Jeff Jackson

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From the Editor . . .

We have good news and bad news. First, the good. This is a larger issue of the *GSHR* than we have done recently. We have two Coker Award winners this year, and their excellent papers are joined by two more submissions, for a total of four articles. Then there are the book reviews.... Well, one way and another the issue just grew, but each and every article and review was too good to cut.

Now, for the bad news. This is the last issue of *The Gulf South Historical Review*. After twenty-one years and forty-two issues the journal will itself become history. There are a lot of reasons for this sad turn of events. We have struggled along for several years with marginal subscription revenue while production and mailing costs gradually rose. Despite our best efforts, we were fighting a losing battle. Perhaps if we had appealed to more readers.... Who can say? Also, the day of the small print journals may be coming to an end, what with on-line competition, etc. Finally, Ms. Elisa Baldwin, our long-serving Associate Editor, retired last September, and I decided to do the same at the end of this academic year. No one at the University of South Alabama wanted our jobs, and other schools in the region were unwilling or unable to take on the responsibility that USA has borne since 1985. The hurricanes were probably the last straw in this process. Dr. Jim McSwain, who has served as our Book Review Editor, also had other projects he wished to undertake. In the end, we had no choice, but it is still very sad to see something you have worked on, worried over, and even hoped would become a permanent part of the scholarly landscape, die.

In addition to Ms. Baldwin and Dr. McSwain, I wish to thank the current chair of the USA History Department, Dr. Clarence Mohr, and his predecessor Dr. George Daniels, for all their help and support over the years. Also our colleagues at other Gulf South Historical Association member institutions were very supportive, especially the people at Southeastern Louisiana University, Pensacola Junior College, and the University of West Florida. Finally, I owe a debt to our university's Publications Department, especially Sharon Haynes who worked on virtually every issue until she lost her long fight against cancer last fall. Also, I want to recognize Todd Waltman and his people at Southeastern Press here in Mobile who printed each and every issue and did a wonderful job, year in, year out. Last of all I want to thank our contributors and you, our readers. I hope that we had a positive impact on your lives, because you certainly did that for us. Without the support of its readers and contributors no journal will survive, nor should it. Everyone helped, but in the end it just wasn't to be.

Thank you all for the past twenty-one years.

Michael Thomason

Cover Photo: *United States Forest Service Poster, 1948.* <http://www.smokeybear.com/vault/images> (March 8, 2006).

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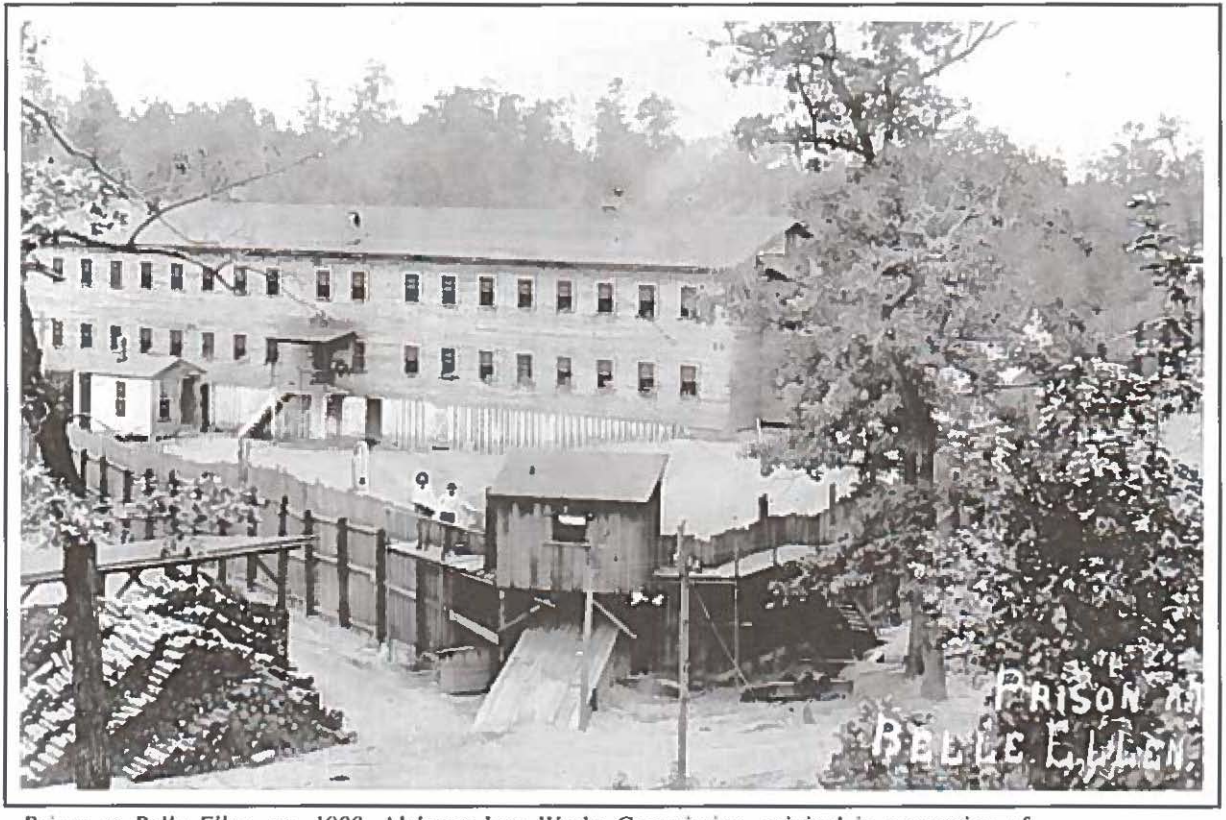


Prison at Belle Ellen, ca. 1900. Alabama Iron Works Commission, original in possession of Will Reese, Montgomery.

The Convict-Lease System in Alabama, 1872-1927

James S. Day

On Saturday, April 8, 1911, an explosion rocked the Banner Mine of the Pratt Consolidated Coal Company killing 128 miners.[1] Disasters of this type were not uncommon given the risks inherent in such underground work, but the victims' demographics marked this tragedy as one of distinct significance. First, the miners were state and county convicts, leased to Pratt Consolidated. Second, of the 128 killed (122 convict, 6 free), all but five were black. Next, seventy-two convicts (or 56 percent) were from Jefferson County. Finally, thirty percent of the Jefferson County prisoners were serving sentences of no more than twenty days for misdemeanors such as gambling, vagrancy, and illegal drinking.[2] Consequently, the Banner Mine explosion incited the ire of numerous progressive reformers, but opposition to the convict-lease system in Alabama would not be able to end the program until 1927.

The Banner Mine incident constitutes the most infamous tragedy of Alabama's coal industry. In addition, because of its visibility, this disaster draws attention to the paucity of mine safety procedures during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, similar events occurred throughout Alabama's coal district. Just one year prior to the Banner Mine explosion, tragedy struck at Lucile shortly after convicts arrived at that location. At 2:00 A.M. on May 16, 1910, fire broke out in the wooden stockade that housed the prisoners. Apparently, three inmates set the fire as a diversion to facilitate their escape attempt. Unfortunately, the flames spread quickly and soon created a life-threatening situation. Many convicts were trapped inside the burning structure, and Warden A. O. Thompson was overcome by smoke as he attempted to unlock cells on the second floor. In the end, the escape proved unsuccessful and an inmate pulled Thompson to safety, but twenty-seven prisoners died, and twenty-two others suffered from burns. Survivors occupied temporary quarters in the commissary building, construction crews rebuilt the stockade, and convict labor continued at Lucile until 1918.[3]

Widespread in the Birmingham District and throughout central Alabama, this exploitive system introduced a statewide issue into the local coal industry. Pitting coerced labor against free miners, the employment of convicts fostered a dynamic of oppression, greed, and frustration, and many operators and miners found themselves

vicariously connected to events outside of their local districts. The incidents mentioned are typical of mining conditions throughout the South and reflect the region's unique system for managing prisoners. In fact, similar events occurred at sugar and cotton plantations, turpentine farms, phosphate beds, brickyards, and sawmills that used convict labor. Matthew J. Mancini contends that the convict-lease system depicted the true nature of the values of the post-Civil War South–racism, violence, shortage of capital, and challenges to modernization. Moreover, convict leasing replaced slavery as the means of controlling the black population. However, Mancini argues that the convict-lease system was "worse than slavery." As property, slaves had value; but convicts were expendable. If a convict laborer died, escaped, was injured or abused, he could be replaced cheaply.[4]

Alabama's convict-lease system was the South's longest running. Noted for its persistence and its profitability, Alabama's lease system traced its roots to antebellum days. State lawmakers established a penitentiary in 1839 and constructed a facility the following year, but the facility ran up a significant debt by 1845. As Elizabeth Boner Clark observes, "penology in Alabama labored under the theory that the state's correctional institutions should be self-sufficient."[5] Therefore, the General Assembly voted to lease the penitentiary to private interests. Under this arrangement, the state negotiated a contract with a lessee who agreed to pay a specified amount in exchange for the convict labor. Once established, the agreement required the lessee to provide housing, food, clothing, and security for the convicts.[6] In addition, contractors usually agreed to provide transportation from the state penitentiary or county jails as well as a new set of clothes and a ticket home after discharge.[7]

Signing a six-year lease in 1846, J. G. Graham assumed total control of the state prisoners at no cost to the government. Subsequent leases to Dr. M. G. Moore in 1852 and to Dr. Ambrose Burrows in 1858 continued the trend, but netted no real financial gain for the state. Burrows's murder at the hands of an axe-wielding inmate in 1862 prompted a brief period of direct state administration that extended through the Civil War. During that time, convicts manufactured artillery and wagon harnesses for the Confederate war effort.[8] In 1866, the Smith and McMillan subsidiary of the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad leased prisoners for building new rail lines.[9] The lack of revenue generated by this arrangement caused state lawmakers to reconsider and revamp the convict-lease system. Rather than contracting for the administration of the state prison, legislators opted to lease the prisoners

themselves to private enterprises.[10] Thus, by 1872, the formal convict-lease system that would persist until 1927 was in place.

Unfortunately, the revised system did not reverse the trend in death rates among leased convicts that rose from 18 percent in 1868 to 41 percent in 1870.[11] Rather, state officials continually sought relief from overcrowded prisons, idle prisoners, an empty treasury, and heavy taxation.[12] In similar fashion, mine owners sought a more efficient, less expensive work force. According to most operators, "the convict accomplished more labor than the free laborer, and...he is more reliable."[13] In effect, convicts comprised the ideal captive work force. Representing the least expensive form of labor, prisoners remained generally passive and unorganized. Consequently, when confronted with organized protests instigated by frustrated free miners, operators frequently used their leased convicts as strikebreakers in order to maintain consistent production.[14]

Milfred Fierce has argued that humanitarian concerns played no role in this system contrived by state officials seeking to minimize penal costs and by lessees who pursued profit as their sole objective. Indeed he described the convict-lease system as a return to slavery. Focusing on similar techniques of race control inherent in antebellum slavery and postbellum convict leasing, he asserts that victimization of blacks formed the centerpiece of the convict-lease system. Viewed by whites as inferior beings and habitual criminals, blacks remained generally illiterate, unskilled, landless, and ill-equipped to deal with complex political, economic, and social issues. In sum, "convict leasing was indivisible with Blackness."[15] Therefore, labor arrangements that incorporated long hours, sub-standard conditions, non-existent medical and health care, poor nutrition, inadequate clothing, oppressive worker-supervisor relationships, punishment akin to torture, and general exploitation closely resembled slavery.[16]

According to Fierce, "sanitary conditions were Neanderthal, living and sleeping arrangements were vulgar, health and medical care were hostage to lessee frugality, and food–such as it was–was frequently unfit for human consumption."[17] Bolstering his argument by quoting noted social reformers, Fierce uses Julia Tutwiler's words to argue that the convict-lease system "combined all of the evils of slavery without one of its ameliorating features."[18] An analysis by Mary Church Terrell also considers leasing a "modern regime of slavery":

> The convict lease system [was] "less humane" than slavery because slave owners had an economic stake in keeping slaves

> healthy and at maximum productive capacity, while no such consideration existed among lessees, who obtained their convict labor by virtue of being the highest bidder at auction.[19]

Finally, W. E. B. DuBois contends that leasing "had the worst aspects of slavery without any of its redeeming features.... It linked crime and slavery indissolubly in their minds as simply forms of the White man's oppression."[20] These descriptions gain credibility, as, by 1877, blacks comprised 91 percent of the state convict population.[21]

The preponderance of black convicts may be attributed to the effectiveness of the post-Civil War Black Codes. These laws, designed to exert social control over free blacks, limited their freedom to bear arms, keep late hours, or talk with white women. Consequently, many newly freed blacks faced arrest on charges of abusive or obscene language, adultery, gambling, vagrancy, or riding a freight train without a ticket.[22] Mary Ellen Curtin contends that, in spite of eventual ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment and revocation of the Black Codes, state and local laws continued to exert a form of racial repression throughout the Reconstruction period. A two-tiered penal system emerged with convicted felons sentenced to the state prison and those found guilty of misdemeanors housed in county jails. Many county judicial systems required convicts to pay all court costs to include fees charged by the sheriff, the jurors, and the judge. On average, these expenses totaled approximately fifty dollars, but "cash-poor sharecroppers" could not afford to pay. Therefore, county convicts remained incarcerated until they could work off their debts at the standard rate of thirty cents per day. As a result, a two- to four-week sentence could be extended to a maximum of eight months at hard labor. Sheriffs, deputies, and court officials also often subsidized their meager incomes with their portions of the fees, so multiple and frequent arrests became common. Many counties limited a prisoner's diet to cornmeal mush and fatback, thereby pocketing up to two-thirds of maintenance stipends granted by the state. By maximizing arrests and minimizing expenses, some local cabals netted nearly $50,000 annually from the fee system.[23] Ultimately, fifty-one of Alabama's sixty-seven counties leased their prisoners to business interests thereby insuring a large convict-miner population.[24]

Beginning in 1872, the Inspector of the Alabama Penitentiary filed an annual report. Initially, these reports listed the following data for each convict: name, when received, offenses, term of sentence, age, height, previous occupation, nativity, where convicted, race/gender,

conduct, and general remarks (i.e., died, pardoned, discharged, escaped). In addition, the Report of Physician recorded ailments treated and deaths which occurred. The 1874 report included a financial statement that reported the "amount received and due from hire of convicts."[25]

The 1873 report provided a detailed account of leased convicts. For example, Thomas Williams leased 103 convicts for labor on the state farm in Montgomery County as well as the penitentiary farm in Elmore County. These convicts generated $5,212.50 for the state treasury. Other lease agreements included:

Lessee	Number of convicts	Total amount received
Dr. M. G. Moore	6	$ 250
Storrs & Parker (Elmore County)	18	1,008
Boyle & Pollard (Pike Road, Montgomery County)	52	1,875
Alabama Furnace, Alabama Iron Co. (Talledega County)	34	520
D. J. Boazman	8	150
New Castle Coal & Iron Co. (Jefferson County)	32	932.50

These contracts generated total revenues of $9,948. Additional revenues came from leases to Jackson, Morris & Co. of Clanton in Chilton County (17 convicts); Z. P. Crawley (9); Alexander Nummy (1); L. Willis (1); Gaius Whitfield of Linden in Marengo County (1); and W. D. Goggins (1). Thus, of 368 state prisoners in 1875, 283 were leased while only 85 remained inside the penitentiary walls.[26]

Other contractors joined the list of convict lessees in 1876, including the Eureka Company of Helena in Shelby County, Monroe Parker of Equality in Coosa County, Farris & McCurdy of Lowndesboro in Lowndes County, and B. S. Smith of Dadeville in Tallapoosa County. In addition to the expansion of the convict-lease system, the state inspector initiated unannounced quarterly visits to the lessees in order to inspect convict working and living conditions. He also noted: "Before the passage of an act approved February 10, 1876, the [Penitentiary] Warden was required by law to furnish an officer,

at the expense of the State, to attend each squad of convicts so hired out."[27] Commissioned by the state assembly, these inspectors checked on food, living quarters, hospital facilities, and the quantity and quality of clothes. Conducting private interviews with selected prisoners, the inspectors asked the following battery of questions:

> 1. What do you get to eat, and how often? Is it enough and wholesome?
>
> 2. How often do you wash and change clothing? Do you have shoes, hats, and clothing enough to keep you comfortable?
>
> 3. Have you been punished? How often? For what offense, and what kind of punishment was inflicted?
>
> 4. Have you been sick? How long were you sick? What was the nature of your disease? What physician attended you?
>
> 5. At what time do you commence work in the morning? What recess do you have at noon? At what time do you stop work in the evening?
>
> 6. Have you any other complaints to render?[28]

In the following year (1877), fourteen lessees controlled a total of 557 convicts who generated revenue for the state in the amount of $26,471.18.[29] The convict-lease system was indeed becoming "big business" in Alabama.

