machiavelli’s plan for a successful republic.<sup>48</sup> The Church was not respected, and therefore could not serve its political role the way the Roman religion did. But far more important in his estimation and “the cause of our ruin” is the fact that the Church was working actively to keep Italy fragmented.<sup>49</sup> The Church was powerful enough that it held strong influence over parts of Italy and feared to lose that power. At the same time it was not powerful enough to extend that control over all of Italy. Therefore the Church was not strong enough to unite Italy, but was just strong enough to keep anyone else from doing the job.<sup>50</sup> Anytime someone became powerful enough to begin to unite Italy like the Venetians, the Church brought in someone like France to put a stop to it. Then the Church would have to appeal to another power to stop the power it had invited in and Italy was kept fragmented and in constant danger of invasion.

This was the heart of the matter for Machiavelli. His entire *Discourses* were written to set forth a guide on how to create and maintain a stable republic, and like factionalism and mercenary warfare the Church was mitigating against such a republic. It seems likely that if the Church could have united all of Italy under a common rule in a stable republic Machiavelli would have supported it fully, but the state of the Church at the time prevented that from being a feasible option. And so it became an enemy to Machiavelli’s political views, not because it was not able to unite Italy itself or because of

its doctrines, but because its corruption had removed its power to influence everyone and its dedication to keeping anyone else from bringing the Italian people together under one government.

It was this idea of unity for the state and the resulting security of liberty that Machiavelli was interested in. The political scene of his time was fractured and unstable. Machiavelli proposed to address this problem by examining the past and presenting lessons for how to maintain a united state. By taking examples from antiquity he could show the success of the ideas he outlined because they had been successful in the past. Using historical figures he laid out how he felt a citizen should act by referencing individuals such as Cincinnatus. He contrasted this by using characters like Julius Caesar as examples of what not to do. By weaving these characters with the backdrop of history and the ideas of government, military structure, and religion he argued that many of the things dividing Italy could be changed. The military clashes and factionalism could be curbed by creating outlets for the tensions between the upper and lower classes. At the same time, creating these outlets along a Roman model would require changing the political structure to keep small factions from monopolizing power in the state. Religion would play a part in concentrating the states power and ensuring that it lasted beyond the lifetime of one influential ruler. By combining the triumphs of the ancient states with warnings of their mistakes Machiavelli believed it was possible to form a stable government that would last.



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## ENDNOTES

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## PERSPECTIVES

### “Are You a Member of the Communist Party?” – The House Un-American Activities Committee and the Hollywood Blacklist

*Zach Wells*

The Cold War is regarded as a time of heightened ideological differences between the two superpowers of the twentieth century, the United States and the Soviet Union. Immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the fear of Communist expansion was felt in Europe as well as the United States. This first *Red Scare* (roughly 1920-1941) caused the United States to begin the process of preventing Communist influence from invading its borders. Hysteria gripped America in the 1920s, and increased in 1929 with the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. Many saw the rise of unemployment throughout the 1930s as an opportunity for increased Communist influence within the United States. Furthermore, exponential growth of the U.S. government by President Franklin D. Roosevelt was seen by conservatives as a possible vehicle for Communist expansion. This period of history witnessed the beginning of several years of attacks by the United States Congress against liberal ideals. The most radical of these attacks by the federal government was the creation of a special committee to investigate any activities that were believed to be subversive and un-American.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was created in 1938 as a tool to eliminate Communism from New Deal Programs. What happened during the committee's history was a series of attacks that went beyond President Roosevelt and the task of eliminating Communist influence from the New Deal. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) declared war on the entertainment industry, pressuring Hollywood to create a blacklist of suspected Communists that not only ruined careers, but individual lives and families. While HUAC's goal was to curb un-American propaganda within the borders of the United States, its actions were responsible for

creating much of the same hysteria it claimed to be preventing. The House Un-American Activities Committee was more about spreading conservative political influence than it was about protecting the country from Communism. Suddenly, the American government itself, not the Communist Party, was trying to gain control of private industry and spread conservative, traditional American ideals.

In its initial years, HUAC was referred to as the *Dies Committee* after its first Chairman, Congressman Martin Dies. Upon its creation in 1938, Congress authorized the committee to do the following:

To extend, character and objectives of un-American propaganda activities in the United States: the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of domestic origin and attacks the principles of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution...<sup>1</sup>

Congress voted 191-41 to allow Texas Democrat Martin Dies to begin a seven-month campaign against un-American propaganda. Many Republicans, as well as Southern Democrats like Dies, did not support President Roosevelt and the expansion of the federal government under the New Deal; the committee was a way of gaining negative publicity for the otherwise popular President and his administration.<sup>2</sup> Because “anti-Communism” received a great deal of publicity, the American public generally supported HUAC. Gallup poles from the late 1930s showed high approval ratings for Dies and the committee.<sup>3</sup> Members of Congress were cautious in opposing the committee for fear of political backlash. Every time the committee was up for renewal (it did not become a permanent committee until 1945), it passed by huge margins. One liberal Democrat, when voting for the committee’s renewal in 1941, declared:

On the one hand, to adopt this resolution is to seemingly approve the un-American procedures of the Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities. On the other hand, to defeat the resolution is to seemingly approve of a continuation of subversive activities.<sup>4</sup>

This statement shows that early in its history members of Congress saw the committee and its practices as un-American. While many did not support the actions of the committee, they felt it would be more dangerous (for themselves) to oppose it. President Roosevelt spoke out against the committee saying that he believed its sole purpose was to attack his programs. Roosevelt’s public opposition stopped there and he did nothing further to stop its attacks. His silence only helped strengthen public opinion that the charges brought forth by the Dies Committee were justified.<sup>5</sup>

During the Dies Committee’s initial years, from 1938 until America’s involvement in World War II in 1941, the committee concentrated almost solely on eliminating Communism from New Deal programs. In an early attack on the entertainment industry, the Dies Committee initiated an investigation on

the Federal Theater Project, a program for unemployed theater professionals in the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA). Hallie Flanagan, the director of the Federal Theatre Project sought not only to put actors back to work, but also to provide a service to the American people in a time when life was hard for the majority of the country. She said in 1940, "we all believed that the theatre was more than a private enterprise, that it was also a public interest, which, properly fostered, might come to be a social and educative force."<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the establishment of the Federal Theatre Project, the Dies Committee accused Flanagan of spreading Un-American propaganda through the Project's plays. In 1937, the Federal Theater Project was preparing to premier a new play entitled, *The Cradle Will Rock*. The themes of the play centered around the sensitive issues of labor unions and corruption in big business, topics that took a significant amount of personal risk to support publicly. The opening of *The Cradle Will Rock* was delayed several times due to its controversial themes. Hallie Flanagan was called to appear before the Dies Committee on December 6, 1938; she had been named as a possible Communist sympathizer by the testimonies of several "friendly witnesses" who were called before the committee.<sup>7</sup> Throughout its history HUAC got most of its information and justification for its attacks from "friendly witnesses," individuals who were known to be anti-Communist and would give the committee the information they desired.<sup>8</sup>