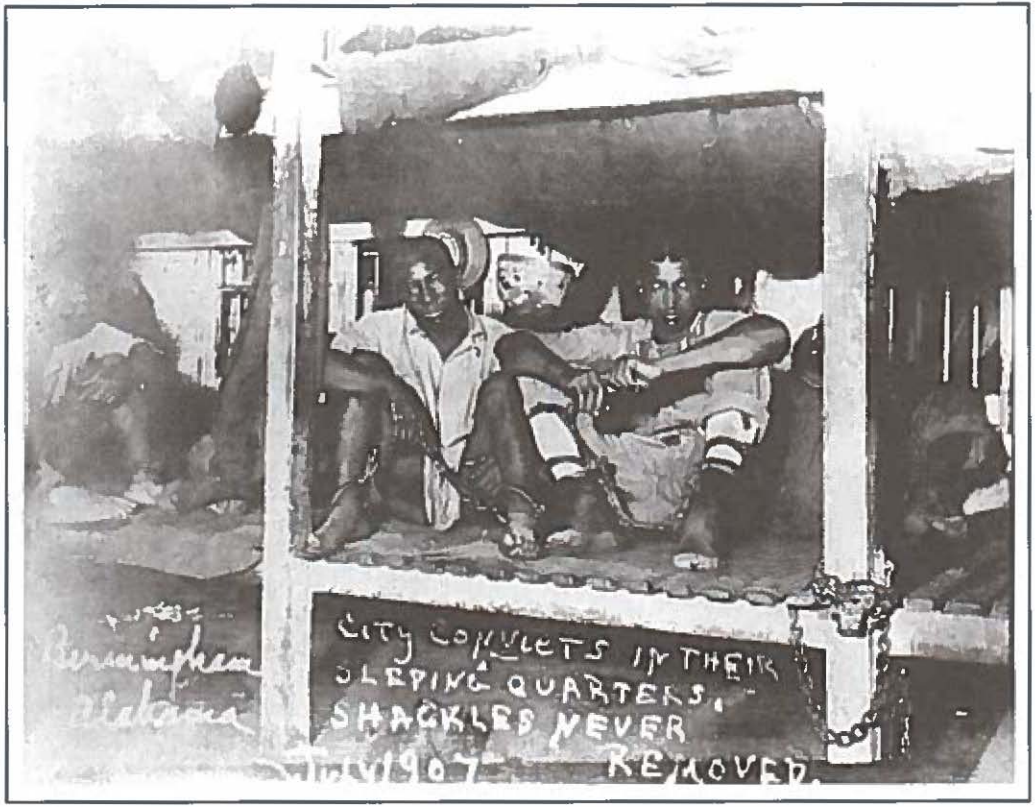
By 1880 state administrators classified convicts according to their physical condition and support requirements. For example, first-class laborers–those who were physically fit and capable of a full day's work–leased for five dollars per month. Second-class miners brought in $2.50 per month, and third-class workers were considered "dead heads."[30] This classification was a carry-over from slavery days, but a fourth-class designation developed in later years. Sloss-Sheffield records list laborers in the latter category as cooks, farmers, waiters, bath house attendants, hospital orderlies, bakers, barbers, plumbers, wagoners, wheel house workers, and yard men.[31] Even so, workers from all four classifications mined coal. All labored under a task system which required production of four tons per day for first-class miners, three tons for second-class, two tons for third-class, and one ton for fourth-class. These daily coal production quotas translated into convict miners shoveling 8,000 to 12,000 pounds of rock and ore six days per week.[32]

By 1880 the list of lessees had changed as well. Comer & McCurdy bought the Eureka Company and administered the Helena mines formerly owned by Henry F. DeBardeleben. Letters from convicts working at Helena described the Eureka mines as "replete with dangers: crumbling walls, gas-fueled fires and explosions, thick dust, and waist-high water."[33] These prisoner accounts also recorded common living conditions:

> The rooms were "filled with filth and vermin." Gunpowder cans were used for slop jars, chained men suffered miserably when the cans "would fill up and runover on bed." On a typical workday prisoners left the camp at three in the morning, in chains, and ran three miles to the mine. They returned at eight o'clock in the evening and stood for hours in the rain or snow to be counted before they could eat.[34]

Forced to exist in this horrific environment, many convicts attempted escape. Proving themselves "difficult to control," these prisoners "made coal companies liable to public exposure, scandal and criticism."[35] In addition, mine operators like J. W. Comer, brother of future governor Braxton Bragg Comer and owner of the Eureka mines, became notorious for their harsh and inhumane treatment of convicts. A firsthand account by a resident of Helena describes a manhunt that ensued when two prisoners escaped. Apparently, one of the men made good his getaway, but the other fell victim to Comer's brand of punishment. Driven to the ground, the prisoner begged Comer to call off his dogs. Ignoring the man's pleas, Comer "took a stirrup strap, doubled it and wet it, stripped him naked, bucked him, and whipped him–unmercifully whipped him, over half an hour." With the prisoner helpless and begging to be killed, Comer's men "left him in a...cabin where...he died within a few hours."[36] No criminal charges were filed in this case.

Similar incidents prompted the *Huntsville Gazette* to state that "our present convict system is a blot upon the civilization of this century and a shame upon the State of Alabama.... Humanity demands legislation on this subject. Christianity demands it. The State will never prosper as long as the infamous system prevails in her borders."[37] Sadly, such editorials fell on deaf ears, as no legislation limiting the control exercised by mine owners was passed. Rather, coal operators conducted themselves as they saw fit. In addition to his partnership with McCurdy, Comer held an individual interest in the Pratt Mines (owned initially by Henry F. DeBardeleben), and John T. Milner, former chief



Birmingham Prisoners, 1907. Thomas Duke Parke Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Birmingham Public Library.

engineer for the South and North Alabama Railroad, owned the Newcastle Coal Company.[38] Accusations of inhumane treatment of convict miners at the latter enterprise would become the center of controversy a few years later.

When Rufus W. Cobb (1878-1882) won the gubernatorial election of 1878, he inherited John G. Bass as Warden of the State Penitentiary system. Under Bass's leadership, the state's penal system generated money for the treasury, but he often resorted to questionable tactics in doing so. Viewing Bass as an unnecessary remnant of George S. Houston's administration, Cobb immediately removed him from the contract bidding process. Realizing significant increases in state revenues thereafter, the governor declined to renew Bass's appointment. Enjoying an improvement in state finances yet realizing the need for penal reforms, Cobb selected John H. Bankhead to succeed Bass.[39] As Warden, Bankhead commissioned Dr. John Brown Gaston, president of the Alabama Medical Association, and Dr. Jerome Cochran, state health officer, to inspect conditions for convicts working in coal mines. Gaston and Cochran discovered generally unhealthy and hazardous conditions, and they reported their findings to Bankhead.[40]

Addressing the annual meeting of the State Medical Association in Mobile in 1882, Gaston criticized the convict-lease system and the contractors for atrocious sanitation practices and horrid living and working conditions.[41] The specific allegation directed against the Newcastle mines sparked a passionate, two-fold rebuttal from Milner in which he defended the state system in general and his mining operation in particular.[42] Nevertheless, Gaston's comments prompted a reevaluation of the convict-lease system. In that same year, Bankhead initiated prison reform. He proposed legislation requiring severe penalties for mistreatment of prisoners as well as mandatory periodic inspections of mining conditions–"if practicable." Apparently, the practicability of reform paled when compared to the protection of some $50,000 in annual state revenues.[43]

On the other hand, changes following from Gaston's report and Bankhead's initiatives ushered in more than a decade of penal revision. Under Bankhead's direction, reform legislation constituted a "revolution" in Alabama's prison system. As a result, coal mining emerged as the primary prison industry in spite of protests from agricultural and timber interests. As Pratt Coal and Coke Company took control of the Eureka Mines at Helena, Bankhead arranged a system of inspection and regulation. Appointed to Alabama's first Board of Inspectors in 1883, Reginald H. Dawson, Albert T. Henley, and

William D. Lee visited mining operations, inspected various aspects of prison life, operated within the state political system, and challenged coal operators. Henley, a physician from Marengo County, and Lee, a Perry County lawyer, served as assistants to Dawson who had practiced law in Dallas County prior to his appointment.[44]

One of the early inspections investigated the Comer and McCurdy operation at Helena. In May 1883, approximately two hundred state convicts worked in the old Eureka Mines. The inspectors' report described the setting as well as the conditions. The mine operators had constructed a two-story, T-shaped wooden dormitory building for prisoners that included a dining hall, chapel, tailor shop, and warden's office.[45] The prison barracks contained four cells (70 feet x 20 feet) and a dining room opening into a hallway. Cells contained privies, but the inspectors noted their poor construction and offensive odor. A large room above the hallway served as a hospital, but the number of sick prisoners overwhelmed its efficiency and comfort. Overcrowding constituted a problem in the cells as well. Dawson and his assistants reported:

> The men slept upon scaffolds built along the walls; there were two of these scaffolds, and in some rooms three, one above the other, upon which the convicts lay thickly packed at night. There were some old mattresses upon these scaffolds, and there were blankets enough to keep the men warm; but they were all as dirty and filthy as coal-dust and grease could make them, and were thickly infested with vermin. In the four cells there was not more than room enough for the State convicts, and, as there were more county than State convicts at the prison, they were crowded entirely beyond their capacity. There was no ventilation, except through cracks in the wall, which were not always kept open; and as there was a high stockade close to the cells, the circulation of the air was very imperfect. At night, the heat, the stench from the privies, and the effluvia from the persons of the prisoners and from the filthy bed-clothing, made the cells almost unendurable.[46]

Apparently the report generated improvements; by 1884, these same mines boasted a "new dining room, relief from overcrowding, increased supply of water, new hospital, ventilation windows, more light, hanging bunks/new mattresses, renovated bath house, [and] improved latrines."[47]

Upon Bankhead's resignation in 1885, the state eliminated the office of Warden and elevated Dawson to Chief Inspector. Thereafter, Dawson, Henley, and Lee comprised the Board of Inspectors for the Alabama Department of Corrections. Contrary to many of Bankhead's

political machinations, Dawson attempted to apply a humanitarian approach to prison management. Based on his personal distaste for the prison mining system, he expressed concern for the welfare of individual miners. Curtin contends that "Dawson often provided a moral voice in the midst of an immoral system."[48] This new approach proved effective, and the trend toward reform continued. For example, a quarterly report submitted in the Spring of 1886 concerning the Comer and McCurdy operation at Helena stated: "The convicts have been well fed, very well clothed and kindly treated. The health of the men has been generally very good. The hospital is sufficiently commodious, and kept in a cleanly condition, and the sick received good medical attention."[49]

In March 1886, Dawson recommended and Governor Edward A. O'Neal approved a new set of "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Convict System of Alabama, adopted by The Board of Inspectors of Convicts." This list of thirteen rules established standards for ventilation and drainage and required a minimum of two mine entrances to enhance miner safety. The new regulations also stipulated that a Mine Foreman conduct periodic inspections to insure compliance with revised safety procedures. In addition, Dawson's requirements promoted efficient mining operations by compelling operators to provide proper tools and equipment to their convict miners.[50]

Dawson's reform efforts centered around "short time," regular releases, letter writing, and family visits. In an attempt to reduce the number of escape attempts, he implemented short-time pardons. Realizing that state law rewarded good conduct by deducting two months from every year of a prisoner's sentence, Dawson established the "time card." Under this system each prisoner received a time card that recorded his date of conviction as well as his date of release. Dawson modified the latter part by calculating both a "short-time" and a "long-time" release date. This practical method for eliminating extensions of regular release dates improved convict morale by encouraging them to "embrace hope and reject restlessness."[51] Dawson also promoted family connections by initiating a formal system of letter writing. Twice each month the Board of Inspectors provided paper, envelopes, and stamps for the convicts to communicate with their family members.[52]

As Dawson and his assistants instituted their reforms, many prisoners began to realize a degree of self-determination. Recognizing their skills as miners, convicts began to view themselves as bona fide workers who could affect change in overall mining operations.

Exhibiting many of the attributes of free miners and self-employed workers, these prisoners attempted to influence their work environment. Many joined the Knights of Labor and the Greenback Party in an effort to organize a collective effort for reform. In light of these developments, the Pratt Coal and Coke Company paid overtime wages to its prisoners who exceeded their coal-mining quotas. In turn, this money enhanced self-respect among the convicts; additional earnings provided purpose, fostered identity as a provider, and promoted family connections.[53]

Dawson's reforms did not last, however. In spite of improvements to mining conditions, operators continued to exert authority over the pace of work, punishment, and overall treatment. When the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company (TCI) purchased the Pratt Coal and Coke Company in 1886, convict miners experienced a loss of freedom, work speedups, dangerous conditions, and brutal treatment. When contracts with Pratt and Comer & McCurdy expired on December 31, 1887, the State advertised and solicited bids for new lease agreements. At that time TCI negotiated an unprecedented ten-year contract for all state prisoners and for half of the county convicts. The remaining county prisoners went to the Sloss Iron and Steel Company despite protests from competing companies.[54] A legislative investigation revealed significant irregularities in the negotiating process, but Governor Thomas Seay (1886-1890) supported the TCI contract. Subsequently, TCI increased its payments to the state, but the contract remained loosely enforced.[55] A total of 1,744 state convicts were leased, with 518 going to TCI and 300 designated for Sloss Iron & Steel. In addition to these state prisoners, 622 county convicts were leased, most of these allocated to the Pratt Mines and to Coalburg in Jefferson County.[56]

TCI did retain the practice of compensating miners for extra work. In fact, the company paid more than $7,000 to convicts in 1890. Some of this outlay returned to TCI coffers as prisoners purchased cigars, cigarettes, fruits, and canned goods from the company's "convict merchant." After the TCI takeover, convict miners resorted to gambling for sporting entertainment and to spending more money on themselves through internal prison markets. Consequently, fewer dollars went home to provide for the needs of their families. Sloss, too, compensated its prisoners for extra work, but officials insisted on paying with company scrip lest miners earn enough cash to pay their court costs and thereby gain their freedom. In effect, scrip payments guaranteed a captive work force.

These undercurrents prompted convict miners to band together in protest. Many prisoners used Dawson's writing program to compose letters of complaint to the inspectors and to the governor. Others became more cynical and resorted to direct action such as setting fires, planning escapes, committing suicide, or stopping work. Sabotage, strikes, and other forms of resistance exemplified the miners' frustrations, but they also revealed the prisoners' resolve. As Curtin points out, these forms of protest did not represent random acts of rebellion but deliberate responses designed to evoke specific changes.[57] Growing unrest among Alabama's convict miners indicated the need for further reforms.

On February 14, 1893, the state assembly adopted "An Act to create a new convict system for the State of Alabama, and to provide for the government, discipline and maintenance of all convicts in the State of Alabama." The new law stated that "no convict, State or county, shall be employed in any mines in this State, except as provided for in this act." However, Section 48 continued:

> *Be it further enacted*, That upon the termination of the contract with the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company [TCI] ...said contract shall not be renewed or extended.... That it is the true intent and meaning of this act, that the convicts now worked under contract in any of the coal mines of this State shall be removed therefrom as rapidly as practicable, by the first day of January, 1895, *if it can be done without detriment to the financial interests of the State*. [emphasis added][58]

In spite of support for reform from Governor Thomas G. Jones (1890-1894), the Panic of 1893 thwarted all attempts to remove convicts from the mines. Citing the need to preserve vital sources of state revenue, Governor William C. Oates (1894-1896) convinced the legislature to repeal all legislation introduced by his predecessor.[59] The ineffectiveness of the 1893 decree is evident when contrasted with the implications of a similar act passed in 1895 under Oates's leadership. This act–to regulate the management of state and county convicts by the General Assembly of Alabama–stipulates that "convicts must be classed or tasked, if hired in mines...." Furthermore, contracts must specify the type and place of labor; convicts were restricted to that place and to that work unless a new contract were negotiated.[60]

Thus, in spite of Dawson's heroic efforts at reform, the state penal system continued to generate significant revenues for the state. Dawson hoped to alter the county convict system as well, but as Chief

Inspector he continued to enforce current state policy. State officials relied on the system to maintain social order and to produce income. Almost impervious to Dawson's reforms, convict mining became an institution unto itself. When he retired in 1897, Dawson faced the realities of failure in achieving his ultimate goal–abolishing the lease system and removing the convicts from the mines. His successor, S. B. Trapp, reversed many of Dawson's reform measures in his support of the status quo. He subscribed to the widespread commitment to white supremacy and prison profitability.[61] Consequently, by the turn of the century, Alabama's convict-lease system represented the most profitable such enterprise of all the states.[62]

There was no real effort to terminate the leasing system in the early twentieth century, but some minor reforms did occur. However, early in his administration, Governor William D. Jelks (1900 and 1901-1907) boasted that, under his leadership, the state penal system earned $100,000 in one year–more than his predecessor, Joseph F. Johnston (1896-1900) netted during his entire four-year term. In similar fashion, Governor Braxton Bragg Comer (1907-1911) attempted to offset budget deficits by promoting convict leasing. Even with this emphasis on profits, token humanitarian policies reduced some of the hardships and corruption within the system.[63] For example, the Rules and Regulations of 1886 were published under separate cover in 1901.[64]

Intrigue and corruption continued to plague the penal system. A new contract with TCI in 1904 transferred responsibility for housing and feeding prisoners from the company to the state. In return, TCI agreed to pay a fixed price for every ton of coal mined by convict labor. The ensuing increase in state revenues prompted James G. Oakley, president of the Board of Convict Inspectors, to move prisoners from turpentine and lumber camps until almost all state convicts worked in coal mines.[65] Some years later, Oakley's chief clerk, Theophilus Lacy, siphoned $115,000 from the record-breaking revenues of 1913. Arrested the following year and charged with embezzlement and grand larceny, Lacy was sentenced to sixteen years in prison. Similarly, Oakley faced trial twice for embezzlement of state funds, but, unlike Lacy, he was acquitted on both counts.[66]

Increasing revenues reflected expansive growth, and the convict-lease system extended its reach to other mining communities. A series of quadrennial reports commencing in 1910 trace the growth of Alabama's system. In that year, TCI leased 450 convicts, and Sloss-Sheffield assumed control of 250. Henry F. DeBardeleben's Red Feather Coal Company at Lucile leased 200 prisoners, and his Bessemer

Coal, Iron and Land Company at Belle Ellen leased an additional 200.[67] The 1914 report recorded a total of four hundred convicts at the Pratt Consolidated Coal Company's Banner Mine with total revenue for the state above $300,000. Sloss-Sheffield maintained its work force of 250 and generated nearly $450,000 for the state treasury. The Red Feather and Bessemer Coal enterprises employed 300 and 250 convict miners paying $262,000 and $301,000, respectively. TCI, having terminated its contract in 1912, contributed almost $175,000 in additional funds. Finally, the Montevallo Mining Company at Aldrich–a relative newcomer to convict-leasing, starting the practice after the Aldriches sold the company in 1912–added about $17,000 more.[68] By 1922, revenues had increased to the following amounts:

Montevallo Mining Company	$ 717,689.84
Bessemer Coal, Iron & Land	686,127.17
Pratt Consolidated Coal Company	848,862.66
Sloss-Sheffield Steel & Iron	957,581.57

Total revenue generated by these four major lessees topped three million dollars for this four-year period.[69]

At the same time, leasing rates increased to challenge the free labor rate of 85.5 cents per ton of coal mined. First-class laborers leased for $93.125 per month, second-class for $83.125/month, third-class for $73.125/month, and fourth-class for $63.125/month.[70] In effect, the cost for convict labor was on par with that of free labor, but coal operators opted to maintain the convict-lease system because of its reliability.[71] Moreover, convict miners could not move to a new job, choose to stay home from work, or exercise any degree of freedom concerning their employment.