Flanagan was one of many, over the next several years, who would be asked the question, "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" Flanagan stated on the record that she was not a Communist, nor did she ever participate in any un-American activities. While the Federal Theatre Project consumed most of the hearing, attention was drawn to an amount of time that Flanagan spent in Russia studying theatre in the 1920s. Flanagan was given little chance to defend herself, having to fight off several interruptions by the committee whenever she was permitted to speak.<sup>9</sup> As the hearing continued, it became apparent that the committee was intent on discrediting Flanagan solely on the fact that she studied theater in Russia a decade earlier. Congress eventually prevailed and in 1939, the House Appropriations Committee refused to grant funding to the Federal Theater Project.<sup>10</sup>

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, HUAC became almost non-existent. Suddenly, with the onset of war, the perception of the Soviet Union changed throughout America. The two countries became reluctant allies and despite twenty years of claims that the Soviet Union did not support American values, they were now seen as "friends" fighting side by side for freedom. American propaganda supporting Soviet soldiers became a common finding during the war years.<sup>11</sup>

In January 1945, with peace on the horizon, the committee became visible once again and regained influence. No longer publicly known as the *Dies Committee*, HUAC was now chaired by Representative J. Thomas Parnell, and included several influential members including Congressman and future U.S. President, Richard Nixon. By 1947, the committee began a campaign against

Hollywood and the Motion Picture Industry of America that would forever cement its mark in history. Throughout World War II, Hollywood was effective in producing successful propaganda that was used to keep American support and morale up during the war. Posters, short films, and even cartoons aimed to boost the country's spirit and the belief that America was the "good guy" fighting the evils of Germany and Japan. Walt Disney was very successful in producing pro-American propaganda during World War II. Cartoons such as *Der Fuehrer's Face* featured the popular Disney character Donald Duck, showing a frightening but ironically humorous side to the horrors of Nazism. During the war years and especially after 1945, the United States government took notice of exactly how influential Hollywood was during those years. Rumors began to circulate about Communist activity in Hollywood; the fear that Hollywood Communists could potentially use their films as a vehicle to influence the American public worried Congress. In 1947 HUAC officially launched its campaign to eliminate Communist influence from Hollywood. The problem that HUAC faced was that there was little proof that Communists were operating in the film industry, only a number of suspicions and hearsay comments made in passing. In order to prove that Communists had indeed infiltrated Hollywood, HUAC once again called forward several "friendly witnesses" including Walt Disney as well as the Chairman of the Screen Actors Guild, and future U.S. President, Ronald Reagan.<sup>12</sup> During the hearings, these "witnesses" gave names of people they suspected to be Communists or supposedly had Communist Party connections. Many of these testimonies included the phrases "I heard" or "I think." None of the "friendly witnesses" were able to give concrete proof that the people they were naming were in fact members of the Communist Party.<sup>13</sup> However, the accusation alone was enough to allow further investigation into the lives of the suspected individuals by HUAC.

It is important to mention Ronald Reagan's personal feelings on the matter since he was influential in bringing several innocent people under investigation. It was revealed years later that Reagan was a secret FBI informant at the time of his testimony before the committee.<sup>14</sup> He wrote in a 1951 article that Hollywood was always a prime target for red propagandists and Communists were "a subversive brethren (that) hoped eventually to control contents of films and thus influence the minds of 80,000,000 movie goers."<sup>15</sup> While Reagan's comments expressed an obvious distaste and paranoia for Communists, some witnesses made more extreme threats including the American actor Adolphe Menjou who said: "I would move to the state of Texas if they (Communists) ever came here because I think the Texans would kill them on sight!"<sup>16</sup>

While witnesses like Reagan and Menjou were strict anti-Communists many were not, and when called forward told the committee essentially what it wanted to hear to protect their own interests and reputation. This scenario was true in the case of Walt Disney. As previously mentioned, Disney produced several pro-American cartoons during World War II. Because of the popularity of his films, HUAC called Disney forward for questioning to ensure that his films did not contain anything that could be considered Communist propaganda. When testifying before the committee, Disney gave the names

of several individuals who he presumed had connections to the Communist Party. He even stated during his testimony that left-wing screen cartoonists tried to turn Mickey Mouse into a Marxist rat! <sup>17</sup> While Disney was not a Communist sympathizer he also was not a hardliner like Reagan. It was later revealed that Disney was more concerned with clearing his own name than he was with eliminating Communist influence from Hollywood. Like many studio bosses, Disney told the committee what it wanted to hear to keep the government out of his studio.

The testimonies of these “friendly witnesses” were taken as the whole, credible truth with little or no evidence and were used to call many Hollywood screenwriters, producers and actors to testify in front of the committee. On October 27th 1947, the committee began interviewing a new round of what they deemed “unfriendly witnesses.” The first to be interviewed was the founder and first President of the Screen Actors Guild, John Howard Lawson. Like many who appeared after him, Lawson was denied the right to defend himself throughout his hearing. He repeatedly stated that the committee was infringing on his rights and reminded them several times that the government does not have control over press and communications.<sup>18</sup> Committee member Robert E. Stripling began the hearing by asking the question that would be heard time and time again throughout HUAC’s history, “Mr. Lawson, are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party of the United States?” Lawson replied,

In framing my answer to that question I must emphasize the points that I have raised before. The question of Communism is in no way related to this inquiry, which is an attempt to get control of the screen and to invade the basic rights of American citizens in all fields. ...The question here relates not only to the question of my membership in any political organization, but this Committee is attempting to establish the right...which has been historically denied to any committee of this sort, to invade the rights and privileges and immunity of American citizens, whether they be Protestant, Methodist, Jewish, or Catholic, whether they be Republicans or Democrats or anything else.<sup>19</sup>

Before he was removed from the stand, Lawson said, “I have written Americanism for many years, and I shall continue to fight for the Bill of Rights, which you are trying to destroy.” <sup>20</sup> Lawson claimed the fifth amendment of the U.S. Constitution gave him the right not to answer the committee’s questions; he was found in contempt of Congress and sentenced to time in prison. Lawson is remembered as the one who set the precedent for those who testified after him in using the Bill of Rights as their defense.

Following Lawson, several others testified before the committee. Lawson, as well as nine others, refused to cooperate and were found in contempt. Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner, Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Sam Ornitz, Robert Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo, all well-known screenwriters and directors came to be known as the Hollywood Ten. In response to pressure from Washington, studio executives

met at the Waldorff-Astoria in New York, NY in December 1947 where they decided to start blacklisting those that did not cooperate with HUAC. In an official statement, Eric Johnston, President of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) declared:

We will forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation those in our employ and we will not re-employ any of the ten until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist.<sup>21</sup>

Another part of Johnston's statement displays one of the greatest examples of irony throughout this entire conflict: "In pursuing this policy, we are not going to be swayed by hysteria or intimidation from any source."<sup>22</sup> This statement contradicts the reasons why the MPAA initiated the blacklisting process. The original meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria took place because of government pressure on the film industry to take action against suspected Communist influence in their studios. Hollywood feared that if it did not take initiative and punish those who refused to cooperate with Washington, the government would become even more influential in the film industry.

Similar to when studio bosses, like Walt Disney, testified as "friendly witnesses" to keep the government out of their studio, the MPAA created the blacklist to keep the government out of the entire industry. One of the greatest tragedies of this situation was that while the accused individuals sometimes shared radical ideas, there was little or no evidence presented that any of them were Communists or had any affiliation with the Communist Party. Also, the MPAA's statement says that they will not "re-employ any of the ten until he has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist." Anyone could easily go under oath and claim they had no affiliation with the Communist Party, even if the opposite was true. This shows that the MPAA was less concerned about actually eliminating Communism from Hollywood, and more concerned about avoiding a negative image cast upon its members and being seen as Communist sympathizers.

While the MPAA stood firmly next to HUAC, several Hollywood actors created a group in support of the Hollywood Ten called The Committee for the First Amendment. The Committee started with twenty-eight members, including Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Ira Gershwin, Sterling Hayden, June Havoc, Gene Kelly, and Danny Kaye, Audrey Hepburn, Judy Garland, and Frank Sinatra.<sup>23</sup> Within weeks, the Committee for the First Amendment had over 500 members. They traveled to Washington during the hearings to provide support to those who were called to testify. After the hearings Humphrey Bogart made a statement expressing his feelings toward what he observed during the HUAC testimonies: "American citizens were denied the right to speak. The sound of the gavel of the committee chair rings across America because every time the gavel struck it hit the Constitution of the United States." The Committee for the First Amendment did little good because public sentiment at the time was firmly behind HUAC. Also, members of the Committee for the First Amendment were now under suspicion themselves, for partaking in un-American activities. While



Humphrey Bogart spoke loudly against HUAC during the testimonies, he later claimed that his trip to Washington was “ill-advised, and even foolish.”<sup>24</sup>

While public support was behind HUAC during the late 1940s, not everyone saw them as a tool to promote American ideals, even those of the highest authority. President Truman himself commented that HUAC was un-American. Also, many political cartoonists were brave enough to challenge HUAC and expose it as a renegade organization. One cartoonist, Herb Block, challenged HUAC during its hearings in October 1947.<sup>25</sup> Block argued what many did not realize until ten or fifteen years after some of his most biting cartoons were published: nobody was safe from HUAC. It had the power to run over anyone it wanted, as long as it hid behind the mission of hunting Communism and anyone that was a threat to liberty. While eliminating Communism and subversive activities was its mission, no politician or American citizen would question HUAC and its authority without obtaining a reputation of also being un-American.

In addition to ruining careers, HUAC and the Hollywood Blacklist destroyed friendships and personal relationships through forced betrayal. Actor Larry Parks, known for supporting liberal causes, was called to testify in 1951. To avoid jail and losing his career, he named in a closed-door hearing several individuals he suspected to be Communists. The transcripts from the hearing show that Parks begged the committee not to force him to give names of individuals he worked with. Park lost many friends and damaged his own relationship with his family as a result of this.<sup>26</sup> Many who were not blacklisted were put on a “gray list” which was essentially a state of limbo. While HUAC never made names on the “gray list” public, these individuals became unemployed through casual actions like the signing of a forgotten petition, guilt by association, rumor, or mistaken identity.

Many took the anti-Communist cause into their own hands and ruined the lives of individuals without the help from the House Un-American Activities Committee. In 1950 a group of three ex-FBI agents published *Red Channels*, a book that included the names of people in the entertainment industry who they claimed were members of the Communist Party or had Communist affiliations. In a further display of hypocrisy and deception, the authors of *Red Channels* were known to have cleared the names of some individuals who feared of being suspected, for a fee.<sup>27</sup>

Some on the blacklist started other careers, attempted to work overseas, or continued to write scripts for Hollywood under assumed names. Among the most well known of those on the blacklist was screenwriter Dalton Trumbo. Trumbo began working as a screenwriter and a novelist in the mid-1930s. In 1939, Trumbo’s anti-war novel *Johnny Got His Gun* was published. This book itself has quite a history and reputation and was put on the banned list of several publishers, schools, and libraries over the years for being too controversial, pessimistic, and un-American. Trumbo was also responsible for writing several films about World War II during the war years. He wrote *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* in 1944 about the Doolittle raids, as well as the 1943 film, *Tender Comrades*, which focused on the lives of U.S. women whose husbands were away at war. When he was brought before HUAC in 1947, the committee

used *Tender Comrades* as evidence that Trumbo was a Communist: first, the story was about *communal living* of women during the war; second, the word *comrade* was in the title of the film. This almost insignificant evidence was used against Trumbo by the U.S. government to accuse him of promoting Communist ideologies.<sup>28</sup> Trumbo refused to cooperate with HUAC, and was charged with contempt of Congress. Trumbo, along with the other nine members of the Hollywood Ten, spent a year in a federal penitentiary starting in 1950.<sup>29</sup>

Trumbo relocated to Mexico and continued writing scripts for Hollywood under assumed names. His daughter later commented that while she was growing up, their house would get hundreds of phone calls a day—each caller asking for a different man. She was never allowed to tell the callers that they had the wrong number, even if she did not recognize the name. Most likely, the name being requested on the phone was probably one of her father's many assumed names.<sup>30</sup> This paid off for Trumbo in 1955 when his film, *The Brave One*, written under the assumed name of "Robert Rich," won an Academy Award. There was great confusion at the award ceremony when no one showed up to claim the award. It was not until 1975, a year before his death, that Trumbo was finally presented with his award for the film. When rumors started circulating that Trumbo himself wrote *The Brave One*, Hollywood began re-examining the inaccuracies and need for the blacklist. In 1960, Trumbo finally received his own name on a screen credit with the films *Exodus* and *Spartacus*.<sup>31</sup> Today, Trumbo is remembered for his bravery and determination in continuing to work in the film industry despite being on the blacklist.