Advocates of the convict-lease system focused on the economic benefits to the state treasury rather than on the humanitarian needs of the prisoners. Reformer George Washington Cable provided a realistic view of the system when he stated: "...without regard to moral or mortal consequences, the penitentiary whose annual report shows the largest cash balance paid into the state's treasury is the best penitentiary."[72] Certainly, convict leasing represented an important economic venture, and the system's prosperity kept taxes low for state landholders. Moreover, the following data illustrate the growing importance of the convict-lease system within the state's overall fiscal plan:

REVENUES

Year	State	Convict Dept.	Convict Lease as percentage of State Budget
1914	$ 6,607,001	$ 1,162,493	17
1919	8,558,751	1,666,089	19
1923	18,692,362	2,629,696	15

CONVICT-LEASE PROFITS FOR ALABAMA TREASURY

Dates	Total Profits from Convict Leasing (mining, timber, etc.)	Profits from Convict Miners	Mining Profits as percentage of Convict-Lease Revenues
1910-14	$ 2,188,604	$ 1,325,182	60
1914-18	2,635,686	2,059,963	78
1919-22	3,671,210	3,357,354	91
1922-26	3,269,098	2,590,533	79 [73]

As Clark observes, "The officials of the state hesitated to abolish the lease system that netted the state so great a profit."[74]

Other factors stemmed from convict leasing as well. Ronald Lewis notes that 80 to 90 percent of all convict miners were black. Hence, he argues, as many contemporary reformers did, that the system served to reinstate a form of slavery by establishing racial hierarchy. Furthermore, since law enforcement and court officials were paid by commission rather than on salary, sentences even for misdemeanors often increased up to three times.[75] Lewis also argues that the convict-lease system constituted political bargaining within the restored Democratic party. An acceptable compromise developed between Black Belt planters who advocated social control and capitalists of the Birmingham District who promoted industrial progress and growth. These "Redeemers" and proponents of the New South defended the system as a means of rehabilitation and technical or vocational training. They justified this position by arguing that more than half of the free miners in the Birmingham District learned their trade as convicts. Entrepreneurs also supported the state system because of its consistent production, reliable work force, cheap labor, anti-union sentiment, and source of ready-made strike breakers.[76]

On the other hand, a death rate of nine to ten percent in Alabama mining camps did not compare favorably to the one to two percent rate in the mining areas of Pennsylvania and Ohio.[77] Reformers attributed death and disaster to poor sanitation and harsh working conditions. As in the Banner Mine tragedy, the deaths of convicts who had committed relatively minor crimes and received comparatively short sentences, constituted judicial murder. In 1913, organized demands for the abolition of the convict-lease system gained momentum with the formation of the Alabama Convict Improvement Association in Birmingham. This group advocated removing convicts from the coal mines and employing them on the roads of Alabama. In the same year, the United States Good Roads Congress met at St. Louis and resolved to encourage use of convicts on public highways. This action, according to the resolution, would promote "better morals, reformation of convicts, improved roads, and a higher order of intelligent citizenship."[78]

Similarly, a report from Alabama's Legislative Investigating Committee, submitted on July 13, 1915, criticized the state's penal system:

> The convict lease system of Alabama is a relic of barbarism, a species of human slavery, a crime against humanity.... We find under this driving slavery system, [that] the free miner mines two tons, the convict produces four.... It has been too much the policy of this state to look upon the commercial side of convict life. Each successive administration has done all in its power to increase the earnings of the convict department. The humanitarian side of the question has been entirely lost sight of.... The average life of a convict sentenced to work in the mines is seven years. The effect of the system is to make by the process of death, long-term convicts into short-term ones.... We therefore find the convict coal mines operating on full time, at full capacity, with the convict driven to the task of from ten to twelve [hours] a day, while the mines of free labor employers are operating at a loss only two or three days a week.[79]

In spite of growing support from anti-lease factions, humanitarian reformers lost momentum with the onset of World War I. As unmarried free miners responded to the draft and as some European immigrants returned to their native lands, convict miners represented one of the most stable aspects of the coal mining industry. In essence, the convict-lease system proved critical in sustaining wartime production levels.[80]

The spirit of reform revived after the war as Governor Thomas E. Kilby (1919-1923) advocated the abolition of convict leasing. His

attempts to sway the legislature proved futile, however, as lawmakers recognized the difficulties inherent in replacing a system that generated $750,000 in annual revenues. In 1923, anti-leasing forces formed the Statewide Campaign Committee for the Abolishment of the Convict Contract System. A year later, the wrongful death through water torture of convict miner James Knox resulted in a public outcry against the lease system. At that time, state officials decided that, instead of leasing convicts to the mines, they would lease the mines and work the prisoners in them. This conversion to state-operated coal mining began at Belle Ellen in February 1924, continued at Flat Top in July 1924, and extended to Banner and Aldrich in March and August 1925, respectively.[81]

Even with the groundswell of opposition against the leasing system, most of the humanitarian reform movements failed to gain any credibility. As Matthew Mancini points out, officials often dismissed them as naive efforts by "Weeping Willow women and sobbing sissy men."[82] Nevertheless, reformers gained a champion in Bibb Graves who campaigned in 1926 on a platform committed to abolishing the convict-lease system. Before taking office, Governor-elect Graves (1927-1931, 1935-1939) persuaded out-going Governor William W. Brandon (1923-1927) to convene a special session of the legislature in December 1926. During this session, legislators provided for a constitutional amendment that established a $25 million bond issue for maintaining the state's roads. The new law instituted an additional two-cent tax on gasoline and created eighteen road camps complete with buildings, road-building machinery, and other equipment.[83]

Only when this revenue-generating alternative arose did state legislators terminate the leasing system and revise the penal system in Alabama. The gasoline tax of 1927 provided alternative funding, and convicts left the mines to work in road gangs and on the state prison farm.[84] Even with its termination on June 30, 1928, the convict lease remained true to form. After an infamous half-century of cruelty and corruption, state officials had terminated it based on economic issues rather than on humanitarian concerns. Because of its exploitation of captive labor, the convict-lease system undermined public morality and constructed its notorious legacy. As Isadore Shapiro, President of the Alabama Committee on Prisons, stated in 1917: "The damnable system which sells human beings at auction to the highest bidder, ...Alabama's lease system is her unholiest and most indefensible shame."[85]

Notes

[1]For a comprehensive account of the Banner Mine explosion, see Robert David Ward and William Warren Rogers, *Convicts, Coal, and the Banner Mine Tragedy* (Tuscaloosa, 1987).

[2]Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780-1980* (Lexington, KY, 1987), 31.

[3]Charles Edward Adams, *Blocton: The History of an Alabama Coal Mining Town* (Brierfield, AL, 2001), 230-37.

[4]Matthew J. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928* (Columbia, SC, 1996), 1-3, 20, 30-31, 38.

[5]Elizabeth Boner Clark, "The Abolition of the Convict Lease System in Alabama, 1913-1928" (Master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1949), ii.

[6]Ibid., 1-2.

[7]William Franklin Drummond, "Utilization of Convict Labor in the South" (Master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1933), 54.

[8]Clark, "Abolition of the Convict Lease System,"11-12.

[9]Some records spell McMillan with an "E," i.e., "McMillen."

[10]Mancini, *One Dies*, 99-101.

[11]Clark, "Abolition," 14.

[12]Drummond, "Utilization of Convict Labor,"18-19.

[13]Ibid., 37-38.

[14]Douglas A. Blackmon, "From Alabama's Past, Capitalism Teamed With Racism to Create Cruel Partnership," *Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 2001, 4.

[15]Milfred C. Fierce, *Slavery Revisited: Blacks and the Southern Convict Lease System, 1865-1933* (New York, 1994), 252.

[16]Ibid., x, 2, 15, 77, 252-53.

[17]Ibid., 90-91.

[18]Albert B. Moore, *History of Alabama and Her People* (New York, 1927), 1: 979, cited in Fierce, *Slavery Revisited*, 112-13.

[19]Mary Church Terrell, "Peonage in the United States: The Convict Lease System and the Chain Gangs," *The Nineteenth Century* 62 (1907): 308, cited in Fierce, *Slavery Revisited*, 231-32.

[20]W. E. B. DuBois, "The Spawn of Slavery: The Convict Lease System in the South," *Missionary Review of the World* 24 (October 1901): 744-45, cited in Fierce, *Slavery Revisited*, 240.

[21]Fierce, *Slavery Revisited*, 88.

[22]Blackmon, "From Alabama's Past," 5.

[23]Mary Ellen Curtin, *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (Charlottesville, 2000), 2-3, 207-10. Curtin notes that "after a massive political campaign leading to changes in Alabama's constitution, the fee system in Jefferson County was finally abolished in 1919." Curtin's research centers around correspondence filed by the Alabama Department of Corrections between 1881 and 1897. Letters exchanged among chief inspector Reginald Heber Dawson and his two subordinates, Dr. A. T. Henley and W. D. Lee, "contain candid accounts of daily prison life, politics, and contractors." Curtin's study complements this author's research in the Board of Inspectors annual, biennial, and quadrennial reports. Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Administrative Correspondence, 1881-1897*, SG 18151-18155, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as ADAH.

[24]Blackmon, "From Alabama's Past,"4-5.

[25]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Annual Report of the Inspector of the Alabama Penitentiary, 1874*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[26]*Annual Report, 1875*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[27]*Annual Report, 1876*, SG 13058-13060, 3, ADAH.

[28]*Annual Report, 1877*, SG 13058-13060, 4, ADAH.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Biennial Report, 1880*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[31]Alabama Department of Corrections and Institutions, *Administrative Correspondence, 1909-1947*, SG 17601-17604, 17606, 20624, ADAH.

[32]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Convict System of Alabama* (Montgomery, 1886), 21. These *Rules and Regulations* established daily quotas for "convicts working in coal mines where coal is four feet thick or upwards" in which the miners must cut and load the coal. Further clarification revealed that "convicts loading coal and not cutting it, when coal is four feet thick or upwards, shall be required to load not exceeding the following tasks per day: First class men, Eight tons of coal. Second class men, Six tons of coal. Third class men, Four tons of coal. Fourth class men, Two tons of coal."

[33]Ezekiel Archey to R. H. Dawson, January 18, 1884, cited in Curtin, *Black Prisoners*, 20-21. An examination of the *Administrative Correspondence, 1881-1897* files used by Curtin revealed that many of the letter book copies had absorbed some moisture and that the ink had smeared. Furthermore, much of the correspondence was filed in haphazard, i.e. non-chronological order. This author located enough letters to substantiate the validity of Curtin's citations, but the lack of organization rendered the collection non-conducive to efficient historical research. Consequently, notations will cite Curtin's book as a reliable secondary source rather than focusing on the more obscure primary sources.

[34]Archey to Dawson, January 18, 1884, cited in Curtin, 20-21.

[35]John T. Milner to R. H. Dawson, June 10, 1885, cited in Curtin, 70-71.

[36]Curtin, 69.

[37]*Huntsville Gazette*, September 3, 1881, reprinted from the *Jackson Republican*, cited in Curtin, 70-71.

[38]*Biennial Report, 1880*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[39]Samuel L. Webb and Margaret E. Armbrester, *Alabama Governors: A Political History of the State* (Tuscaloosa, 2001), 107-8.

[40]Clark, "Abolition,"15.

[41]J. B. Gaston, *Annual Address before the State Medical Association in Mobile upon the Sanitary Condition of our Prisons* (1882), SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[42]John T. Milner response to J. B. Gaston, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[43]*Huntsville Gazette*, December 16, 1882, cited in Curtin, 76-77.

[44]Curtin, 83.

[45]Clark, "Abolition,"23.

[46]*Biennial Report, 1884*, 21, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[47]*Biennial Report, 1884*, 263-64, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[48]Curtin, 84. Curtin also notes (pp. 82-83) that "critics and subsequent historians have emphasized Bankhead's dishonest relations with mining interests. Journalist Robert McKee, editor of the *Selma Argus*, alleged that Bankhead headed a 'penitentiary ring'–a corrupt alliance between Democratic party insiders and industrialists. Bankhead parlayed a two-year stint as warden of the state penitentiary, with a salary of $2,000 a year, into a wealthy political dynasty. In 1888, three years after he left the position of warden, he received a payoff of over $1,200 from [the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company] so as to ensure that company would continue to receive the lion's share of prison labor.... It seems clear that Bankhead's reforms were merely a means of getting more prisoners into coal mines and staving off criticism about the lease."

[49]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Quarterly Report, Spring 1886*, 65, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[50]*Biennial Report, 1886*, 13-15, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[51]Curtin, 23, 82, 94. A state law passed in 1885 stipulated that each prisoner should have his own time card.

[52]*Biennial Report, 1886*, cited in Curtin, 91.

[53]Curtin, 5, 22-23, 73-74.

[54]*Biennial Report, 1888*, iv, SG 13058-13060, ADAH. Also see Curtin, 100, 106, 111-12, 130, 138.

[55]Webb and Armbrester, *Alabama Governors*, 115-16.

[56]*Biennial Report, 1900*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[57]Curtin, 5, 37, 112, 141-43.

[58]Alabama General Assembly, *An Act to create a new convict-lease system for the State of Alabama, and to provide for the government, discipline and maintenance of all convicts in the State of Alabama* (February 14, 1893), 21, SG 13058-13060, ADAH..

[59]Webb and Armbrester, *Alabama Governors*, 119, 125.

[60]Alabama General Assembly, *An Act to regulate the management of state and county convicts by General Assembly of Alabama* (February 18, 1895), 864, 876, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[61]Curtin, 84, 131, 147-48, 165. In 1890, the convict-lease system generated $113,000 for Alabama's treasury–about six percent of the state budget.

[62]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Biennial Report, 1888-1906*; *Quadrennial Report, 1910*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH. The following data illustrate the rising importance of the convict-lease system as a source of state revenue:

1888–$103,332.97
1890–$209,579.44
1892–$225,648.84
1894–$240,736.78
1896–$260,919.14
1898–$325,196.10
1900–$361,284.98
1902–$302,870.42
1904–$767,381.05 (approximately 1800 convicts)
1906–$1.3 million (2059 convicts)
1910–$2.72 million (1905 convicts)

[63]Webb and Armbrester, *Alabama Governors*, 143-44, 153-56.

[64]*Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Convict System of Alabama, adopted by The Board of Inspectors of Convicts, March 3, 1886* (Montgomery, 1901).

[65]Curtin, 166.

[66]Webb and Armbrester, *Alabama Governors*, 161.

[67]Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, *Quadrennial Report, 1910*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[68]*Quadrennial Report, 1914*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH, and Henry A. Emfinger, "The Story of My Hometown, Aldrich, Alabama," (Montevallo, AL, 1969), 48.

[69]Convict labor ended for the Red Feather Coal Company at Lucile on January 1, 1918. Resident prisoners were transferred to the Bessemer Coal, Iron and Land Company interest at Belle Ellen. That enterprise filed its last report re: Convict Hire Invoices with the Alabama State Auditor in January 1924. See Alabama State Auditor, "Convict Hire Invoices (1875-)," SG 5248, 20658, 20667, 20668, 20673, 20674, 20679, 20680, 20685, 20686, ADAH, and Adams, 237.

[70]*Quadrennial Report, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1922*, SG 13058-13060, ADAH.

[71]Convicts worked 310 days per year on average as compared to 170 days for free laborers. See Melvyn Stokes and Rick Halpern, eds., *Race and Class in the American South Since 1890* (Oxford, 1994), 16.

[72]George Washington Cable, *The Silent South, Together with the Freedman's Case in Equity and the Convict Lease System* (New York, 1889), 126, 128, cited in Lewis, 14.

[73]Clark, "Abolition," 34-36.

[74]Ibid., 36.

[75]As noted earlier, additional compensation for county officials frequently extended time served, credited at thirty cents per day.

[76]Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, 32-35.

[77]Gaston, *Annual Address*, ADAH collection. Also, Curtin states that, "compared to the death rates in other prisons throughout the nation, Alabama came in first, or last, depending on perspective [64 per 1,000]. The Missouri penitentiary's rate was 16 per 1,000; Ohio's was 9 per 1,000; Maryland's was 27 per 1,000. The only state coming close to Alabama was Mississippi, whose death rate was 40 per 1,000 in 1894." Curtin, 155.

[78]Clark, "Abolition," 26.

[79]Ibid., 54-57.

[80]Ibid., 70-71.

[81]Ibid., 72, 88.

[82]Mancini, *One Dies*, 115-16, 228-30.

[83]Clark, "Abolition, 105-6, 114.

[84]Mancini, *One Dies*, 115-16, 228-30.

[85]Isadore Shapiro, *Address to the American Prison Association*, New Orleans, 1917, cited in Clark, "Abolition," 29.

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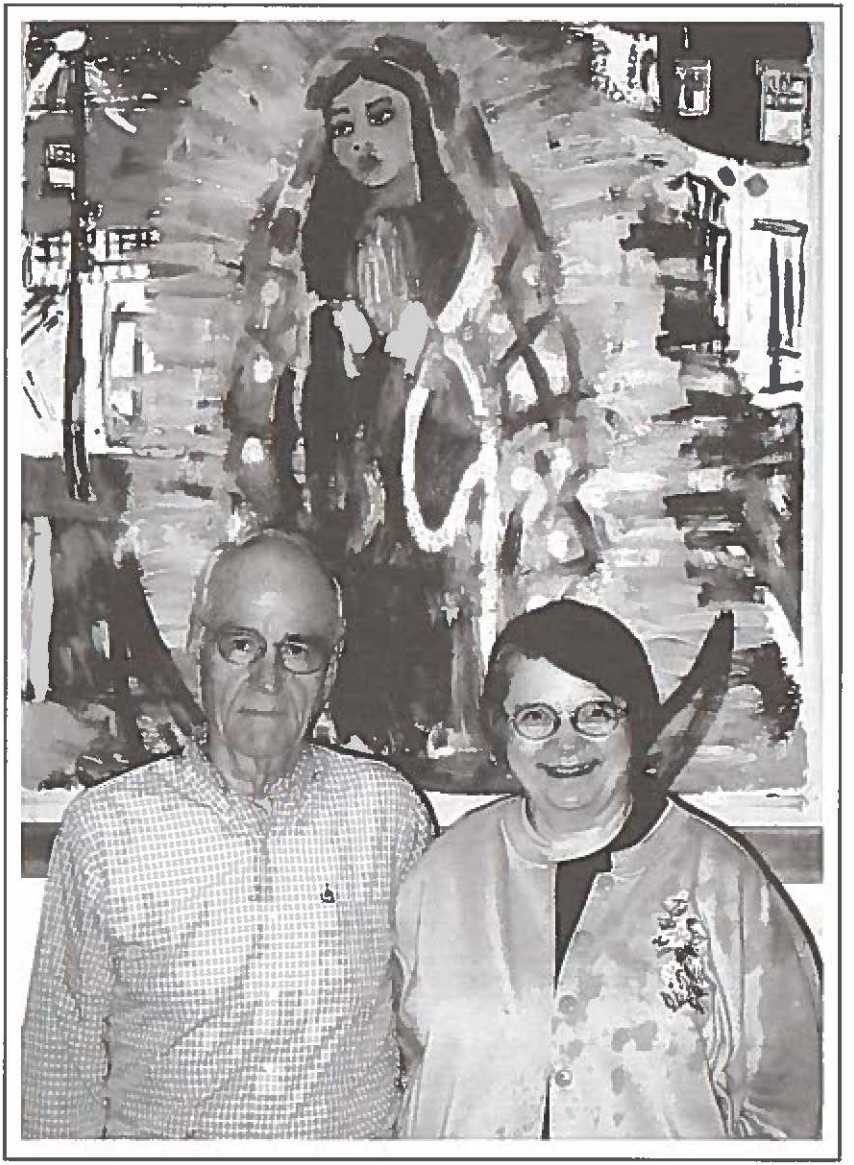

Mark and Louise Zwick. The painting of the Virgin of Guadolupe was made for Casa Juan Diego by a young woman who had just given up drugs. Mark and Louise Zwick.