Throughout the 1960s, many blacklist members begin to write films again under their real names. It was at this same time that HUAC began to quickly lose influence. In 1969, HUAC was renamed the *Internal Security Committee*. Six years later in 1975, the committee was abolished indefinitely. It is important to mention that while the focus of this paper is the House Un-American Activities Committee, anti-Communist hysteria was not limited to HUAC. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy began a new round of so-called "witch hunts" attacking state department employees as well as the United States Army. Harvey Matusow, who worked for McCarthy, went as far as to testify against the *Girl Scouts of America* for being suspected Communists.<sup>32</sup>

What began as a tool to eliminate suspected Communist influence from Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Programs turned into a vehicle of mass hysteria. Through HUAC, Congress declared war on the entertainment industry and anyone who opposed traditional American ideas. The war started with The New Deal and ended with the Motion Picture Industry of America. The power of the committee and its influence was seen with President Roosevelt's appeasement of its actions in the 1930s, as well as Hollywood bowing to pressure from HUAC and creating the blacklist in the 1940s. These instances show that the committee's intentions were political, having little to do with eliminating Communist influence in American culture and more with attempting to spread its own influence. Hollywood was merely a backdrop for the committee because it knew that it would be the greatest instrument used to influence the American people. In the end, HUAC and its sympathizers were unsuccessful in

gaining control of the motion picture industry. Its members and their actions were motivated by coarse opportunism and the power of influence. Individuals including the *Hollywood Ten* should be praised for their bravery, while others in the entertainment industry should be lamented for their lack of courage. HUAC assembled barriers throughout its years, silenced and temporarily severed a number of fundamental freedoms entrusted to a nation. However, in the end it was unable to defeat America's most powerful weapon—freedom of speech.



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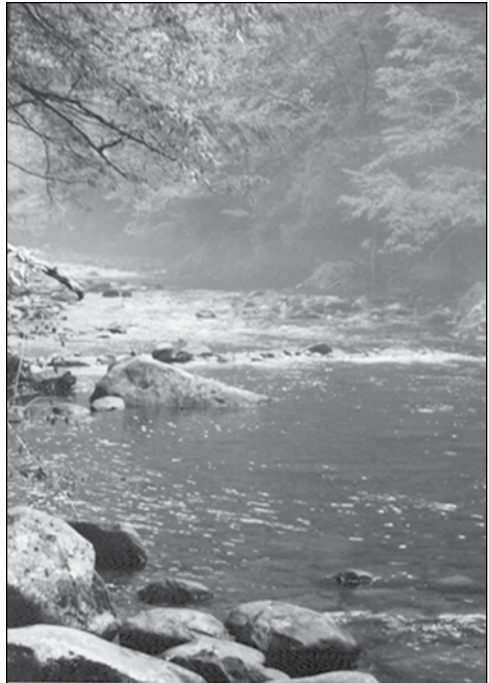


## PERSPECTIVES

### Elkmont Settlement: A Microcosm of Appalachian Challenges

*Deborah Ellis*

The Appalachian Mountains, ancient and worn by time, are among the oldest mountains in the Western hemisphere. The Appalachian Mountains are breathtakingly beautiful—mist-covered and lush, and home to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in which sits the Elkmont campground, a popular vacation destination with a rushing river, towering trees, and huge boulders (See Photo 1). Surrounding this area are ninety-year-old vacation cottages and a hotel which have lost their battle with time, and are deteriorating rapidly. It has an intriguing past with challenges that are comparable to so many areas of Appalachia and is representative of three of the five themes identified by Richard Drake. The area of Elkmont represented a yeomanesque lifestyle, a loss of economic control of the regions' natural resources through outside



(Photo 1) *The Little River, below Elkmont.*  
Image courtesy of Ron Ellis.

control, and a strong and persistent presence of wilderness.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, this community has morphed from a rural settlement, to a logging camp, to a resort

destination, to a campground, while experiencing economic and environmental challenges typical of other parts of rural Appalachia.

The southern Appalachian Mountains have been described in many ways, but the most compelling descriptions usually set them apart from the rest of America, treating them as a distinct region. James Watt Raine provides this description: "There are more mountains in Appalachia, the valleys are deeper and more frequent, the surface rougher and the trails steeper than in any other section of our country."<sup>2</sup>

Drake identifies the southern mountains as first home to Native Americans as early as the Archaic period (around 6000 B.C.). The Cherokee nation, heavily influenced by the Mississippian culture, came to dominate the region from around 1600 to 1780 A.D., and lived primarily in North Carolina and Tennessee in what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Native Americans called the area Shaconage "the land of the blue mist."<sup>3</sup> This is descriptive of the fog that shrouds the mountains the Cherokee call their home.

White settlers to the area began arriving in the 1700s primarily from Scotland, Ireland, and Germany, and were known for their staunch independence and love of the land. Drake described them as having a "yeomanesque mentality," independent land owners who shared a desire for land to support their simple lives.<sup>4</sup>

The natural ruggedness of these mountains enveloped the peoples who settled the area, keeping them a world apart and preserving their staunch independence and individuality. Those who settled the remote areas, in hollows and up mountainsides, remained isolated, unlike those in the valleys and small rural communities. Neighbors were often miles apart, separated by rugged, road less terrain. In time, progress bypassed this region, and the evolving internal problems of illiteracy, minimal education, and poverty complicated their existence. Eventually, the Appalachian region and its people were viewed in a negative light for their differences and peculiar ways.

In the more times, from the turn of the 20th century to the present day, the region known as Appalachia has been struggling to shed its identity as an area that is economically depressed. Drake and Raine, among others, have identified the area of Appalachia as one distinct from the rest of the United States - a description that continues to this day.

The area known today as Elkmont, Tennessee, has never had a designation as a town, but has had several settlements over the years. Its earliest name, Little River, was changed to Elkmont in 1908, when the Little River Lumber Company completed the logging railroad in that area. Homes were built along many of the creeks and small rivers that are so abundant in the region. The Walker family built along the Middle Prong of the Little River, now known as Tremont, and a larger community of Cades Cove was located west of Elkmont. The Cook family built a cabin in the 1850s and settled along Jakes Creek, south of Elkmont. Following the yeomanesque mentality, rural life in this era was completely tied to the land. Settlers lived life, getting by farming what they could, and bartering excess crops for goods they could not produce. They raised bees for honey, kept animals and livestock, killed wild game for meat and pelts, and harvested lumber for sources of income, to build their

homes and other necessities, and to provide fuel. Trees produced edible crops of nuts and fruit. Fish, primarily the native brook trout, were abundant in the clear, beautiful streams. Foods were preserved by pickling, salting, drying, and storage in root cellars. Fresh foods were kept in a spring house. Illnesses and injuries were remedied with herbal medicines, carbolic acid, turpentine, and the ever present poultice. Clothing was homespun and rarely purchased.

Florence Bush vividly detailed the life of Dorie, her mother, in this era, and related that at the turn of the 20th century not much had changed from early settlement days. Dorie recalled that when she read as a child about Abraham Lincoln, she realized that one hundred years later her life was not so different. She wrote:

Abraham Lincoln could have been a part of the world where we still lived. ...Were we that far behind the rest of the world? We were living like Mr. Lincoln now....Out beyond the rounded hills of Boogertown, life was different and hard to understand. Were we backward and poor, or were we more blessed because we were isolated and unaware of the worldly progress?<sup>5</sup>

As Bush explains, a few years with severe weather conditions resulted in crop failures, and necessitated families such as hers find sources of income other than farming. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the lumber industry became established in the area. This brought opportunities of reliable income, and was especially appealing for those farmers who were living on land that had become depleted. Poor soil resulted in reduced crop production, which made life more difficult for the farmer. For many, these challenges to the yeoman lifestyle created the appeal of the logging industry.

As in many other areas of Appalachia, the rural mountain farmer had dabbled in the lumber industry on a small scale basis when clearing land for farming and managing selective cutting of prime timber for transport and sale at local sawmills. Lumber also provided fuel, and material for building fences, barns, outbuildings, and houses. Some had portable mills that allowed them to harvest their timberlands in more inaccessible places. The demand for tanbark for the leather tanning industry was another source of income for the independent farmer willing to strip his forest of oak, chestnut, or hemlock. Horses and wagons, or the streams and rivers were utilized for transport of the logs. For the most part, these were done on a small scale basis by the independent farmer or the small sawmill operator. Historian Ronald Eller explained the need for expansion:

By the late 1880's, the timber resources of the Northeast and Great Lakes had begun to diminish as a result of industrialization and population growth, and northern lumber producers began to search other areas of North America for their timber supplies....between 1890 and 1920 the lumber barons purchased and cut over huge tracts of mountain timberland, devastating the region's forests in one of the most frenzied timber booms in American history.<sup>6</sup>

As Eller explained, the farmers eventually learned that modern timber industry methods would destroy streambeds and the reproductive capacities of the land, in turn moving them farther away from agricultural ties to more urban industrial lifestyles.<sup>7</sup>

It was during this era (1890-1920) that man would forever change the Southern Appalachian landscape. Timber companies and speculators moved to the virgin forests of the southern highlands and began to acquire land rights by sometime questionable means. At this time there was an expansion of the exploitation of the region by outside forces, and an increased dependence of the cash-strapped farmers on outside sources of income. Daniel Pierce described the plight of the farmer:

When they take advantage of right of possession, speculators, or timber companies themselves, purchased timber rights or land outright from cash-strapped farmers for an average of about \$3.00 and acre, and often for as little as \$1.50 an acre.<sup>8</sup>

One of the early speculators to the area was Colonel W. B. Townsend of Clearfield, Pennsylvania. (According to legend, his "Colonel" designation was given as an honorary title, rather than a military one, much like a "Kentucky Colonel" today.) Townsend himself was born into a coal mining family, and poverty and family sickness prevented him from obtaining an education. He worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, and at eighteen, began his career which eventually allowed him to become a successful businessman. His interest was in lumber industry opportunities, which brought him to the southern mountains.

He and his associates founded the Little River Lumber Company in 1901 in the area of Tang, presently Townsend, Tennessee. The Little River lumber mill was located there and the town name was changed in 1902 from Tang to Townsend. The Little River Lumber Company eventually purchased nearly 80,000 acres of prime timberland, in the area drained by the Little River, which included the East (Elkmont), West, and Middle Prongs of the Little River watershed. Because of its open area in the Tuckaleechee Cove, the site of Townsend was chosen for the building of large milling facilities and support buildings needed for more modern methods of milling.<sup>9</sup> The source of the capital required to start such a venture came from capitalists in Philadelphia and Baltimore with ties to railroads, lumber, and other industries in the east.<sup>10</sup> In order to facilitate the logging process as well as their financial interests, construction of a railroad began in 1901 to transport lumber as well as people. By establishing a "common carrier," they acquired the right of eminent domain which eliminated the protection of unwilling property owners who resisted the sale of their land to the railroad. Construction of the railroad began in 1901, connecting Knoxville to Townsend and beyond. Even in these early years, the building of the railroad helped the tourism industry flourish by providing access to new resorts, such as Kinzel Springs, Sunshine, and Elkmont, all located within the vicinity of Townsend. Even before the railroad reached Elkmont, W.B. Townsend was already planning on how to use cut-over land to attract tourists.<sup>11</sup>

After its completion in 1908, the railroad operated for approximately 17 years and its former bed is the current highway that visitors travel through the Little River Gorge between Townsend and Elkmont. By the 1920s, over 200 miles of logging railroad had been built. These construction projects have been described as "...the most successful combination of logging railroad and scenic excursion railroad to exist in one place."<sup>12</sup>

The building of the railroad was an engineering feat, especially as it invaded deeper into the steep mountain gorges. It provided transportation for the employees of the lumber companies, and their families. The railroad also provided access to the railcars (which were motorcars adapted to ride the rails) for inspection, transportation, and communication purposes. Another unique function of the railroad was to move the boxlike living quarters of the workers up to remote logging locations. These railroad boxcars were adapted to be the homes and boarding houses of the workers and were set off to the side of the tracks in the area of logging operations. Also known as cracker boxes and "shotgun" houses, when the work ended the cars were lifted by a hook, loaded back on the flatcar, and moved to another location by rail. Because of the configuration of the boxcar locations, they became known as "stringtowns."

Dorie Cope recalled her childhood, when she described her first night at Elkmont in one of these boxcars. It was a snowy night and the train stopped in front of the long bunkhouse building a few feet off of the tracks. The units were built at the saw mill in Townsend and moved to the necessary locations. They were rough, bare buildings with rooms with built-in bunks. The family would live at one end, boarders at the other, with food cooked on the stove in the middle and shelving provided for belongings. Outside elements such as dust and snow easily entered. Household goods were removed when the boxcar was loaded onto a flatcar for relocation, and then loaded back in the boxcar for transport.<sup>13</sup>

Logging at Elkmont and camps in the area provided a rough but adequate life for the workers. Cope's childhood memories, as well as her adult life in the camps, show that the basics were provided and even some luxury items. Amenities and comforts of life were introduced that were not previously available in the rural, mountainous regions. The company commissary had cloth, thread, and catalogues available from which to mail-order supplies, and even the luxury of a sewing machine was available to Cope's mother. The fees for these many benefits were automatically deducted from the pay checks of the workers. The company provided schools, medical care, life insurance, and a post office, coal for stoves, barber shops, movie theaters, and community buildings. Also, community events, such as company-sponsored sports teams, picnics, and Christmas parties, were hosted by the company president Colonel Townsend and his wife. He even assisted with college education expenses for the children of the workers. Even so, there was a fine balance between what the worker actually brought home and what they owed to the company at the end of a pay period.<sup>14</sup> This system did not differ greatly from those of the coal camps.