The Houston Catholic Worker: Casa Juan Diego, 1981–2004

Carol Ellis

On July 7, 1982, forty people were singing inside a wood-frame building at 4309 Washington Avenue, in the Sixth Ward of Houston, Texas. Suddenly, about 8:00 P.M., as the last note of the last song died out, shouts of "fire! fire!" were heard. Some men grabbed water hoses and rushed to the second floor of the building in a vain attempt to extinguish the blaze. A few hurried to try to salvage their possessions. Others raced out, fleeing as smoke poured from the building. The fire destroyed the structure. Officials later ruled that arson had caused the blaze. The couple who were responsible for the building raised funds and rebuilt, only to see the second structure, which they located only a few blocks away, go up in flames as well three years later. On June 20, 1985, thirty guests awoke about 5 A.M. to the smell of smoke. The couple who operated the building were in shock. How could this be happening again? The kitchen and dining areas of 4818 Rose Street were a total loss, but, this time, the fire department claimed an electrical malfunction had started the blaze. The couple farmed out their patrons to various other places, and, within several months, were able to construct another building at the same address, on the corner of Rose and Shepherd. They chose concrete and steel for the new building, making a third blaze less likely.[1]

The guests who were in the buildings that burned were not vacationers roused from a pleasant night's sleep. And the buildings were not resorts. The forty people in the first fire and the thirty in the second were refugees who had fled poverty or their war-torn countries, and the structures, known as Casa Juan Diego, accommodated those refugees.

The immigrants of Casa Juan Diego arrived in Houston with few possessions. They required almost everything to sustain life—food, clothing, a place to live, medical treatment, diapers for their babies, as well as shoes for their feet. Unlike most welfare agencies that operated during normal business hours, where ticket-clutching patrons filled out forms as they waited to be called so that their needs could be determined, the items given at this refugee house were not supplied in a regulated fashion. The Casa was not open only from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. because immigrants did not arrive by some pre-determined timetable that assured orderliness. They came night and day, seven days

a week. And the founders of the House, Mark and Louise Zwick, were there to welcome them and provide all that they needed, regardless of the hour or the need.

Being the primary caretakers of Casa Juan Diego was not glamorous. The hours were long. There was no pay. The work was often dirty and underappreciated. Accepting people into Casa Juan Diego meant admitting all of their problems as well. What kept this increasingly aged couple going? Despite the fires, the problems, and the long hours, the Zwicks did not give up and return to their jobs in the professional world.

Mark and Louise Zwick claimed that it was their love for the poor and dispossessed that kept them going. Their love was their vocation, though not one simply to serve the poor. Their job, as they saw it, was not merely to work for those in need, but to put their love in action by serving the poor. The Zwicks believed that "[t]o preserve a house,...one must work at it." The filth, the danger, the worries were all worth it. "[O]ne's hearts must burn," Mark Zwick said years later to a newspaper reporter. "[T]hat is where the fire is needed—born with the love of the poor and of the refugees, not just love of ideas."[2]

The Zwicks, devout Christians, have operated Casa Juan Diego as one of dozens of existing Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality in the United States. An examination of the couple's efforts offers us an opportunity to refine the portrait of religion at work in the modern world. It also allows us to test how well the Zwicks' ideals have conformed to the paradigm established by the founders of the Catholic Worker movement. One scholar, Sister Michele Aronica, R.S.M., a professor of sociology at Saint Joseph's College in Maine, examined the continuing work of the original house of hospitality in New York City. She argued that those who run that house have been unable to maintain the same level of commitment as the crusade's architects, the late Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin.[3]

Did the death of the movement's charismatic leaders cause the two Houston Catholic Workers to lose focus? This article considers the work of Mark and Louise Zwick, and looks at whether discontinuity developed between their work and the philosophies laid down by Day and Maurin. Rather than confirming Aronica's conclusion, this article will show that Mark and Louise Zwick did not veer away from the example set by Day and Maurin. Their work has closely followed that of the movement's architects.

Mark Zwick's sentiments about Houston's most abject population, and his association with the Catholic Worker movement, sprang from

his study of the life's work of Dorothy Day, who is currently being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church, and of Peter Maurin, a former seminarian and French native who emigrated to the United States. Born on November 8, 1897, in Brooklyn, New York, Day's concern with life's downtrodden led her to join the Socialist Party in the late 1910s. In 1927, after the birth of her daughter, she converted to Catholicism but she never lost interest in the plight of the poor. Maurin, born May 9, 1877, in Oultet, France, had once been a member of the pious De La Salle Christian Brothers. That order was founded by Saint John Baptiste de La Salle in the seventeenth century. An educational innovator, La Salle established the Brothers of the Christian Schools, where teachers assisted parents in the educational and ethical formation of their children. Maurin subsequently left the order and migrated first to Canada in 1907 and then to the United States one year later.[4]

Day and Maurin founded the Catholic Worker movement in New York City in 1933. The movement was more than a group of people sharing a common ideology. It was a way of life. In it they incorporated a system of attitudes, beliefs, patterns of behavior, and values. At root, it is a combination of the Marxist philosophy and Catholic dogma of its founders and espouses a utopian form of Christianity. The movement had its beginnings in a newssheet called the *Catholic Worker*. Maurin believed that it was time for Catholics to have a socially conscious paper of their own, one with two aims: to express a radical concern for social equality and to make papal encyclicals popular with the faithful. He wanted Catholics to know that the church had a social program that rebuked unrestrained greed and put the interest of workers above that of corporations and states.[5]

Day and Maurin established their paper at the height of the Great Depression. Nearly one-quarter of the nation's working population was unemployed. Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic, were disposed to accept experiments in social reform. The American Catholic hierarchy had even published letters in 1933 and 1934 blaming the depression on "selfish greed and the inversion of priorities which put money ahead of human rights and dignity." The bitterness of the depression caused many of New York's citizens to respond positively to Maurin's and Day's broadsheet. It expressed three overarching principles that appealed in a time of need: personalism, pacifism, and voluntary poverty.[6]

Scholars of Day's and Maurin's movement have concentrated on the pacifist elements of Catholic Worker ideology. With the exception of James J. Farrell's *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar*

Radicalism, they have paid less attention to personalism and voluntary poverty.[7] The idea of personalism derives, in part, from the writings of such people as St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Assisi, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Emmanuel Mounier. It involves putting the words of Jesus Christ, particularly those contained in Matthew, chapter 25, into action through personal involvement in the lives of people. Personalism is a "heightened sense of...responsibility for one's neighbors and involvement in struggle for justice on their behalf." The personalist, in imitating the Gospel of Jesus Christ, places Christian love at the foundation of social existence. It is a radical doctrine that involves abandoning materialism, renouncing violence, and committing to a system of just labor.[8]

Catholic Workers' devotion to voluntary poverty shows, they believe, respect for the poor. They voluntarily take on the involuntary poverty of others, and through their dedication to the impoverished express the works of mercy, including sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked. Workers strive to treat those in poverty as fundamentally human and worthy of esteem. "The mystery of the poor," Day wrote, "is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him.... The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love."[9]

Christian anarchy rather than secular hierarchy is another tenet of the Catholic Worker movement. Day and Maurin did not envision anarchy as a total lack of government or complete chaos. Rather they meant "not getting involved in government bureaucracy," regardless of the system under which it operated. In theory, the movement was internally anarchistic and embraced a communal utopia. There were to be no bylaws or articles of incorporation. Catholic Workers did not elect officers, hold elections, or write constitutions. Workers shared available space with their guests. Meals were prepared and eaten communally. And, in contrast to the emphasis many Christians place on involvement in politics, the Catholic Worker movement's founders remained wedded to the classical position that religion belonged to a sphere separate from politics. They believed that the authentic Christian should reject power. This does not mean that Day and Maurin believed in a "spirituality divorced from worldly concerns." Instead they wanted a Christian "radicalism that united spirit and society." Such a philosophy was certainly controversial.[10]

As a former Socialist, Day had been controversial even in her younger years. After her conversion, however, she aligned herself with

Catholic teaching. Those teachings derived largely from papal encyclicals. Day and Maurin, committed to anti-communism, frequently cited the May 1891 encyclical of Pope Leo XIII entitled *Rerum Novarum*, or more commonly known as "On Capital and Labor." Writing about the abuses of industrialists in their behavior toward workers, the pope also warned his following not to accept the socialists' remedy for the excesses of capitalism: common possessions and the destruction of private property. Then, in May 1931, Pope Pius XI issued a missive entitled *Quadragesimo Anno* (*After Forty Years*), which stated that socialism and communism were incompatible with Catholicism because they jettisoned any connection with a supreme being. Pope Pius soon followed that encyclical with *Divini Redemptoris* (*Divine Redemption*), which denounced the Russian communists' relentless attack on Christianity and warned Catholics to have nothing whatsoever to do with their creed. Beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, the popes' teachings gave Catholics license and encouragement to engage in more progressive action on social questions.[11]

Wedded to social reform of the capitalistic system, Day and Maurin also spotlighted the encyclicals' discussion of that system's rabid individualism in the pages of the *Catholic Worker*. The same *Rerum Novarum* that warned against the ills of communism also took capitalism to task. It called for Catholics the world over to defend the human person and safeguard human dignity. *Quadragesimo Anno* stressed the need for Catholics to support a more equitable economic world system within the capitalist mode of production. The founders of the Catholic Worker movement opposed the American celebration of the individual as the highest order in society, as well as the communist glorification of the state. Day and Maurin believed that the communist system deprived people of ownership, freedom, and responsibility, but they also condemned the corporate monopolies and colossal scale of capitalism. They argued that the capitalist system allowed people to ignore their obligation to use resources wisely and that unbridled capitalism was "radically un-Christian and anti-Christian...contrary to Nature and contrary to God" because it destroyed "the dignity of man." "The Communist," Day wrote, "does not see Christ in his neighbor. Nor do we [the Capitalists]." Both systems, in their opinion, relied on materialism. What should really distinguish people, Day believed, was love.[12]

One way in which Day and Maurin expressed their love for the dispossessed was in their house of hospitality. The idea came about as the first editions of the New York *Catholic Worker* were being

compiled. Day rented a former barbershop in Manhattan, located just below her apartment, and there she and several friends put together each issue. It was 1933, and the idle and hungry would drift in and out of the building. A young, unemployed pregnant woman took over the kitchen in the shop and began to prepare food for the homeless drifters. Out of that grew soup distribution, and then the idea of a house of hospitality. The first two houses that Day and Maurin launched soon closed. But the pair opened another a few months later at 144 Charles Street near the Hudson River in Manhattan. The building accommodated women and men and held the kitchen and dining areas, and housed the offices of the paper. Day and Maurin soon left the Charles Street location because it was in poor condition, and, by 1973, after several other moves, Day permanently settled (Maurin had since died) into the Saint Joseph House at 36 East First Street. To that house was added another known as Maryhouse, a former music school, on Third Street in Manhattan. The founders of the movement housed the poor, distributed meals, prepared the newspaper, created a maternity guild, started a workers' school, and collected and dispensed clothing and other items. From those simple beginnings, houses of hospitality grew. By 1936 there were more than one dozen independent houses located throughout the United States.[13]

According to one scholar, Day and Maurin, by doing this type of work, expressed Christian Socialism. However, neither Dorothy Day nor Mark Zwick accepted such a judgement. Day always preferred to be labeled as a personalist, and Zwick was quick to call himself that as well. What Day and Maurin offered, and what the Zwicks believed they extended, was "a 'third way'" between capitalism and communism, between "radical individualism and collectivist radicalism." That alternative included denouncing all war, accepting voluntary poverty, performing works of mercy, a personalist approach to material culture, and the philosophy of Distributism. Adherents of Distributism, like G. K. Chesteron and Father Virgil Michel, believed that wages should be adequate enough for all workers to share in a culture of private property. Based on local initiatives, these components formed a third alternative that was "primarily a matter of personal transformation, not [the] mass conversion" promoted by the secular communist state or the capitalistically driven welfare state.[14]

Mark Zwick did not initially embrace this third alternative. Zwick, who looks amazingly like the first President George Bush, was the ninth of twelve children. He was born in 1927 and raised in a devoutly Catholic home in Canton, Ohio, where his father died when Mark was

young. Mark later earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago and spent time in that field in California.[15]

As a young man Zwick was not a Catholic radical. He followed a more-or-less traditional path. From 1953 until 1967 he was a Catholic priest. While working with farm laborers in California, he met his future wife, Louise, who was attending Berkeley University. Born in 1942 on a farm in western Pennsylvania, Louise had been a non-practicing Methodist. Earlier, while attending college at Youngstown University, she took a philosophy course that piqued her interest in Catholic teachings. She converted to Catholicism and, after meeting Mark, who left the priesthood, the couple married and she went on to earn a master's degree in children's literature and library sciences.[16]

In the 1950s the future co-founder of Casa Juan Diego had discovered Dorothy Day and her philosophy. Mark Zwick once cited one of Peter Maurin's "clarification of thought" retreats, where attendees fasted, immersed themselves in the doctrine of self-denial, and discussed the tenets of the Catholic Worker movement as his "most intense exposure to the movement...." Separately at first, and then as man and wife, Mark and Louise Zwick have worked with the poor since the 1960s. They helped form a community organization and neighborhood center called Gilead House in the black community of Youngstown, Ohio. They were active in civil rights in the early 1960s, establishing interracial groups and organizations. And they formed ecumenical peace groups that included Jews, Catholics, Unitarians, and Protestants. Then, in the mid-1960s, Mark and Louise met the Jesuit priest and radical activist Daniel Berrigan; learning of Zwick's interest in Hispanic culture, Berrigan advised Mark to learn Spanish and concentrate his work in the southwestern United States, a region, with its Spanish immigration increasing, that was ripe for the kind of activism Zwick wanted to practice.[17]

The couple, however, were not quite ready to abandon the material culture that Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin railed against. In the 1960s, as Louise Zwick recalled in 1994, they had it all. "Two kids, two bank accounts, a four-bedroom, three-bathroom house, respect." But what, they increasingly asked themselves, was all of that in the face of eternity, "or even in the light of a lifetime." So in 1976 the couple sold everything they owned and went with their two children as missionaries to El Salvador. They wanted to immerse themselves in the Spanish culture and discover what the church was doing there about social justice for the poor.[18]

El Salvador was war-torn and its people desperately poor. The Zwicks tried to help the Salvadorian church stand with the country's underprivileged and fight against the government's policy of murdering Christians. By the late 1970s, however, after witnessing chaos, terror, and martyrdom, they left El Salvador for McAllen, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley. "We left El Salvador a changed people. Our Catholicism and our faith would never be the same," Zwick later said. Their devotion to serving Hispanic people did not wane while they worked in McAllen, but they were increasingly dissatisfied with their own level of dedication. With Berrigan's voice ringing in their ears, the couple considered what a McAllen nun had told them as she described the abject conditions in which immigrant refugees in Houston, Texas, lived. The Zwicks teased each other about the scope of their commitment to the poor. "We said if we had any guts, we'd start a [Catholic Worker] center ourselves," Zwick recalled later.[19]

The Zwicks ultimately accepted the nun's recommendation and moved to Houston in 1980. Initially they served the poor through the Texas Catholic Conference's Volunteers for Education and Social Services program by performing social work at St. Theresa Catholic Church near Memorial Park, and as parish directors of religious education. That, however, eventually proved less than fulfilling. The couple believed that "they were still too comfortable [in their personal lives] to reach the poor effectively...." They wanted some other way to put their faith into action. Haunted by the vision that surrounded them—Hispanics living in cars in the parking lots around the Heights area of the city—they recognized the tremendous need in Houston for a Central American refugee shelter. Mark and Louise begin to pester each other about the prospect of continuing Dorothy Day's style of serving the poor.[20]

By 1980 the Zwicks also shared Dorothy Day's and Peter Maurin's attitudes toward both communism and capitalism. With its emphasis on what Zwick called "artheistic [*sic*] materialism," communism was, as far as he was concerned, synonymous with "Satanic evil," and thus anathema to Catholics.[21] The couple's treatment of the two rival economic systems stemmed, as did that of the Catholic Worker movement's founders, from the spiritual teachings of the Catholic Church through papal encyclicals. Zwick wrote about the cultures of communism and capitalism and often reprinted the words of the early philosophers of the movement. He also cited *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, and *Divini Redemptoris*, but he stressed another

encyclical as well: John Paul II's 1991 pronouncement on the subject of social justice. *Centesimus Annus* (*After One Hundred Years*), reiterated the call for industrialists, world leaders, and Catholics everywhere to put a human face on capitalism by offering workers of the world human dignity and just wages.[22]

In Zwick's opinion, this papal statement expressed disapproval of the capitalist system because of its dehumanizing aspects, its dichotomy of benefits, and its deleterious effects on spirituality. "The religion of 'consumerism,'" he wrote, "subverts a serious commitment to the faith." Zwick and his wife rejected the selfishness of a capitalistic society that allowed corporate CEO's to make millions of dollars while employees made a tiny fraction of that amount, or that permitted multinational conglomerates to pay Honduran workers thirty-eight cents per hour. They also rejected the system of welfare capitalism, an arrangement they believed exploited the poor for economic gain and subjected its patrons to social workers whose detached attitude dehumanized the very people they were supposed to uplift.[23]

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Zwick and his wife dreamed that the massive military budgets of the world's two greatest powers would be spent on initiatives that would erase the desperate poverty of people. Instead, they lamented that "the profit motive reigns supreme." They were thankful that communism was gone, but they bemoaned what they saw as its successor: economic oppression. Unbridled capitalism, the beneficiary of communism's demise, meant the economic devastation of the Third World and the enslavement of American citizens to a dominating materialist culture, softened only by state-sponsored, impersonal welfare programs.[24]

Economic devastation, not to mention war, did effect the Third World, and brought many desperate refugees to Houston. So several months after Dorothy Day's death the couple finally, on February 18, 1981, opened the first Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in the southern United States. Having weighed how that decision would affect their personal lives, and having struggled with the decision, the Zwicks located their house at 4309 Washington Avenue, a largely Hispanic area of the city. The Catholic Worker movement had been popular on the East and West coasts of the United States, but it had traditionally received a cool response in the highly conservative and anti-socialist South. In 1992, eleven years after the opening of Casa Juan Diego in Houston, there were 134 independent houses of hospitality, 106 of which were in the United States. Of those, only twelve were in the U.S. South. The Zwicks named their house after a sixteenth-century

Mexican peasant Cuauhtlatoa ("eagle that speaks"), who was later known as Juan Diego. An Aztec native, Juan Diego was one of the first to evangelize in New Spain. The Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to him on five different occasions. Zwick later said that he chose the name because Juan Diego represented the "paradox of the powerless being powerful." The building the Zwicks took over had been a meat market. It had no shower, no heat, no gas, one toilet, and one sink. No wonder Zwick never failed to call the structure the "ugliest building [in Houston]."[25]