However, life in the camps was dangerous because of overcrowding and the rapid spread of infectious diseases such as typhoid. And, logging is an

inherently dangerous profession. There was no compensation for lost work. Loggers worked six days a week and usually ten hours a day, with Sunday being the only day of rest. Two holidays were observed, Christmas day and July fourth.<sup>15</sup> The lifestyle was a migratory one, with the family or workers moving to another camp as soon as the logging was completed in an area.

In the second decade of the 20th century, the logging operations were facing overwhelming obstacles. Some areas had been completely logged, leaving the areas barren. In 1922 a serious, widespread fire above Elkmont burned for over two months and destroyed standing timber, as well as timber that had been cut and was awaiting transport. Other fires occurred, some of which burned and smoldered for nearly six months. Fires routinely occurred following timber operations because of the enormous piles of slash and debris left behind. A spark from a skidder or metal wheels on rails could set these timber boxes aflame.<sup>16</sup> The landscape had been forever altered, erosion silted the once clear streams, and fish died. The economic pressures of the depression made an impact. Beginning in the late 1920s, the logging operations and employee jobs were scaled back, due to the pervasive effects of the economic depression and the decline of board-foot production in the southern timber industry. Companies had begun to look westward to unexploited timberlands. Profits generated by the logging operations continued to diminish through the thirties. Following W.B. Townsend's death in 1936, at 81 years old, the mill and operations continued to decline and finally closed in 1939.<sup>17</sup>

Long before the end of area logging, Townsend had begun negotiations for purchase of land for a national park. Evidence shows that as early as 1911, he possessed the foresight to realize the land would be worthless after logging was complete, and began in the second decade of the 1900s to negotiate sale of the land to the state of Tennessee and the federal government to create a park. Townsend was keenly aware that unless his company sold off its property, his company would soon have 77,000 acres of cut-over land.<sup>18</sup> Negotiations for timbered land purchases lasted years, and in the end, Colonel Townsend was paid an average of \$3.58 per acre.<sup>19</sup>

During the logging era, Elkmont was not only a hub for the lumber operations along the East Prong of the Little River, but it became a tourist destination because of the rail access created by the logging industry. Attractions included picnic sites, walking trails, and swimming holes along the river. Cooler weather and a wilderness landscape were also attractions that drew tourists. A fatal train wreck on Jakes Creek became a macabre attraction. It was noted in 1909 that, "Everyday service from Knoxville to Elkmont began on July 5th with a crowded train and a great outpouring of local people to meet it."<sup>20</sup> The Appalachian Hiking Club was formed by wealthy individuals from the Knoxville area. W.B. Townsend gave some land to the club on which to build a clubhouse and cottages along the East Prong at Elkmont. In 1911, he sold 50 acres to Charles B. Carter on the condition that he would build a hotel on the property. In June 1912, Carter opened the Wonderland Hotel to accommodate visitors who rode the Little River Railroad's "Elkmont Special" into the mountains.<sup>21</sup>

Proponents for a national park to protect the remaining virgin forests and stop the devastation came from external sources as early as 1919. As Eller relates,

a conservation movement to protect the national forests had begun on a national level. Conservationists were generally from urban middle and upper class society, and they were the same groups who used the mountains as a tourist haven. Many were proponents of decision making by a strong, central government, not one at a local level. Satisfying the needs at a national level, and not those of the people who



(Photo 2) *Cottage at Elkmont*. Image courtesy of Ron Ellis.

actually lived in Appalachia, seemed to justify “...placing power in the hands of those who seemed ‘best equipped’ to bring progress and civilization to the region.”<sup>22</sup> Momentum increased for the movement in Tennessee. With a five million dollar donation from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and other private donations, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park became reality through an act of Congress on June 15, 1934. Finally, logging would be forever banned from the newly preserved area of almost 500,000 acres.

When the national park was established, the landholdings of the Wonderland Hotel and Appalachian Club were sold, and cottage owners were given lifetime leases for the remaining years. Renewal of the leases continued until the 1970s, when the Elkmont Preservation Association joined the fight for preservation of these historic buildings.<sup>23</sup> Elkmont had seen the end of another era.

This area survived the loss of the yeomanesque life style and the ravages of external economic extraction of natural resources, and recovered with a restored strong and continuing presence of wilderness. Today, Elkmont is one of the favored campgrounds in the Smokies. The cottages and hotel remain, but are in severe disrepair as the debates over restoration or removal of the buildings continue (See Photo 2). The natural features of Elkmont’s landscape enjoy protection by the National Park Service. Rivers and streams are pristine again, and the wilderness has gradually reclaimed most of the area. It is an attraction to those who love the land in a different way than the early settlers, for it can be enjoyed and used by hikers, fishermen, and campers, but never settled, or timbered again.



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## ENDNOTES

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## PERSPECTIVES

### Life and Death in Andersonville Prison

*Sara Patenaude-Schuster*

Soldiers fighting in the Civil War knew there were only two outcomes of battle—win or lose. When one side or the other would lose, however, the outcomes were much more complicated than the participants might have at the outset. For example, if a soldier was captured by the enemy, he immediately became a prisoner of war. At the beginning of the Civil War, prisoners were treated “humanely.” The prisoner of war was often paroled upon pledging not to return to the front lines to fight until a prisoner on the opposite side was released as well.<sup>1</sup> However, as the war progressed and years passed, the life of a prisoner of war changed drastically. Security at prison camps was tightened, and camps were soon filled to bursting as the paroling of prisoners became a thing of the past. Prison camps both in the North and the South were crowded, dirty, and unforgiving. In the South, however, the Confederate States of America did not have the necessary resources to care for the men in the army as well as the enemy soldiers now in their care. More than any other single cause, the Southern economy contributed to the deaths of men in camps such as Andersonville, the final resting place of thousands of Union soldiers.<sup>2</sup> It was widely believed at the time that the cost of feeding a Union prisoner in the South was three to four times more than the cost of feeding a Confederate prisoner in the North.

To see this facet of war in practice, one need look no further than Camp Sumter. It was constructed in 1864 near the Georgia village called Andersonville. Consisting of 16.5 acres of land close to the railroad, though far from any large towns or cities, Camp Sumter was designed to house 10,000 Union prisoners.<sup>3</sup> While other prison camps were planned to be built in Georgia as well, these plans were abandoned by the Confederacy, due to a lack of funds, before definite locations were even decided.<sup>4</sup> The camp was surrounded by walls made of pine logs that blocked any view of the world outside. A small creek ran through the center of the camp; this creek was intended to provide a source of fresh water for the prisoners, as well as serve various sanitary functions necessary in a facility for thousands.<sup>5</sup> Guard towers

were built along the stockade, and a small fence was constructed inside the wall, approximately 20 feet from the fortifications. This was the “dead line,” and crossing the line for any reason resulted in a quick death by a shot from the guard tower. Within the walls there were assortments of shelters, ranging from shacks filled with cots to tents with blankets on the ground. Combined, these various structures provided enough shelter for the 10,000 men intended to be housed in the prison camp. The camp’s kitchen was a one room building containing two ovens that were supposed to provide enough hot food for the camp’s 10,000 prisoners.<sup>6</sup> Conspicuously lacking from the camp compound were trees or foliage of any kind.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after prisoners began arriving at Camp Sumter in early 1864, the prisoner exchange program between the Union and the Confederacy dissolved. The reason for the breakdown of the program remains a point of contention among many scholars. In May 1863 the Union stopped allowing for the exchange of captured Confederate officers.<sup>8</sup> The official reason given by the Union government was that the Confederate government refused to recognize that black soldiers captured by the South were entitled to be exchanged, stating that the ex-slaves were property of their owners and not truly soldiers for the United States. Not surprisingly, the Confederate government blamed the Union for the end of the exchange. They claimed that the Union was purposely abandoning the soldiers in Confederate prisons because the terms of service signed by the soldiers had expired, and their release would not aid the Northern war effort. This meant that the Union was not “burdened” with the cost of caring for such men by allowing them to die in the prison camps.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the reason, the immediate effect of the change was the overcrowding of existing prison camps, including Camp Sumter; because the Confederacy was struggling and the prison camps originally intended to be constructed in Georgia were never built. By late spring of 1864, Camp Sumter was home to 20,000 captured Union soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Those soldiers arrived at the Andersonville station and were then marched to Camp Sumter. Consequently, the prisoners knew their place of captivity as Andersonville, rather than by its proper name.

Conditions within Andersonville became increasingly abysmal as the Confederacy found itself essentially bankrupt. The Union was starving the Confederacy through use of blockades and by winning an increasing number of overwhelming victories on the battlefield. Ironically, Confederate citizens were not the only ones negatively affected by the Union’s victories; the further the Union pushed into the Southern territories, the further the Confederate transportation and communication lines broke down. It was precisely these lines upon which the lives of the Andersonville prisoners depended—their suffering intensified.<sup>11</sup> The isolated location of Andersonville Prison prevented adequate provisions from reaching the camp even as a constant flood of new prisoners flowed into it.<sup>12</sup> By August of 1864, over 33,000 Union soldiers called Andersonville home.

As more prisoners filled the camp, the number of beds and shelters within the camp remained the same. This meant that at the camp’s peak occupancy, more than 2/3 of the prisoners had no shelter. At this point in

time, Andersonville prison had been expanded to encompass 26.5 acres; this worked out to approximately 3.5 square feet of space for each man in the camp.<sup>13</sup> The stream providing water to the camp became a sewage line; prisoners had no other access to drinking water, so they filtered the filthy water as best they could through whatever shirts or sacks they possessed. As their clothing disintegrated it was not replaced, leaving many men to live in only tattered shirts and underpants. As their stay increased from months to nearly two years, more than a few prisoners found themselves completely naked.<sup>14</sup>

The Union soldiers living in Andersonville struggled constantly for space. It was the struggle for food, however, which often became deadly. The daily rations of a prisoner consisted of 8 ounces of corn bread, often filled with large, inedible pieces of corn husk, and 2 ounces of rotten pork. Approximately twice a week the pork was omitted and prisoners were substituted two spoonfuls of rice. Twice a month prisoners were treated to two spoonfuls of molasses. All the rations were cooked in the prison kitchen; prisoners were not allowed mess kits or cooking instruments of any sort. Even if the prisoners had been given pots in which to cook their food, the complete lack of ingredients and combustible materials would have rendered meal production impossible. Rations were carried from the kitchen in wagons, and summarily dumped onto the ground and left for prisoners to divide amongst themselves. Such divisions were rarely fair, contributing to the starvation of thousands of prisoners.<sup>15</sup> In the instance of rain, the entire compound flooded and became a swamp of mud, feces, and decomposed materials upon which larvae such as maggots thrived.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, guards refused to distribute daily rations in the rain, as well as refusing any additional attempts of distribution after the rain had stopped. When rain fell multiple days in a row, prisoners simply did not eat.<sup>17</sup>

The men living in Andersonville suffered not only from starvation and exposure to the elements, but also sickness and low morale were major contributors to the mortality rate of prisoners. The average mortality rate for prisoner of war camps during the Civil War was 12-15% on both sides of the conflict, though some reports claim the mortality rate of Union soldiers was higher than that of the Confederacy.<sup>18</sup> The official Andersonville prisoner mortality rate was 28.12%, however many reports place the actual mortality rate closer to 32%. By the end of the war, 12,949 men died in the prison camp.<sup>19</sup> At its peak, an average of 130 men died each day.<sup>20</sup> During the trial of prison commander Major Henry Wirz, a Confederate Army surgeon who treated prisoners in Andersonville testified that at least 3/4 of the deaths in the camp were the direct result of their treatment. The prisoners, he stated, died of the "need of air to breathe, want of ground on which to lie, lack of shelter, and starvation."<sup>21</sup> Wirz was charged with more than just the failure to provide necessities for the prisoners in his camp; he was accused of directly murdering several men.<sup>22</sup> The charges levied against Wirz were in four distinct categories: death of prisoners resultant from the biting of dogs ordered by Wirz to pursue prisoners attempting to escape; death of prisoners resultant from confinement of the men in the stocks and in chain gangs; death of

prisoners resultant from Wirz's direct orders given to guards to kill the prisoners; and death of prisoners by Wirz's own hand.<sup>23</sup> Wirz's only defense in his trial was that he was acting upon the orders of his superiors, including Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee.<sup>24</sup> Even so, the Judge Advocate over the trial, General J. Holt, declared that superior officers were not to give any orders which were to result in illegal acts, and that the officer acting upon a superior's orders was also responsible and answerable for any consequences resulting from his actions. It was in this trial that the determination was made that it is the responsibility of the one carrying out the orders to decide if an order was legal and constitutional.<sup>25</sup> Also influencing the conviction of Wirz was President Lincoln's General Orders No. 100, issued on April 24, 1863, declaring that prisoners of war were not to be subject to any revenge by the "intentional infliction of any suffering, or disgrace, by cruel imprisonment, want of food, by mutilation, death, or barbarity."<sup>26</sup> Wirz was convicted of causing the suffering of 45,000 prisoners of war, the death of thousands, and the murder of dozens.<sup>27</sup>

That Andersonville Prison was the location of where thousands of Union prisoners of war died is not disputed, even though some outspoken Southerners declared the allegations made in the Wirz trial to be untrue, the graves of nearly 13,000 men are irrefutable.<sup>28</sup> Andersonville remains one of the darkest points in the American Civil War, and is studied today as an egregious violation of human rights. More than anything else, though, Andersonville stands as a memorial to the struggle to reunite the Republic.