Dedicated to Central American refugees and battered Hispanic women who were unable to get help from existing social service agencies, Casa Juan Diego became the only U.S. Catholic Worker House of Hospitality that catered to immigrants, legal or otherwise, and to the Spanish-speaking. The house Mark and Louise Zwick founded was patterned after Dorothy Day's and Peter Maurin's Saint Joseph House in New York. Staffed completely by volunteers, no one at the Casa earned a paycheck, although volunteers did receive a ten dollar stipend per week, and no Casa guest was expected to perform work for their room and board. Instead, the Zwicks encouraged men to find work as soon as possible. The number of volunteers fluctuated over the years. In 1998 there were twelve full-time Catholic Workers and seventy-five part-time volunteers, while in 2004 there were nine live-in staff and approximately twenty-five volunteers. Besides the Zwicks, idealistic college students and seminarians made up the bulk of the Casa's full-time staff.[26]

In the early years, the Zwicks ran a loose ship at the Houston Catholic Worker House of Hospitality. "We're disorganized deliberately," the founder of Casa Juan Diego said eight years after the house's opening, running what he called "organized chaos." The couple were also determined to help undocumented aliens by imposing as few procedures as possible. Personalism for Mark and Louise Zwick meant "improving the lot of our fellow man rather than relying on impersonal institutes to provide this assistance." Also dedicated to the Catholic Worker philosophy of voluntary poverty, yet aware that she and her husband had to support their two children, during the first ten years of the Casa's existence the couple maintained a dwelling separate from the Casa, and Louise Zwick, with excellent Spanish skills, took a job at the Stanaker branch of the Houston Public Library, located in a Hispanic enclave, as a children's librarian.[27]

Unlike state or federally run welfare programs, Mark and Louise Zwick did not call the people who came to their door "clients." They

considered them guests, people merely passing through on their way to a better life—the reason they had left their homes in Guatemala, Nicaragua, or El Salvador in the first place. Nor did they regard the Casa as a mission, since they did not proselytize. They accepted people whether they were Catholic, Protestant, or had no faith at all. Those who came to Casa Juan Diego did not have to fill out forms to prove their poverty and need. "We keep no records, no secretaries, no administrators. We save ourselves a lot of grief," he added. The couple wanted the Casa to have a face-to-face environment, and be at least one place in Houston "where a person can get immediate assistance without having to fill out application forms, present certificates and wait days at a time" for help. "We learned early on that it was very difficult to discern who were the so-called 'deserving poor' because in our culture those who tell the best story [to welfare officials] are the 'deserving poor,'" Mark Zwick told a newspaper reporter.[28]

The Zwicks were aware that they were participating in a ministry that straddled the line of legality vis-a-vis U.S. immigration regulations. The couple, however, did not bring people to the Casa. Those who reached it found their own way there. Knowledge of the House traveled by word of mouth, from one immigrant to another, or from people within the Hispanic communities of Houston who found an immigrant on the streets. Another way refugees discovered Casa Juan Diego was through the social welfare and governmental agencies of Houston. Hospitals, schools, police, and even the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) directed immigrants to the Zwicks. Although welcoming the immigrants arriving at Casa Juan Diego, Mark and Louise were not in favor of illegal immigration. As they repeatedly stated: "We oppose undocumented immigration because it destroys families." It was not the immigrants' fault, however, the couple stressed, that war, strife, violence, and unemployment forced them to leave their homes in search of better opportunities. The couple felt that they could not just send immigrants away once they reached Houston. "We can't give them a stone when they need bread," Zwick once wrote.[29]

The Zwicks were incensed whenever the welfare state failed the poor. Christian lapses especially exasperated them. One battered woman, seeking escape, contacted a local church group. The church tried to locate a place for her to stay. When their calls to welfare agencies went unanswered, however, they sent the woman back home to her abuser. Zwick, when he learned of this rebuff, was "completely blown away." Why, he wondered, did not one member of that group,

One of the Casa's self-help programs. Mark and Louise Zwick.

an association funded with church money, practice personalism and take the woman to his or her home for the night, and then find shelter for her the following day?[30]

Louise and Mark abhorred the detached manner with which state bureaucracies treated the poor. Their goal was not to furnish a quick-fix or to pass the needy on to others. They ministered to the immigrants' physical, emotional, mental, and financial needs, and to their spiritual ones, if the immigrant so desired. The Zwicks or their volunteers would take guests to the airport, translate English into Spanish for the immigrants, and make trips to the post office for guests who had material arriving from family members they had left behind. The Houston Catholic Worker House of Hospitality bought bus tickets for those guests who wished to move on to other cities in the United States. Because many financial institutions in Houston would not cash checks for refugees, the House also acted as a bank. Casa Juan Diego received and protected battered women, whether they were documented or undocumented aliens or American citizens. They took refugees to hospitals (usually Ben Taub, the indigent aid facility) or medical clinics, picked them up, and gave them free legal advice, free English lessons, bond money, start-up cash, dental service, and medical help. They initiated a work cooperative for men and women and a shoe repair business for disabled men. Volunteers at the House frequently drove to Western Union outlets to receive monies sent for refugees, and the unpaid Catholic Workers cleaned and maintained the kitchens, bathrooms, sleeping areas, dining rooms, and yards of the houses the Zwicks managed. And, in what Mark Zwick considered one of the House's most important functions, Casa Juan Diego pursued employers who hired undocumented aliens and then refused to pay them.[31]

A typical day in the life of Casa Juan Diego included Mark, Louise, and/or one or more members of the staff waking around 6 A.M. to prepare a breakfast of oatmeal or something similar. This would feed the refugees who had slept at the Casa the previous night. The dishes would then be washed and for the next hour the phones turned off so that the staff could spend time renewing themselves spiritually. Then they would meet to plan the day's activities, as much as was possible. Someone volunteered to receive guests. Another unpaid Worker drove to local stores to collect donated food. Others would offer to help residents with their medical, family, employment, or legal problems. This could involve visiting a job site to ask an employer why he did not pay a refugee-employee, or it could mean a trip to the hospital, the bus station, a medical clinic, or the immigration office.

The other volunteers divided up the additional tasks, including preparing lunch and dinner. If it was a Wednesday, there would be mass for those who wished to attend.[32]

The Zwicks frequently received phone calls from hospitals, border guards, housewives, and families in the Houston community. In one *Houston Catholic Worker* column the couple listed a series of requests they had received: a Galveston, Texas, nurse wanted the Casa to take a long-time undocumented immigrant who had no legs and needed dialysis. A border guard asked if the Zwicks could accommodate an immigrant youth whose leg had been run over by a train, while the United Way wondered if the couple could provide counseling for an elderly man. Another family wanted to know if the Casa could furnish colostomy bags for an immigrant teenager. A private hospital in Houston asked Mark if he could supply shelter for a female refugee who had just given birth, and a Houston housewife called to see if the Casa would accept rice with weevils as a donation. Another homemaker rang up to apologize for accusing her live-in immigrant maid of stealing her jewels. She said she was sorry that her husband pressed charges against the female refugee. The jewelry had only been misplaced. A refugee mother wanted to know if the Casa could help her teenage son with his skin disease. She was unable to get help from any of the traditional social agencies because she was an undocumented alien. The Methodist Hospital called to get the Casa's address so that, in the future, all indigent patients could be referred there. To all these requests, save the weevil-infested rice, Mark and Louise Zwick said yes.[33]

Once a week Louise Zwick would meet with the battered immigrant females, while Mark spent time talking in the evening on a weekly basis with the newly arrived guests. He liked to do that because the stories they told kept him focused on what he was doing. In the evenings there might be, as we have seen, an unexpected fire, or an unforseen birth, a knife fight, a battering husband or partner who tried to get into the building, a murder, or a drunk who had to be calmed down and taken to a cheap motel for the night.[34]

Operations at Casa Juan Diego began slowly but spread by word of mouth. Every evening in 1982 approximately twenty refugees sought shelter in the House, and the center's operating budget was about $36,000 per year. Nine years later Mark and Louise Zwick managed a $300,000 budget. By 2004 that figure had increased to almost $1,000,000 per year, only a small portion of which went for volunteer stipends, none of which was slotted for salaries or administrative costs,

and all of which came from donations. In 1987 the couple bought one-half ton of rice and beans every week for the Houston Catholic Worker house. And every week they gave one-half ton of rice and beans away to those in need, regardless of race, sex, age, or whether the person arrived by bus, foot, bicycle, or automobile. By 1989 the Zwicks freely handed out, to more than six hundred Houstonians, two thousand pounds of beans and rice weekly.

In addition, the Houston House gave away tons of clothing, free of charge, once a week, as well as beds, diapers, furniture, eyeglasses, and medical care. According to figures published in the *Houston Catholic Worker*, in 1988 it took a minimum of $10,425 monthly just to pay for utilities, gas, insurance, and taxes, and to supply food, medicine, transportation, and rental assistance. By 1991 Casa Juan Diego gave away at least $5,500 per month in rice, beans, flour, milk, medicine, and cooking oil alone. These numbers were taken from aid requests published in the Zwicks' periodical. Thus, they probably underrepresent the Casa's actual monthly outlay because they only highlighted the pressing needs for that month. In that same year the *Houston Press* estimated that in its first ten years of existence Casa Juan Diego had been the temporary home of approximately 13,000 Central American refugees and had distributed more than 200,000 meals annually. Just five years later, in early 1996, Casa Juan Diego had provided aid to nearly 30,000 refugees. In the half-decade since the *Press* account, 3,400 additional immigrants per year had come and gone through the doors of Casa Juan Diego. By 1993, as the *Houston Chronicle* reported, the Casa housed 150 guests nightly, while a separate facility boarded another 50 per evening. Using those figures, from 1993 through 2004 the Zwicks provided 876,000 bed nights in just two of the houses they ran.[35]

At first, Zwick imposed very few regulations on his guests. By 1990, however, as a small number of refugees took advantage of the lax authority in the Casa, he had to establish some ground rules. Because a few male guests preferred to sleep all day and stay out all night, Zwick established the regulation that males had to look for work during the day. They were given aid for only fifteen days unless they had not found jobs in that time. Because many women arrived either pregnant or with one or more children, they were often unable to seek employment aggressively. Instead the Zwicks helped women find jobs by announcing in their publication that immigrant women were available as domestics. Since many of the arriving female immigrants had either been battered by the men in their lives before leaving home,

or were raped and/or abused on the trip to the United States, Zwick also initially insisted (when the couple had only one house) that the male guests sleep downstairs and refrain from going upstairs into the women's quarters. He also instituted a prohibition against weapons and alcohol. "We welcome them with one arm," he told a reporter, "and give them the list of rules with the other."[36] The couple had few illusions about serving the poor. They realized that immigrants, just like everyone else, have faults and vices.

In the Casa's twenty-four years of existence, Mark and Louise Zwick have frequently been called Socialists. Their detractors have claimed that the couple, who repeatedly denounced usury practices and war and extolled human rights and non-violence, were do-gooder radicals who promoted leftist ideals. One reader of the *Houston Catholic Worker* considered a particular Zwick campaign (the Jubilee Fund, see below) as nothing but "a tool of the communists." Mark Zwick has provided a tongue-in-cheek answer to the people who have labeled he and Louise bleeding heart liberals. "We don't allow ourselves to bleed," he retorted, "[i]f we did, we would bleed to death quickly." Visitors to the House, Zwick recalled in 1999, often asked, "[a]re you liberal or conservative?" "[A]s if these are the only possibilities for Catholics," Zwick replied. "We didn't start this work," he responded, "as liberals or conservatives, but on our knees." "All we can do" when such questions were asked, he told a reporter, "is giggle." The Zwicks considered themselves as something more than communists or capitalists, conservatives or liberals, fundamentalists or heretics. They wanted to be known as people who loved Christ, who embraced personalism and voluntary poverty, and who were committed to the works of mercy as demonstrated by Day and Maurin.[37]

The couple also often heard the refrain that their ministry to Central American refugees was "bandaid" work. There are those who believe that poverty can only be attacked by reforming societal structures. To them, activists who merely feed, clothe, and house the poor are doing nothing but applying a bandaid to the problem. One graduate student who visited the Casa while doing research for a paper on refugees said to Mark: "You mean you just house people...is that all you do for the refugees?" In the midst of his exhaustion after attending to the one hundred guests seeking shelter in the Casa overnight, the question took him aback. Because the Zwicks did not make it a priority to ensure that their guests obtained legal status in the United States, this young woman felt that they were not doing enough for the immigrants. In her opinion the couple should have expended more energy on changing

structures. Day and Maurin, too, had believed in social reform. But that reform, in their view, could not be imposed from above. It had to come about on the individual level, by those committed to the poor. Zwick explained to this young lady the difficulty undocumented workers have in getting papers, and then concluded that what he and his wife did, in the simplest terms, was "welcome them" and try to put into action the words at the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." He worried that the structuralists would concentrate so much on changing edifices that there would be no one left "to do 'bandaid' work...." This did not, he told the student, "make people legal, but it certainly helps the refugees to be good Americans."[38]

Besides instruction in the English language, the other way in which the Zwicks tried to help refugees was in their bi-monthly publication, the *Houston Catholic Worker*. The Zwicks' paper began shortly after the opening of Casa Juan Diego. It started out with eight pages, half in English, half in Spanish. By 1987 it had grown to ten pages, and, in 2000, to fourteen. There were no editorial offices, no reporters' salaries, no costs for upkeep. The Zwicks wrote the stories and a volunteer couple did the typesetting and mailing. In 1996 the *Houston Catholic Worker* had 35,000 subscribers. By 2000 that number increased to 63,000. An additional 3,500 readers received the paper by 2004. Subscribers included nuns, priests, monsignors, bishops, churches, other Catholic Worker communities, and Catholic and non-Catholic laypeople. Its readers could be found in every state of the union and forty-seven foreign countries.[39]

In their publication the Zwicks were aggressively critical of the political economy of the United States, just as they had previously been of the Soviet Union. The couple imparted their views on how refugees should be treated by America's society. They also instructed their readers in Catholic Worker philosophy. They wrote about social justice, charity, the role of Catholic women, abortion, and industrialization. In the *Houston Catholic Worker* the couple confessed their failings, celebrated their victories, and offered insight into their devout faith. They sold no advertising, but they did recount their trials and joys as well as those of the Casa's guests. The Zwicks opened themselves up to the scrutiny of their readers, which they sometimes paid for when a subscriber requested his or her name dropped from the paper's circulation list.[40]

Judging by the overwhelmingly favorable letters sent to Mark and Louise Zwick, very few subscribers wanted to stop getting the *Houston*

Catholic Worker. Little did the couple know when they started Casa Juan Diego in 1981 that it would become "the Worker movement's first major multinational operation." What began as a small effort with a single house grew into a far-flung concern. At one time the Zwicks had as many as ten different houses that served the immigrant community of Houston. As of 2004 they ran eight different welfare facilities and two distribution centers (see Table), and they had launched three in Mexico and one in Guatemala.[41] The couple supervised a house in Matamoros, Mexico, which sheltered migrants from Central America. They also started houses in Netzahualcoyotl and Tapachula, Mexico, and in Tecun Uman, Guatemala. The latter facility catered to women who had been deported to their native land from Mexico. Indigenous personnel have since taken over the running of the Tecun Uman and Netzahualcoyotl houses. In Houston the Zwicks had a facility for up to one hundred battered, pregnant, or Spanish-speaking women and their children, who were allowed to remain for as long as they needed. The women's shelter also served as Casa Juan Diego's headquarters and, since the Zwicks' children left home, as Mark's and Louise's home. An eighty-person men's shelter, known as the Padre Jack Davis House, was located a block away from the original Casa, just south of Washington Avenue, in an old steel-fabrication factory. Accompanying the men's house was St. Joseph the Worker hiring hall and a shoe repair school. There was also Casa Don Bosco, which provided space for sick and wounded men.[42]

In addition, the Zwicks once housed in a separate building known as Casa De Las Familias y Los Jovenes (the house of families and the young) immigrant youth who had, for one or another reason, reached Houston alone. In the past they also operated a soup kitchen out of the back of a van that served food during daylight hours to the street people in the area. Another house, Casa Del Sol, initially housed families and the elderly, but it was renamed the Dorothy Day Medical and Dental Center. In 1987 the couple launched a house in southwest Houston, Casa Maria, that served as a food and clothing distribution point for that area of the city, as well as a gathering point for women seeking employment. It also had a medical clinic. There was also Loyola House, a seven-apartment complex where women with babies were given long-term, transitional housing.[43]

Financial backing for all that the Zwicks and their volunteers accomplished came from many sources. Parishes, religious congregations, religious orders, and individuals, 75 percent of whom were from Houston, donated amounts ranging from a few dollars to

TABLE

Mark and Louis Zwick's Houses of Hospitality in Houston, Texas

House	Year of Opening	Function
Casa de las Familias y los Jovenes[a]	c. 1995 closed c.1998	House for Immigrant Youth
Casa Don Bosco[b]	1993	House for Sick & Injured Men
Casa Juan Diego[b]	1981	House for 35 immigrant women & children especially pregnant/ battered women
Casa Maria[b]	1987	Social Service & Medical Center
Casa Peter Maurin[b]	2004	House for Sick & Injured Men
Distribution Centers (2)[c]	1981	Food & Clothing for 400 Families Weekly
Dorothy Day Clinic[b]	1981	Dental/Medical Clinic
Loyola House[b]	1990	Apartment Complex for Women & Their Children
Matamoros, Mexico[b]	1995	Home for Immigrants
Padre Jack Davis House/ Hiring Hall[b]	1993	House for up to 60 newly-arrived Immigrant Men
St. Joseph the Worker Hiring Hall/ Shoe Repair School[a]	1996 Now closed	Hiring Hall/School

Sources: [a] Author's email interview with Mark and Louise Zwick, August 17, 2005; [b] Author's email interview with Mark and Louise Zwick, August 15, 2005; [c] Casa Juan Diego website, <Http://www.cjd.org/whatis.html>, (August 17, 2005).

as much as $5,000. On two occasions over the twenty-four-year life of Casa Juan Diego, the Zwicks sponsored what they called a Jubilee Fund. They asked their readers to refrain from buying new clothing for an entire year and to donate the savings to the poor. Other than that, the only appeal for contributions that the Zwicks made was in their annual Christmas letter published in the *Houston Catholic Worker*.[44]

From its beginnings Casa Juan Diego operated "in flagrant defiance of U.S. foreign policy" by housing refugees that the INS routinely deported. Louise and Mark did not favor illegal immigration. They were determined to adhere to the teaching of the Catholic Church on the subject, however. Deportation of refugees, the church had declared during the Second Vatican Council, was a serious sin. Thus, once the immigrants reached Houston, the Zwicks believed they had no choice but to help them "pick up the pieces." "Not to accept the homeless at your doorstep," Mark later wrote, "is tantamount to rejecting one's belief system."[45]

That sentiment was not shared by everyone in Houston. Initially, between the opening of the first house and the fire that destroyed the second, Zwick was very reticent about commenting publicly on his work, and with good reason. In his occasional talks to church and civic groups, he could sense the growing tension and uneasiness within the audience as they finally grasped that he was discussing his work with and requesting funding for undocumented people. Neighbors were angry at the trash "those people" left scattered about. Plus, some of them worried that the Houston Catholic Worker House of Hospitality was "a plot of the Pope to bring more Catholics into the United States." What is more, every year INS received dozens of complaints from nearby residents of Casa Juan Diego about the numbers of men milling about Rose and Washington streets.[46]

By 1986, Zwick became less bashful about discussing his work, in part because of the public outcry over the forced closing of Casa Oscar Romero in extreme south Texas and the jailing of persons associated with the Sanctuary Movement. This movement had begun in the United States in 1980. An ecumenical effort to support refugees, it grew out of the conflict in El Salvador. Oscar Romero had been the archbishop of that country. The public disapproval over official actions with regard to the Casa that bore his name and the jailed Sanctuary supporters, emboldened Zwick. He began to talk openly about his immigrant-aiding operation, and reminded his neighbors that immigrants were just as human as anyone else, just as hopeful for a better life, and just as in

need of jobs. And he stressed that the employers who drove around the area in search of immigrants to hire attracted just as many native street people as undocumented workers. Then he assigned crews to pick up trash daily and asked his guests not to frequent the shops or loiter around the areas of complaining neighbors.[47]

Despite the stress of dodging complaining neighbors, coping with the myriad crises and needs of refugees, and trying to ensure that his guests avoided immigration officials, the Zwicks continued their work. In their opinion, laws would not stop immigrants from coming to the United States, thus, they would not stop the Zwicks either. "We are not lawyers," Zwick said, "so we do not know their legal status. We are not trained in legal matters."[48]

But, in 1993, those who were trained in immigration law finally took action against the refugees of Casa Juan Diego. After fifty "complaints a year for the past three years" from the Casa's neighbors, the INS set up a sting operation. On November 2 of that year immigration officials, posing as employers anxious to hire the men of Casa Juan Diego, appeared a 6:00 A.M. in an unmarked van. Some of the agents, according to Zwick, "chased his residents through his property and up to the center's front door." Meanwhile, other officials offered the immigrants five dollars per hour, loaded them in a van, and drove them to a staging area in Cleveland Park near Memorial Drive, where they were detained.[49]

The sweep conducted that day by INS netted them 111 undocumented aliens, some of whom were from Casa Juan Diego. A little more than a week after the sweep occurred protestors converged on the federal courthouse in downtown Houston to voice their objection to INS tactics. Zwick used the event to once again invite his business neighbors to help him in building an employment center for the immigrants and thus cut down on the numbers of men milling about the street. His neighbors never helped him in that effort, but eventually, through a healthy bequest, the Zwicks bought the old steel-fabrication factory and turned it into the Padre Jack Davis House.[50]

Sister Michele Aronica has addressed the question of how one Catholic Worker House of Hospitality has withstood the deaths of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. She argued that the New York house has evolved significantly since the loss of the movement's charismatic leaders. The people who run it have had to replace the personal responsibility inherent in the movement's philosophy with bureaucratic decision-making. The anarchy that was supposed to prevail within each house of hospitality has been supplanted with internal organization.

Aronica found that soup distribution had dwindled, newspaper subscriptions had decreased, and the Catholic workers' pacifism had cooled. This examination of the Houston house of hospitality contrasts sharply with those findings. Mark and Louise Zwick have remained incredibly faithful to the vision of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. From their unfailing devotion to voluntary poverty to their steady adherence to personalism, they acted out the philosophy expressed by the founders.[51]

Like Dorothy Day, Mark Zwick was not able to strictly maintain the anarchistic ideology of the movement. Day, instead of building her organization on the personal responsibility and anarchy touted by her beliefs, found that she had to develop a decision-making apparatus.[52] The Zwicks, to a lesser extent, have had to do the same. To avoid burnout, they developed the morning hour of free time, which they used for contemplation, prayer, and renewal. Plus, because humans will be human, they had to impose some rules on their guests. Still, there was little hierarchy within the organization. Volunteers with seniority did the same jobs as new Catholic Workers. The Zwicks steadfastly refused to become involved with government bureaucracies. They operated without government funds. They also had no internal elections, constitutions, bylaws, or officers. They continued to share the Rose Street Casa with their guests. In most other respects, the Zwicks preserved continuity between their work and the philosophy of the movement's architects.

In every aspect of their work at the Casa, the Zwicks lived the words of the Gospel; they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, housed the homeless, and took care of the sick. They were personally involved in the lives of their guests and showed a heightened sense of responsibility for the poor among them and engagement in the struggle for justice on their behalf. And, although questions of war were not the primary features of their articles in the *Houston Catholic Worker*, the Zwicks also held to absolute pacifism. They continued to advocate what was to them a middle road. Through personalism, pacifism, and voluntary poverty, they adhered to the social alternative of Day and Maurin. They saw themselves as a bridge between the radical individualism of unchecked capitalism and the socialist radicalism of atheistic communism. They, too, like Day and Maurin before them, were labeled as radicals and do-gooders.

Like Day and Maurin, Mark and Louise Zwick embraced sociopolitical policies that both coincided with and differed from those of today's so-called religious conservatives. They were strictly against

abortion, just as the vast majority of evangelical Christians are. But the Zwicks also opposed the death penalty, current U.S. immigration policy, and war, regardless of how justified it seemed. The Zwicks, like the founders of the Catholic Worker movement, did not view these as topics to be decided in the public arena. The sanctity of human life—whether it be that of an unborn child, a struggling refugee, or a convicted murderer—was inviolate to them. For the founders of Casa Juan Diego, preserving life was their "consistent...ethic, [a] matter of morality," not a matter that belonged in the sphere of politics. Thus, they regularly spoke out against inhumanity in the pages of their newspaper and believed that one must act, individually, to solve social questions.[53]

Perhaps the primary difference between the Zwicks' operation and that of Day and Maurin was that the Houston couple began their house of hospitality first and then followed it with the publication of their newspaper. Day and Maurin did the reverse. That aside, the Zwicks launched the Casa just as Day and Maurin started theirs: with women on the upper floor and men on the bottom. They also patterned it after the original New York house by living communally with their guests, distributing food and clothing to anyone in need, and helping those in their charge to build better lives. The Zwicks remained true to the responsibilities of parenthood but gave up lucrative careers and a middle-class existence to purposely take on the involuntary poverty of those they served.

The couple lived out their beliefs on a daily basis. Unlike what Aronica found with the New York House of Hospitality, food distribution at Casa Juan Diego has not lessened. Indeed, it has grown enormously. The number of subscribers to the *Houston Catholic Worker* have increased. The population of immigrants the Zwicks helped has grown. Mark Zwick attributed the development of Casa Juan Diego to two factors: the increased attention being paid to undocumented immigration since the 1980s and the consequent awareness of the plight of immigrants, and the support he and Louise received from the readers of the *Houston Catholic Worker*. To those reasons one must add the increase in Houston's immigrant population.[54] Undoubtedly the couple's success has also stemmed from the fact that people were disillusioned with bureaucratic efforts to aid the poor. The Zwicks' backers knew that the majority of the money they contributed to Casa Juan Diego was immediately turned over to the people for whom it was intended. They did not have to wonder what percentage of their contributions were expended on administrators or professionals.[55]

Aronica's examination of the New York House of Hospitality showed that resident Catholic Workers failed to impart the ideals of the movement to new volunteers. Again, this contrasts with Mark and Louise Zwick's practices. They held sessions in which staff and volunteers read and discussed the works of Day and Maurin. And they repeatedly reprinted Day's and Maurin's writings.[56] By doing so, they safeguarded the messages and charisma of its founders and helped sustain the movement's philosophy. Day's and Maurin's images were continually before the Zwicks, their guests, and their readers. In fact, one of the questions asked of the couple was why Casa Juan Diego's Workers could always be found reading papal encyclicals or one of the architects' writings. "It's...a tradition," the Zwicks replied. They believed that their success as Catholic Workers depended on following in the footsteps of the founders. They have worked very hard to replicate the Day and Maurin legacy. Mark and Louise Zwick felt that if one did not work at it, lead a contemplative life filled with prayer, and read the works of the saints and of contemporaries like Dorothy Day, one would not be able to "see Christ in the poor. The poor [would] become the enemy, interfering with your life. Or, just as bad, the poor [would] become a social 'cause' rather than real people with real needs." Rejecting both cynicism and secularism, the Zwicks have remained unfailingly true to their definition of what being a Christian means.[57]

Notes

[1]"Catholic Worker house burns; arson suspected," *Houston Chronicle*, July 8, 1982 (quote); Rosalie Riegle Troester, comp. and ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia, 1993), 484–85. For more on the 1982 fire, see "Blaze at mission for the poor is ruled arson," undated *Houston Chronicle* newsclipping, in Other Catholic Workers and Catholic Worker Communities, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Special Collections and University Library, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin [hereafter cited as Marquette]; Also see "Casa Juan Diego Burns," *Houston Catholic Worker* (hereafter cited as *HCW*), August 1982. For more on the 1985 fire, see "Blaze guts charity shelter," *Houston Post*, June 21, 1985; "Catholic Worker house is multinational," *National Catholic Reporter*, January 12, 199?; "Casa Juan Diego Burns," *HCW*, July–August 1985. The second building's total cost was $110,000. See "Mission Casa Juan Diego now reopened," undated *Houston Chronicle* newsclipping found in Other Catholic Workers and Catholic Worker Communities, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette. The third building was dedicated in early 1987. Its final cost was $403,000. See "Room at the inn," *Revista Maryknoll*, December 1988. The guests went to places like Star of Hope Mission, Loaves and Fishes, and the Salvation Army.

[2]"Room at the inn."

[3]Michele Teresa Aronica, R.S.M., *Beyond Charismatic Leadership: The New York Catholic Worker Movement* (New Brunswick, 1987).

[4]Ibid., 30, 31, 36; "Lasallian Tradition," <Http://www.cbu.edu/About/lasallian.html>, (December 5, 2004). Day has already achieved the first step on the road to canonization. In 2000 Pope John Paul II named her a "Servant of God." See Cardinal John O'Connor, "Dorothy Day's Sainthood Cause Begins," < http://www.cjd.org/paper/occonnor.html>, (August 19, 2005). For more on the lives of Day and Maurin, see Patrick G. Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia, 1988), 15–133; Anne Klejment, *American Catholic Pacifism: The Influence of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement* (Westport, Conn., 1996); Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (New York, 1989); Rosalie G. Riegle; *Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 2003); James H. Forest, *Love is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986); Dorothy Day and Francis J. Sicius, *Peter Maurin: Apostle to the World* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 2004); and Marc H. Ellis, *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1981).

[5]Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 54, 57; Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia, 1982), 54. In 1993 the U.S. Senate recognized Day and her years of tireless work for the poor. See <Http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?r103:S27AP3-49:>, (August 13, 2005).

[6]"A Case of Unemployment," <Http://ingrimayne.saintjoe.edu/econ/EconomicCatastrophe/GreatDepression.html>, (August 13, 2005); James Hennesey, S. J., *American Catholics* (New York, 1981), 254, 262 (quote). Also see Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870–1965* (Stuttgart, 1982), 237–38. Dorothy Day, accompanied by friends, began to distribute the *Catholic Worker* during a May Day demonstration at Union Station in 1933. The small number of papers initially handed out allowed Day and Maurin to publish a second issue. By December 1933 circulation had reached 40,000. William D. Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love* (New York, 1973), 65–66. Four years later circulation was 110,000. Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 181. Articles in support of social reform can be found in two Catholic publications, *Commonweal* and *America*. See, for example, Jacques Maritain, "A Note on the Bourgeois World," *Commonweal* 18 (May 26, 1933): 94–96; Jacques Maritain, "A Note on the Bourgeois World," *Commonweal* 18 (June 2, 1933): 119–20; Richard Dana Skinner, "Social Justice—A Program," *Commonweal* 18 (July 28, 1933): 320–22; Floyd Anderson, "Sweat-Shops and Social Justice," *Commonweal* 18 (August 18, 1933): 382–83; John LaFarge, S.J., "Harlem Flats and Public Conscience," *America* 53 (April 20, 1935): 35–36; John LaFarge, S.J., "Shall We Raise Cain?" *America* 53 (June 15, 1935): 228–29. For one example of scholars' preferences for Day's and Maurin's pacificism, see Klejment, *American Catholic Pacifism*.

[7]Other works on Day and Maurin do not totally ignore the personalist and impoverishment philosophies of the Catholic Worker movement, but they do not stress them either.

[8]Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart*, 73 (quote); Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 97, 103. For more on Emmanuel Mounier's impact of Catholic radicalism, see John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930–1950* (Toronto, 1981), and "Emmanuel Mounier and Personalism," *HCW*, March 1995. Other influences on Day and Zwick included Father Virgil Michel, O.S.B. and Nicholas

Berdyaev. Michel worked with the American Liturgical Movement. His core idea was that all believers belong to the Mystical Body of Christ. See "Saints and Philosophers inspired Peter and Dorothy," *HCW*, April 1995. Berdyaev was a Catholic Worker prophet. He was an exiled Russian philosopher who often wrote about the pursuit of materialism and the empty bourgeois spirit. See "Materialism destroys the Eternal Spirit," *HCW*, May–June 1995. For more on the philosophical underpinning of the Catholic Worker Movement, see Mark and Louise Zwick, *Catholic Worker Movement: The Intellectual and Spiritual Origins*, (New York, 2005). Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and Mark and Louise Zwick particularly tried to put into action Matthew 25: 35–36 (New American Standard): "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me."

[9]Dorothy Day, *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties* (New York, 1972), 248.

[10]"At home in the Casa," *Houston Chronicle*, May 2, 1989, p. 4D (first quote); "Shelter from the Storm," *Houston Press*, January 3, 1991; Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties*, 27 (second and third quotes), 28, 29, 39; Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 1; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 98, 138. For more on the contentious debate within the early Catholic Worker movement, see, Ibid., 121–59.

[11]Papal Encyclicals Online, Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, <Http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13rerum.html>, (November 20, 2004); "Quadragesimo Anno," <Http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11QUADR.html>, (April 30, 2004); "On Atheistic Communism," <Http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11DIVIN.html>, (May 1, 2004); Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 55, 122. Www.papalencyclicals.net defines an encyclical as "the name typically given to a letter written by a Pope to a particular audience of Bishops. That group may be bishops in a specific country or to all bishops in all countries." They are official teachings of the church. See also Claudia Carlen, I.H.M., ed., *The Papal Encyclicals*, 5 vols. (Raleigh, 1981) for a complete reprint of encyclicals from the sixteenth century through 1981. *Quadragesimo Anno* was written to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Leo's *Rerum Novarum*, hence *Quadragesimo Anno's* title, "after forty years."

[12]Dorothy Day, *On Pilgrimage* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 24, 25, 40–41, 52, 63 (second, third, and fourth quotes) 88, 94–95 (first quote); Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart*, 53. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties*, 28; Day, *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties*, 207; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 72; "Houston Catholic Worker Interviews Peter Maurin," *HCW*, July–August 1996. For more on the importance of papal encyclicals to movements within the Catholic Church, see William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah, eds., *Religion in America* (Boston, 1968), 315. At least one of the founders of the Catholic Worker movement believed that papal encyclicals did not go far enough in denouncing the wage system of labor. Peter Maurin accused Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* of being "too great a compromise with secular capitalist economics. . . ." Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart*, 199.

[13]Ibid., 59, 60–61; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 109. Day and Maurin gave their periodical the name "Catholic Worker," in part, as an alternative to the communist journal the *Daily Worker*. It premiered on May Day 1933. The paper, then as now, cost one penny per copy. See Thomas C. Cornell, Robert Ellsberg, and Jim Forest, eds., *A Penny a Copy: Readings from the* Catholic Worker (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1995) for reprints of some of Day's and Maurin's articles in that paper. The first

houses of hospitality were The Teresa-Joseph House, begun by Day December 11, 1934 after the sixth issue of the paper. It was a six-room apartment that served as a hospice for women. Maurin soon opened a house in Harlem for the hard-hit black population, and both he and Day ran a store that served meals to the poor. The houses closed because the owners evicted Day and Maurin. See Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 60.

[14]Author's telephone interview with Mark Zwick, December 2, 2004, Houston, Texas; Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties*, 23 (first quote); Day, *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties*, 207; "Catholic Worker Advocates New Social Order," *HCW*, July–August 1997 (second quote). Father Vincent McNabb was also a proponent of Distributism. For more on the ideology, see Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 71–72, and the following *HCW* articles: "The Roots of the Movement: Distributism and the Movement Catholic Worker," May–June 1998, and "Distributism at Heart of Catholic Worker," September–October 1999.

[15]Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004.

[16]Ibid.

[17]"Shelter from the Storm," 13 (quote), 14. Clarification-of-thought usually involved round table discussions. For more on the Zwicks' early years and their political and social philosophies, see the following *HCW* articles: "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," October 1983, March 1993, "Can Faith save this Violent World?" February 1995, and "How Can Husband and Wife Work Together?" March–April 1998.

[18]"A marriage remade in heaven's barrio," *Our Sunday Visitor*, January 9, 1994.

[19]"Shelter from the Storm," 14 (first quote); "Ex-priest devotes life to helping Central American refugees," *Houston Chronicle*, July 8, 1990, 5G (second quote); "Casa Juan Diego cares for the city's poorest of the poor," *Mosaic*, October 1998.

[20]Undated newspaper clipping ["crossed the border into Texas,...." (Hereafter cited as "crossed the border"), no pagination in Other Catholic Workers and Catholic Worker Communities, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette (quote); "Shelter from the Storm," 14. Also see "Catholic Worker house is multinational."

[21]"Neither Communism nor Capitalism the Solution," *HCW*, December 12, 1983 (quotes); "Materialism destroys the Eternal Spirit," *HCW*, May–June 1995.

[22]Papal Encyclicals Online, Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, <Http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html>, (November 20, 2004); "'Economy impacts everyone,'" *National Catholic Reporter*, January 12, 199?, 6; "Pope's Call to the West: A Civilization of Love," *HCW*, November 1995.