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## PERSPECTIVES

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### *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*

Stephen Aron

The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

xi, 285 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. [211]-273) and index.

*Review by Erick Walter*

The book, *How the West Was Lost*, is an in-depth analysis of how the land of Kentucky was transformed from a hunting ground of the indigenous tribes of the Ohio Valley to a land dominated by land speculators intent on increasing their acreage at the expense of those both less crafty and less wealthy than themselves. It is a story of potentials lost—potentials for a land which could have created a state different from any that preceded it. Instead, Kentucky ended up mirroring those already in existence in the east. Kentucky became a state not only ruled by the wealthy, but also one with laws enacted to aid the wealthy in their endeavor for land acquisitions.

The overriding theme of Aron's book is the importance of land and its acquisition. "Kentucke," as the Shawnee called the land south of the Ohio River, was an unsettled land of unsurpassed beauty and majesty, a land teeming with plentiful game. It was an area held in the highest esteem by the Shawnee, who respected the land for the bounty that it provided. All of that changed with the approach of the white backcountry pioneers from the East. Those men of little monetary substance were driven by one goal: to acquire land for the betterment of their families.

To the east of the Appalachian Mountains, land was becoming more scarce and harder to obtain. To men such as Daniel Boone, who had very little in the form of property, the land west of the Appalachians appeared to be the answer to their dreams. At times, these dreams were not shared by the women married to these adventurous souls when either left behind for months at a time or

forced to endure the hardships of a pioneering life.

When white colonists began to settle, build structures like Boonesborough and hunt game in the region of Kentucky, conflict soon arose. To the Native American, land was not something that could be owned by an individual. Instead, man and land coexisted for the benefit of one another. This was not the case with the early pioneers who began to claim the Indian hunting grounds as their own. Aron states quite clearly that the methods implemented were cruel; methods such as destroying crops, distributing alcohol and unbeknownst to the settlers themselves, disease. Although the Shawnee and, to a lesser extent, the Cherokee, tried to wage war against the white intrusion, it proved fruitless. The Shawnee could not stem the tide of white settlement and were eventually forced to yield the land which they had hunted for years.

The land and its natural resource of plentiful game were now in the hands of the settlers. Aron states that under the control of the white man, Kentucky quickly began to lose its essence. From the over hunting of game animals for pelts and sport, to the settlements being erected across the landscape, Kentucky was slowly changing into simply another overexploited and overused piece of landscape. To men such as Daniel Boone, Kentucky was the answer to the scarcity of land in the east until the landscape was transformed by a new type of economic warfare—land speculation. These battles were waged between backcountry settlers and the wealthy gentry from the east to the detriment of the former.

Once the Shawnee were, for all practical purposes, eradicated, the land was opened up to wealthy speculators wishing to obtain large tracts of land at any price. A majority of these speculators epitomized the greed of those in power. Ironically, Daniel Boone and many men like him were unceremoniously expelled from the land they felt was their own just as they had previously done to the Shawnee. Hunting had given way to agriculture, and the common man found that their initial settlements were increasingly becoming null and void under emerging law. The laws of the state, enacted by lawyers such as Henry Clay, and upheld by wealthy judges who maintained a vested interest in land acquisitions, were structured to make this fact a reality. Kentucky was slowly transforming from a poor man's haven to a wealthy man's paradise at the stroke of a pen.

Furthermore, Aron pointed out how Henry Clay's beliefs regarding the distribution of land acreage changed dramatically as he obtained more land, prestige and power. In fact, Henry Clay transformed into the quintessential gentry landowner of the Bluegrass System around Lexington. As Lexington became known as the "Philadelphia of the West," priorities in land ownership and economic advancement became more important. Yet this did not translate to the non-gentry of the Bluegrass area who were forced westward into the Green River country. To those with wealth, agriculture and horse breeding became the new economic boom in Lexington. It is no surprise when Aron states matter-of-factly that Henry Clay's was a life of horses, hemp and slaves. Unfortunately, the wealth that the "elites of the west" acquired came at the expense of slave labor as the antislavery movement gave way to slavery in Kentucky.

Those individuals forced westward into the Green River country began to make their living in tobacco. Due to the soil content of the region, tobacco flourished in the Green River area. The “common man” had once more found a home and a tract of land to call his own. That is, until the wealthy gentry of the Bluegrass Region moved in and began to transform the Green River country into a mirror of the Bluegrass system.

When viewed as a whole, there was one chapter of the book that seemed out of place—the last. The chapter on religion did not lend itself to the overall flow of the book as it proceeded from Boone to Clay. This does not mean that the subject matter is irrelevant, but in this instance the book’s content would not have been diminished if this chapter had been omitted. Overall, the book was a thoroughly enjoyable read. Aron’s command of the subject matter as well as his meticulous research have created a first rate historical book. The narrative weaves smoothly through the decades while touching upon the multitude of events that shaped early Kentucky. It was interesting to learn how Kentucky was transformed from a backcountry hunting ground into a place of landownership for the gentrified elite.



Greetings. My name is Erick Walter and I am a senior at NKU majoring in history with the addition of a minor in religious studies.



# *PERSPECTIVES*

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is pleased to draw attention to these other fine historical periodicals published in the Northern Kentucky Region.

## *Heritage*

A publication of Northern Kentucky African American Heritage Task Force (NKAATHF) *Heritage* publishes articles, book reviews, and editorials on the history, impact, and legacy of African Americans in the thirteen counties of northern Kentucky. To have your work considered for this publication, submit an abstract (of no more than fifty words – e-mail or “regular” mail) to: Northern Kentucky University, Dr. Eric R. Jackson, Department of History and Geography; Nunn Drive; Highland Heights, KY 41099.

## *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*

The *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine* publishes articles, book reviews, and editors on the preservation, research, and dissemination of the history of Northern Kentucky, especially the counties of Boone and Kenton. To have your work considered for this publication, submit an abstract to Karl J. Lietzenmayer, Editor, *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*; The Kenton County Historical Society; PO Box 641; Covington, KY 41012 or via e-mail at [nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com](mailto:nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com).



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