[23]"A marriage remade in heaven's barrio" (quotes); "'Economy impacts everyone'"; "Casa Juan Diego cares for the city's poorest of the poor"; "Our Readers Respond," *HCW*, June 1994. One way in which the Zwicks argued that capitalism exploited the poor was that it used them to provide salaries for professional social workers and other bureaucrats who ran welfare organizations. Even some professional social workers active in the bureaucracy of welfare capitalism applauded the Zwicks for their stance. The founders of Casa Juan Diego did not, one official of a major social services provider said, dissipate their "time and

energy" but rather maximized their ability to furnish services. See "Casa Juan Diego cares for the city's poorest of the poor." The Houston Food Bank did not share the opinion of that professional. In mid-1988 it began to refuse to supply Casa Juan Diego with goods from its shelves precisely because the Zwicks did not require their guests to fill out forms or document their need. See Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 493, and the following *HCW* articles: "Food Bank Refuses Services to Casa Juan Diego," June–July 1988, and "Casa Juan Diego and Food Bank Eligibility," October 1988.

[24] "Neither Communism nor Capitalism the Solution."

[25]"Ex-priest devotes life to helping Central American refugees," 5G (second quote); "Shelter from the Storm," (first quote); "Catholic Worker house opens on Washington Avenue," Texas *Catholic Herald*, March 6, 1981. By 1945 only ten houses of hospitality were left in the United States, primarily as a result of Day's outspoken antipathy to U.S. involvement in World War II, which left her at odds with many Catholics. There were eight houses in 1950 and one dozen in 1960. By 1965 that number had grown to nearly twenty. Five years later there were more than fifty. See Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 197, 209, 215, 231, 243. Troester, ed., in *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia, 1993), lists the total number of Catholic Worker associations worldwide as of December 1992 on pp. 569–76. Of the 134, Australia, England, Germany, and the Netherlands had one each. Canada had four. The other 126 were in the United States. However, ten of those were communal farms, seven were kitchens and diners, one was an employment advocate, one was a storefront, and one was the Catholic Worker archive at Marquette University. According to Mark Zwick, Casa Juan Diego is by far the largest Catholic Worker organization in the United States and still the only one whose primary mission is to serve undocumented aliens. Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004. Currently, there are a total of 182 Catholic Worker associations in the world. Some of those groups run houses of hospitality. Others help the poor through food distribution or community advocacy. Of those 182 associations, 161 are located in the United States. There are fifty-seven in the Midwest, thirty-six in the Northeast, thirty-five in the West, and twenty-nine in the South. Australia and England still have one each. One each also exists in Ireland, Mexico, Scotland, and Sweden. Canada has six, while Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands have two each. New Zealand has three. The house in Oakland, California, is dedicated to serving refugees and immigrants, but it is not nearly as large or as financially self-sufficient as Casa Juan Diego. Nor does it explicitly cater to undocumented aliens. <Http://www.catholic worker.org/communities/commlistall.cfm>, (August 26, 2005). For more on the Zwicks' thinking prior to opening Casa Juan Diego, see "On Pilgrimage: How Casa Juan Diego Began," *HCW*, December 1990. One newspaper article cites February 1, 1980 as the date Casa Juan Diego's first storefront center opened. See "Catholic center trying to rebuild after blaze," *Houston Post*, July 12, 1982. That date, however, cannot be correct. The Zwicks did not start Casa Juan Diego until after Dorothy Day's death, and she did not die until November 29, 1980. In fact, her death spurred them to commit to the project. Pope John Paul II beatified Juan Diego in April 1990.

[26]Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004.

[27]"At home in the Casa," 4D (first quote); "Shelter from the Storm" (second quote); "Central America turmoil brings refugees to area," Texas *Catholic Herald*, March 11, 1983 (third quote); "Safe haven: Central America's battered refugees find food, shelter, medical care and the Gospel at Casa Juan Diego," *Our Sunday Visitor*, April 7, 1991; "Casa Juan Diego cares for the city's poorest of the poor."

Louise Zwick retired from the Houston Public Library in 1992. Since then she, too, has devoted the majority of her time to the Casa. After their children grew up and left home the Zwicks moved into the women's quarters at 4818 Rose Street. Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004.

[28]"Crossed the border"; "At home in the Casa," 4D (first and third quotes); "Central America turmoil brings refugees to area," (second quote). The Zwicks kept no client records on those they served. They did, however, maintain ledgers that detailed the amounts spent for the things they supplied the immigrants who stayed in their houses. They also had volunteer accountants who helped them complete the necessary tax forms. Author's email interview with Mark and Louise Zwick, August 17, 2005; Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 490.

[29]"Is Immigration Catholic?" *HCW*, December 1996 (first quote); "Ex-priest devotes life to helping Central American refugees," 5G (second quote); "Shelter from the Storm"; "Welcoming the Lord in Many Disguises," *HCW*, May 1993. In a four day period over the Christmas holidays of 1998, INS sent 249 Central American refugees *to* Casa Juan Diego. See "Hundreds of Immigrants Arrive from INS," *HCW*, January–February 1999.

[30]"Clericalism hurts Lay People," *HCW*, January 1994 (quote); "Among the poor and alien," *Houston Chronicle*, October 10, 1981.

[31]Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 493–94. For more on the work done by the Houston Catholic Worker House of Hospitality, see "crossed the border" or the numerous "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston" in the *HCW*, which usually appears on page 2 of each issue.

[32]"Safe haven"; Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 488.

[33]"Called to Serve," *HCW*, November 1999.

[34]*HCW* is replete with tales about the mishaps and joys of life at Casa Juan Diego, particularly in the regular feature "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston." See also Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 486.

[35]"Survival: Salvadorans say that's why they're here," *Houston Post*, March 7, 1982, p. 24A; "Catholic Worker house aids Central American refugees," *Catholic Exponent*, April 3, 1987; "Room at the inn"; "And it came to pass at the Casa," *Houston Chronicle*, December 12, 1993; "Shelter from the Storm"; Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004. For the $10,425 figure, see "Costs for One Month at Casa Juan Diego," *HCW*, March 1988. For the $5,500 figure, see "Some Monthly Needs," *HCW*, May 1991. For the 30,000 refugees, see the caption below the photograph on p. 7 of the January–February 1996 *HCW*. In Mark Zwick's Christmas letter of 1996 (*HCW*, December) he wrote that the Casa had been host to 50,000 guests. This figure is not as outlandish as it seems in view of the January figure of 30,000. If only eight people spent the night in the seven houses run by the Zwicks in Houston, then over a ten month period they could have housed almost seventeen thousand guests. Since the number of guests per night far exceeded eight, even in the Casa's early days, it is probable that the Zwicks hosted fifty thousand guests in their first fifteen years. In the same Christmas letter Zwick claimed to have given away three hundred thousand meals per year. As Zwick related, these figures are not representative of other Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality because of the sheer size of Casa Juan Diego's operations. Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004.

[36]"A marriage remade in heaven's barrio" (quote); "Casa Juan Diego Changes Approach," *HCW*, March 1990; "Facing the Challenge of Hospitality," Ibid., April 1988; Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 486, 492.

[37]"Letters," *HCW*, March 1993 (first quote); "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," Ibid, October 1990 (second and third quotes); "It's all in the washing of the feet," *Our Sunday Visitor*, February 21, 1999 (fourth, fifth, eighth, and ninth quotes); "How Do You Survive?" *HCW*, March–April 1999 (sixth and seventh quotes). For examples of those who feel that the Zwicks are performing works that should not be associated with the Catholic Church or that they are communist-tainted, see the following *HCW* articles, among others: "Letters to the Editor," October 1990, February 1991, "Why Are We Called 'Catholic Worker'?" May 1986, "Letters from our Readers," June–July 1999, July–August 1995, "Friends and Critics Reply," June–July 1999, and "Our Readers Respond," December 2000. Other examples of those who question the Zwicks' politics include these *HCW* articles: "What are the criticisms or questions about Casa Juan Diego?" September 1993, "Some Questions about Helping Others, etc.," August 1994, "What is the Great Work," December 1994, "Letters from our Readers," January–February 1999, September–October 1999.

[38] "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," *HCW*, September 1990 (first, second, third, and fifth quotes); "What is all this about Band-aids?" *HCW*, May–June 1995 (fourth quote); Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 491.

[39]In 1992 the *Houston Catholic Worker* had nearly 20,000 readers. Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 490. The 65,500 figure comes from the Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004, while the 63,000 number can be found in "Letters From Our Readers," *HCW*, January–February 2000. "Asking no questions, Casa serves the poor," *Houston Chronicle*, February 21, 1996, has the 35,000 figure. The actual readership of the *Houston Catholic Worker* was greater than the figures stated here because many of those who received it passed it on to others in their community.

[40]"Catholic center trying to rebuild after blaze." For an example of a disgruntled *HCW* reader, see "Letters to the Editor," October 1990.

[41]The Casa's website, <Http://www.cjd.org/whatis.html>, (August 14, 2005), says fifteen houses, but in my August 15, and August 17, 2005 email interviews with Mark Zwick, he listed eight houses. Since the Zwicks tried to remain as flexible as possible, the numbers of houses open at any given time fluctuated, as they were opened or closed in relation to the need within the immigrant community.

[42]"Catholic Worker house is multinational" (quote); "What is Casa Juan Diego?" *HCW*, December 2000; Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004. Casa Juan Diego now houses 35 women per night, while the Padre Jack Davis House now accommodates up to 60 newly-arrived immigrant men. St. Joseph the Worker Hiring Hall is no longer in operation. Author's email interview with Mark Zwick, August 15, 2005. On the houses in Mexico, see the following *HCW* articles: "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," Special Edition, vol. 11, no. 7, and "New Catholic Worker Houses in Guatemala and Mexico," December 1995. On Guatemala, see ibid. On the extension of Casa Juan Diego, see, among other articles, "Major Changes at Casa Juan Diego," *HCW*, September 1992. Matamoros is located just below the U.S. border on the other side of Brownsville, Texas. Netzahualcoyotl is a poor suburb of Mexico City, and Tapachula is just above the

Guatemalan border. Not only have the Zwicks founded and launched other houses in Houston, Mexico, and Guatemala, but other volunteers who devoted time to Casa Juan Diego or who have been inspired by the Zwicks' work have gone on to establish other houses of hospitality. Al Mascia went on to found, with support from the Zwicks, a house in Chicago for AIDS sufferers. See "Safe haven," and Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 469. And the Woodbine Community in Louisville, Kentucky, began plans to launch a house there, which they later did. "Letters from New CW's and Others," *HCW*, January–February 1999; <Http://www.catholicworker.org/communities/commlistall.cfm#IA>, (August 26, 2005).

[43]"And it came to pass at the Casa"; "Room at the Inn"; "Serving the poorest of Houston's poor," *Mosaic*, December 1995; "Asking no questions, Casa serves the poor"; "Casa Juan Diego Celebrates Ten Years," *HCW*, November 1990; "Be careful what you wish," *HCW*, September 1993. Casa de las Familias y los Jovenes and the soup distribution are no longer operating. Mark Zwick interview, August 15, 2005. Within months of establishing Casa Maria, the Zwick's landlord expelled them from the property, claiming that it was "disturbing" to see so many poor people hanging about the place. See "Landlord Ousts Catholic Workers," *HCW*, October 1987. By 1989 the Zwicks had acquired another property and had given it the same name. "Casa Maria Clinic—The Pilgrimage Continues," *HCW*, June 1994; "New Casa serves Immigrant Teens," *HCW*, November 1996. Women met at Casa Maria only from 1987 until 1990. Author's email interview with Mark Zwick, August 17, 2005.

[44]Unlike Casa Oscar Romero, Casa Juan Diego received no direct funding from the diocese of Galveston-Houston, nor was the house officially associated with the Catholic Church. Various priests and bishops had conducted mass at the Casa, but both the Zwicks and the local diocese preferred that there be no connection between the two. That way, when the Zwicks did something laudable, the church could point to them with pride. And, if the Zwicks did something that drew the ire of the community, the church could say that the Casa was in no way related to the church. Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 486. Conversely, Casa Oscar Romero had been located in the Brownsville diocese, which did provide financial support. See *United States v. Elder*, 601 F. Supp. 1574 (S.D. Tex. 1985). Not all congregations, even Roman Catholic ones, supported what the Zwicks were doing. As *Mosaic's* article in October 1998 reports, "many church groups...refuse[d] to help" the Casa "because of an anti-immigrant bias." See "Casa Juan Diego cares for the poorest of the poor." Instances of individual support for the Zwicks can be found, for example, in these *HCW* articles: "Letters to the Editor," February 1991, and "Letters from Our Readers," December 2000. For the Jubilee Fund, see ibid., Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 490, as well as the following *HCW* articles: "Houston Catholics Need to Revolt," Special Issue 1989, vol. 9, no. 3, "Year of Jubilee Declared for Homeless," September 1989, "Jubilee! No Clothes for a Year!" September–October 2000, and "Jubilee 'No Clothes' Grows," November 2000. There is some evidence that supporters of Casa Juan Diego had, at times, tried to help the Zwicks with fundraising. Preferring to spend the bulk of their time in actual hands-on work, this was something they did not encourage, but would go along with. "The Stannard Plan," *HCW*, March 1994. Among the many examples of Zwick's Christmas fundraising messages, see "A Christmas Letter," *HCW*, December 1994.

[45]"Shelter from the Storm" (first quote); "Is Immigration Catholic?" (second, third, fourth, and fifth quotes); "Second Vatican Council and Two Encyclicals Condemn Deportation," <Http://www.cjd.org/paper/deport.html>, (August 17, 2005).

[46]"Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," *HCW*, May 1989 (quote); "Personalism vs. Individualism," *HCW*, March–April 1998; Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 491. See also "Casa Juan Diego cares for the city's poorest of the poor." In the same article, the district director of the Houston INS told the *Post* that shelters such as the one run by the Zwicks were not acting in an illegal manner. Only those who harbored immigrants, the director told the paper, broke the law, and he defined harboring as "a deliberate effort to hide illegal immigrants from the INS." The Zwicks were obviously not purposely "hiding" immigrants from the immigration service. Nevertheless, Zwick's statements in his publication, as well as his opponents in the Houston community where the Casa was situated, indicate that he and others questioned whether or not his activities were outside the law. See, for example, Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 485, and the following articles in *HCW*: "Community Attacks Casa Juan Diego," March, 1991; "Dorothy Day's Pilgrimage Continues in Houston," June 1991.

[47]"City shelter for aliens rising from the ashes," *Houston Post*, November 16, 1986. Prior to the war in El Salvador Romero had been "pastor to the elite," but as El Salvador's government assassinated church leaders and forced the youth of the country to serve in the military, he became a "staunch defender of the poor." See "Shelter from the Storm." Romero was later assassinated himself. For more on Romero, see James R. Brockman, *Romero: A Life* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1989). For more on the forced closing of Casa Oscar Romero, see *United States v. Elder*, 601 F. Supp. 1574 (S.D. Tex. 1985). The Sanctuary Movement began when two Tucson, Arizona, congregations became outraged at the abandonment of a group of El Salvadorians by their professional smuggler and the subsequent arrest of those immigrants. The congregations raised bail and provided sanctuary for several of them. Other churches in the Berkeley, California, area cooperated with the Tucson congregations, and on March 24, 1982, these churches, along with one near or in Washington, D.C., took advantage of the second anniversary of Romero's murder and announced that they would furnish sanctuary for Central American refugees. After 1982 the movement grew to more than four hundred churches throughout the United States. The sanctuaries included Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Jewish, Quaker, and Mennonite churches. The Zwicks' house of hospitality predated this crusade but they nevertheless aligned the Casa with the movement. For more on the movement, see Susan Bibler Coutin, *The Culture of Protest: Religious Activism and the U.S. Sanctuary Movement* (Boulder, 1993) and Martha Liebler Gibson, "Public Goods, Alienation and Public Protest: The Sanctuary Movement as a Test of the Public Goods Model of Collective Rebellious Behavior," <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/full_text_ search/AllCRCDocs/90-5.htm >, (November 20, 2004). Also see "Refugees play a nervous waiting game," and "City shelter for aliens rising from the ashes."

[48]"Sanctuary advocates undaunted by high court ruling," *Houston Post*, March 31, 1987.

[49]"Coalition criticizes INS for detaining laborers," *Houston Chronicle*, November 5, 1993, 30A (quotes); "Immigrants fearful after 'day of the deported,'" *Our Sunday Visitor*, December 5, 1993; "Immigration Violates Sanctuary at Casa Juan Diego," *HCW*, November 1993. The first newspaper article listed above states that INS detained the immigrants in a basketball court, while the second writes that it was a tennis court.

[50]"Coalition criticizes INS for detaining laborers," 30A. Jack Davis was the name of the priest who left Casa Juan Diego the large bequest. The *Chronicle* article

also stated that 117 immigrants, not 111 immigrants were caught up in the INS sweep. At least two *HCW* readers applauded the actions of the INS, see "Letters to the Editors," December 1993, and "Letters From Our Readers," January–February 1997. There was a similar occurrence in late 1995 or early 1996 when plain clothes Houston police officers, posing again as prospective employers, detained a number of immigrants behind a house near Ben Milam school. The immigrants were subsequently arrested. See "Laborers arrested by Police," *HCW*, January–February 1996.

[51]Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 170. During a telephone interview of December 2, 2004, Zwick vehemently protested Aronica's conclusions. Because the work is so hard and so draining, he refused to question the motives or work of anyone who ran a house of hospitality.

[52]Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 149.

[53]Mark Zwick interview, December 2, 2004.

[54]For instance, between 1990 and 1995 the population of the city of Houston increased by 6.3 percent, or by nearly 470,000. Of that number, 147,000, or 31.3 percent, were immigrants. "Houston Growth Rapid, Diverse," *Tierra Grande* 4 (summer 1997).

[55]Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, 486.

[56]Maurin was fond of writing what he called "easy essays." In simple lines, his essays present his views on the new social order he and Day championed. Here is an example of one of Maurin's easy essays from Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 59–50, but also see Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 103; and Peter Maurin, *Easy Essays* (Steubenville, Ohio, 1977):

We need Houses of Hospitality
to give the rich
the opportunity to serve the poor.
We need Houses of Hospitality
to bring the Bishops to the people
and the people to the Bishops.
We need Houses of Hospitality
to bring back to the institution
the technique of institutions.
We need Houses of Hospitality
to show what idealism looks like
when it is practiced.
We need Houses of Hospitality
to bring social justice
through Catholic action
exercised in Catholic Institutions.

[57]Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership*, 149; "How Do You Survive," *HCW*, March–April 1999 (first quote); "Safe haven" (second quote).

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Casual Neglect: Louisiana Legislators and Antebellum Public Education

Sarah E. Lipscomb

In 1857, State Superintendent Samuel Bard explained to Louisiana's legislature:

> There is really not a single feature of the [public school] system anything approaching what it ought to be. Actual useful supervision is merely mocked under the present provisions; the securing of competent and otherwise eligible teachers is utterly impracticable; the administration of the finances of the department is by no means within that rigid control which ought to characterize it; the school-houses existing are quite unfit for the purposes to which they are ostensibly devoted; the books used are not unfrequently [*sic*] an insult and a wrong to us, and are always a source of serious inconvenience, not to say mischief.[1]

This critical report on the condition of public education in the state highlights many of the problems plaguing Louisiana's school system at the close of antebellum period. Deficiencies mentioned by the official such as inadequate local administration, unqualified teachers, insufficient state funding, and unacceptable schoolhouses were all typical hindrances impeding schools throughout the Gulf South in the decades before the Civil War. Though the first educational provision for the newly acquired American territory of Louisiana came as early as 1805, as the preceding comment illustrates, public schools in most of the state advanced little in the following decades. In contrast to the disappointing condition of public education in rural Louisiana, the city of New Orleans established a thriving public school system that operated ten months a year, offered advanced courses to its students, employed highly competent teachers, and attracted patrons from across the state along with praise from across the nation. Exploring the divergent results of public schools in rural Louisiana versus those in New Orleans reveals that state lawmakers deserve much of the blame for the failure of public schools during the antebellum period. The lack of guidance, supervision, regulation, and funding from state lawmakers all combined to condemn public education in most of Louisiana.

By the time the legislature began making arrangements for a statewide system of public education in 1847, the city of New Orleans had been operating a successful and popular system of free public schools for six years. During their first years of operation, New Orleans public schools attracted scores of students and overcame the initial hostility of the population. When the public free system began, most

residents viewed education as the responsibility of parents or the church rather than the state, yet within a few short years the city's white residents embraced public schools. In 1841, when New Orleans opened its first schools, it enrolled only twenty-six students taught by one teacher in a single classroom.[2] By the close of the antebellum period the various schools of the city served 17,419 students, more than public school enrollment in all the parishes of the rest of the state combined, though there were almost ten thousand fewer children in New Orleans.[3] Instituting public libraries and lecture series as well as night schools for young people who worked during the day, by the end of the decade New Orleans public schools attracted support from throughout the state and praise from across the South.[4]

The success of the city's schools can be directly attributed to conscientious local officials who monitored and administered the system. Without any central influence or guidance from the state, city officials took control of their schools and ran the successful system themselves. The city organized an institutional framework to support the public school system and ensure its quality, and such oversight quickly led to thriving public schools.

The success of public schools in New Orleans offered hope to the rest of the state. In 1845 the state adopted a new constitution that in addition to democratizing the political process also required the establishment of public schools in each parish.[5] In 1847 the legislature backed up the constitutional requirement with legislation, establishing an administration to manage the public schools, headed by a state superintendent appointed by the governor, and parish superintendents elected by the voters.[6] Funding for the new system came from millage and poll tax as well as proceeds from the sale of specified tracts of land.[7] The law explicitly intended for all white inhabitants between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school free of charge, while those older than sixteen but under the age of twenty-one could attend for at least two years.[8] The legislation stipulated that police juries divide their parishes into school districts, and each parish received an appropriation from the state based on the number of school-age children residing therein.[9]

Although Louisiana's lawmakers enjoyed the successful example of New Orleans, which might have served as a model for directing the public education system of the state, legislators did not institute the necessary requirements and regulations to guide school administrators. Rather than offering the direction that local officials continually sought from the legislature, state officials failed to fund the system adequately,

to offer solutions or suggestions about obstacles encountered, or to set regulations for the basic functioning of the system, such as establishing standards for teachers, administrators, school-houses, courses, or materials. Indeed, rather than assisting local officials who encountered obstacles in establishing public schools in their area, many observers believed that the actions of the legislature caused more harm than good, frequently altering the law, abolishing the office of effective local school administrators, leaving contradictory sections in statutes, and failing to address many of the most pressing matters that hindered the school system, such as incompetent and illiterate teachers. Instituting some basic requirements would have ensured a level of quality in public schools, but instead lawmakers condemned the public school system through their inaction and negligence. As the state superintendent urged legislators in 1856, "it rests with you, gentlemen, as representatives of the people, to say what shall be done.... The time has come when something must be done. The cry throughout the State is 'give us a better school law;'" seemingly constant appeals requesting relief and guidance came before legislators, but the state's elected officials ignored them and by so doing revealed their own disinterest in public education.[10] Despite the presence of prosperous public schools flourishing within the state, the legislature did not use New Orleans' example to implement education policy in the rest of Louisiana, but left local areas to run their systems themselves, haphazardly and unsuccessfully with no centralized regulations or direction to guide them.

Under the first statutes enacted in 1847, schools began to operate throughout the state, though public education advanced very slowly at first. In 1848, one year after the passage of the free public school act, police juries in only nineteen parishes had organized school districts. Out of 49,048 children in the state between six and sixteen years of age, only 2,160, or 4.4 percent, attended seventy-eight public schools established throughout the state.[11] By 1849, however, 704 public schools operated for an average of six months a year, with the length of school terms ranging from four to eleven months in different parishes.[12] In 1849 enrollment in reporting parishes climbed to 16,217 students, amounting to 56 percent of the reported school age population.[13] Clearly public schools were beginning to make progress in the rural parishes of the state. As the Assumption Parish superintendent explained in 1851, "the general condition of the schools is good and improving. Many who were indifferent on the subject of public education, are becoming more zealous, and the desire to have

their children educated is becoming general. Much good has been effected [*sic*] during my administration, and the schools being well organized, their progress must be onward."[14]

In spite of growing enrollment and promising advances in public school across the state, only five years after they created the system lawmakers inflicted lasting damage that quickly reversed the pattern of improvement and would continue to hamper public schools for the next two decades. In 1852, the same year that legislators saddled the state with a much more restrictive constitution that repealed many of the democratic reforms of 1845, they also made significant alterations to the laws governing the public school system. That year the legislature cut the salary of the state superintendent by two-thirds, from $3,000 annually to a mere $1,000, and also relieved him of the duty of visiting individual parishes.[15] Even more appalling to public school proponents, the legislature abolished the office of parish superintendent, claiming that the meager $300 annual salary cost the state too much.[16] With this provision, the legislature recalled the most effective education officer in the school system, and hope for public education in the state soon evaporated. Lawmakers replaced parish superintendents with unpaid boards of district directors, whose apathy and ineptness would soon prove detrimental to most school systems. The legislature burdened the parish treasurer with the additional duty of obtaining information from the school directors and reporting annually to the legislature, a task which few treasurers accomplished satisfactorily.[17]

The changes of 1852 limited both state and local supervision of the public school system. Without a state superintendent visiting schools in parishes across the state, the legislature began to receive much less information on how the schools actually functioned as well as how the funds they had disbursed were spent. In addition, removing parish superintendents who provided guidance and centralization to schools across their parishes and held teachers to some level of accountability crippled the system beyond repair. Because district directors who replaced parish superintendents received no compensation, many office holders took no interest in the schools. As one official explained, "it is very difficult to obtain the services of competent directors. Those of the community, that are competent, are unwilling to devote their attention to the subject, consequently the amount of good accomplished is much less."[18] Without parish superintendents to oversee the system locally, and a state superintendent entering the parishes to offer advice and exert control, it devolved upon state lawmakers to provide a level of centralized regulation and

guidance in order for the schools to advance—a task which state lawmakers neglected notably.

Under the altered laws of 1852, public schools throughout the state which had been operating successfully began to decline. Many observers attributed this decline entirely to school directors whom the legislature granted responsibility for supervising the system.[19] As an Ascension Parish official reported in 1859, "the character and condition of the free public schools of this parish are not flattering; they are worse than they have ever been, and the fault can, with propriety, be laid on the directors."[20] The absence of salary did not help attract conscientious citizens to the post of district directors, and without regulations from the state, anyone could fill the position regardless of qualifications. As a result, constant complaints reached the legislature concerning the incompetence of these officials. For example, in 1854 Catahoula parish treasurer R. H. Cuny reported that "the condition of the public schools is far from being good, owing in some measure to the fact that a majority of the school directors and teachers are not properly qualified to discharge their duties, and but few of them try to learn what their duties are."[21] In 1853 the state superintendent of education reported to the legislature that "in some districts, the directors are totally incapable of performing this duty, for the very potent reason that they themselves do not know how to read or write."[22] Despite such appalling observations concerning the local officials most immediately responsible for the functioning of the public school system, state officials did not bother to institute basic regulations for these officers. In 1856 one parish official explained, "the directors are very remiss and manifest very little interest in the schools.... At present, there is no supervision over the schools: the directors will not visit the schools."[23]

Given that local public school administration remained with these characteristically incompetent officials, it is hardly surprising that teachers employed in rural schools across the state also failed to meet expectations. Some patrons found the quality of teachers just as appalling as the competence of school directors, noting, "the teachers are generally utterly incompetent," while a typical parish report commented, "generally the teachers are scholastically bad, and morally worse."[24] In employing teachers to instruct the students of their parish, local administrators clearly did not use qualifications as the determining factor. As a St. Helena official explained in 1854, "the cause of the schools not being in a flourishing condition is attributed to the indifference and 'penuriousness of the directors,' who, if they can employ an ignorant teacher at the lowest price, think they have

accomplished their whole duty...while competent and worthy teachers are set aside."[25] Despite such reports, still the legislature did not act. Though funding the schools from state coffers, legislators set no minimum requirements for teachers employed in public schools, not even literacy! In 1857, one parish official reported despondently, "as regards to the qualifications of teachers it is not good, for some of them can scarcely write their own name."[26] Unlike New Orleans where school officials reported the care and consideration that went into choosing instructors, carefully examining applicants on a wide range of subjects, state lawmakers did not follow this example and chose not to enact similar requirements for the state as a whole, so that many parishes continued to employ instructors without even a perfunctory examination of their abilities, often hiring teachers with no qualifications or capacity to teach.[27]

Like school administrators and teachers, no regulations or guidelines came from state lawmakers concerning such basic requirements as schoolhouse accommodations, textbooks and materials, course offerings, or length of school terms; all of which proved disappointing in the years before the Civil War. Indeed, schoolhouses remained one of the most appalling aspects of public schools. Due to limited funding, many schools commenced in makeshift accommodations.[28] In 1857 an Iberville Parish official explained:

> We have no school-houses, in the proper acceptation of the term. The schools are generally taught in dingy, rickety, half roofless sheds or shanties, that a planter of ordinary capacity for managing affairs would not allow his negroes to inhabit. I myself have taught schools for months in an appology [*sic*] for a school-house, through the cracks and holes of which I could easily throw a good sized urchin of sixteen years."[29]

Certainly the inadequate accommodations did not help attract students or instructors to public schools. The state superintendent explained in 1857 the effect of such accommodations, noting, "it is...futile to expect the mind of teachers or pupils to keep or acquire a proper tone and elasticity, when cribbed and bedabbled in dirt, dilapidation and discomfort."[30] He went on to describe school-houses typically found across the state as "a ruinous log-cabin by the road-side, or in the woods, without an inclosure [*sic*], with a slab door, with small apertures without even a shutter, far less any sashes or glazing serving as windows, without chimney or fire-place, lacking maps and black-boards, and other necessities for teaching."[31]

In addition to lacking requirements and guidance from state officials, the problems surrounding public school administrators,

teachers, and accommodations all further deteriorated due to insufficient state funding. In every instance, the amount of state appropriations allocated for education purposes proved completely insufficient to fund adequate public schools. Lack of funding hampered provision of adequate schoolhouses, employment of competent teachers and administrators, and operation of public schools for more than a few months each year. The state allocations proved so inadequate that Washington Parish officials could not even support two schools simultaneously and faced the sad dilemma of choosing to fund one school a year. In 1852 parish officials explained, "there are only two school-houses in our district, and we have agreed to give all the public funds coming to our district to support this school this year, and the other school-house is to have next year's funds to support a school."[32] Each year legislators heard repeated pleas for additional funding to support the schools, yet state officials did not act.[33] As early as 1849 first State Superintendent Alexander Dimitry warned the legislature, "with an insufficient mill tax, and an unreliable poll tax, we are placed before an increased and increasing number of children, clamoring for the means of education."[34] The fact that lawmakers continued to fund inadequately a system already beset with problems reveals their disinterest in public education.

Aside from providing insufficient sums of money, legislators did little else to support the school system. As the state superintendent chided in 1854, "the providing of funds for education is an indispensable means for attaining the end; but it is not education. The wisest system that can be devised, cannot be executed without human agency."[35] But lawmakers provided little guidance for rural areas attempting to comply with state laws in establishing schools and made no requirements in order to ensure the proper functioning of the system. The state's elected officials offered no solutions to the problems of sparse rural settlements, refused to increase the paltry amount of state funding, made no suggestions for how or where schools should be organized, and set no regulations or standards for such basic concerns as the quality of schoolhouses, the literacy of teachers, the courses of instruction offered, or the length of school term. There were no requirements about local administrators who directly controlled the schools, not even mandating that the supervisors themselves be literate, much less requiring them to visit schools or interview teaching applicants. One state official insisted that in order for the public school system to function effectively, "a rigorous and vigilant central influence must be brought to bear upon it, in order to insure [*sic*]

concert of purpose and of action throughout the various members of the system," but state officers offered no such guidance.[36]

Indeed, rather than helping to correct the inadequacies of the system, most observers agreed that the legislature only hampered public education in Louisiana. In 1856, one education official commented, "our public schools are some ten years old, and the laws governing them have been changed and altered to but little purpose, if not with decided detriment."[37] Most officials familiar with the school system noted "the inadequacy of the law," or as an official from Winn Parish explained, "the school law, as carried out here, is all a humbug."[38] Local officers continually pleaded with the legislature to adjust the failings of the school law, but state lawmakers did little to address their grievances.[39] Parish officials as well as state superintendents made numerous suggestions, such as stiffer requirements for assessors and parish treasurers, increased funding, altering the basis for the distribution of funds, requiring school boards to examine teaching applicants, mandating that at least two of three school directors be literate, and many more. Aside from suggestions, local officials pointed out contradictory sections of the law, such as those that referred to collection of taxes, drawing interest on school lands, and the payment of teachers, and asked the legislature to clarify discrepancies. Most often, however, officials asked the legislature to address issues not mentioned in the school law, such as requiring school directors to visit schools and examine teachers, and allowing the police jury to appoint directors in areas where none had been elected.[40] Yet to these pleas the legislature did not respond. As one disgusted local official commented:

> The present condition of the public schools of this parish calls loudly upon the legislature for some revision and modification of the present system. If the members of that body would only devote one-half of their time which is consumed in useless and idle discussions upon party issues, and devote the same to the examination of the public school system, the system would ere long be improved, and the children of the state thereby benefited.[41]

Without the necessary provisions put in place by state lawmakers requiring local school administrators to attend to their jobs in an effective manner, Louisiana's public education system deteriorated in the decade leading up to the Civil War. Rather than suggesting solutions to the problems encountered in rural areas of Louisiana, such as sparsely settled regions, inadequate schoolhouses, and incompetent teachers, the legislature ignored such problems and continued to fund

inadequately an inefficient school system. Comments by local officials reveal that rather than assisting languishing school districts, state legislators altered the school law in ways that often caused more problems, such as their abolition of the office of parish superintendent in 1852. Although in some cases efficient local supervision could overcome the obstacles facing rural education, without central guidance most areas of the state would continue to house failing public schools. State administrators could have used New Orleans' successful school laws to formulate regulations for the rest of the state, instituting requirements, such as certifying teachers before employment, and offering guidelines to establish schools, but legislators continued to neglect public education. Without a more aggressive centralized control of the system and without stringent requirements that would combat the apathy and indifference of many school administrators, public education in Louisiana fell far short in comparison with New Orleans school system. As the state superintendent fatalistically remarked to the legislature less than a decade before the outbreak of war:

> You may extend your fields of sugar and cotton–erect your palatial mansions–establish manufactories–construct your magnificent floating palaces, expend millions for railroads, and accumulate illimitable wealth, but if you neglect to educate the people, you are but making a richer prize for some bold and crafty Cataline, some Santa Anna, or Louis Napoleon, who may ultimately, be hailed as a welcome deliverer from anarchy and confusion.[42]

Notes

[1]"Report of the State Superintendent of Education," *Louisiana Legislative Documents*, 1857, 4.

[2]*[First] Annual Reports of the Council of Municipality Number Two, of the city of New Orleans, on the Condition of its Public Schools*, (New Orleans, 1845), 5.

[3]"Report of the State Superintendent of Education," *Louisiana Legislative Documents*, 1859, 3-95

[4]Alma H. Peterson, "A Historical Survey of the Administration of Education in New Orleans, 1718-1851" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1962), 53-54; Donald E. Devore and Joseph Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools: Public Education in New Orleans, 1841-1991* (Lafayette, LA, 1991), 22, 23; Robert C. Reinders, "New England Influences on the Formation of Public Schools in New Orleans," *Journal of Southern History* 30 (1964): 190-91.

[5]Samuel C. Hyde Jr., *Pistols and Politics: The Dilemma of Democracy in Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1810-1899* (Baton Rouge, 1996), 58.

[6]Richard Loucks, *An exposition of the laws of Louisiana, relating to free public schools* (Baton Rouge, 1847), 1, 13.

[7]Loucks, *Exposition*, 13.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]"Report of the State Superintendent of Education," *Louisiana Legislative Documents*, 1856, 6 (hereafter "Report," year, page). For complaints, suggestions, and requests for relief concerning public school laws, see also "Report," 1853, 3-8; "Report," 1854, 8-9, 63, 68, 69, 79, 88, 101, 113, 117, 120, 130; "Report," 1855, 4-5, 31, 35, 41, 44, 47, 51-52; "Report," 1856, 3-16, 52, 54, 56, 64; "Report," 1857, 3-21, 44; "Report," 1858, 4, 44; "Report," 1859, 3-6.

[11]"Report," 1848, 5.

[12]"Report," 1849, 15.

[13]"Report," 1849, 2.

[14]"Report," 1851, 7.

[15]Raleigh A. Suarez, "Chronicle of a Failure: Public Education in Antebellum Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 12 (1971): 117-18.

[16]Suarez, "Chronicle," 117-18; "Report,"1852, 3.

[17]Report", 1852, 3.

[18]"Report," 1851, 18.

[19]For complaints concerning public school directors, see "Report," 1853, 16; "Report," 1854, 63, 68, 79, 88, 113, 115, 117, 120, 124; "Report,"1855, 20, 23, 31, 41, 47, 52; "Report," 1856, 20, 52, 54, 56, 64, 71, 83, 96, 99, 103; "Report," 1857, 33, 41, 44, 79, 89, 92, 94, 98, 101, 103, 107; "Report," 1858, 35, 38, 44, 57, 113; "Report," 1859, 13, 62, 74, 103.

[20]"Report," 1859, 5.

[21]"Report," 1854, 68.

[22]"Report," 1853, 5.

[23]"Report of the State Superintendent of Education," *Louisiana Legislative Documents*, 1856, 52.

[24]"Report," 1858, 95; "Report," 1857, 33, 89.

[25]"Report," 1854, 113.

[26]"Report," 1857, 33.

[27]*[First] Annual Reports of the Council of Municipality Number Two. . . .*, 9-10. For disappointing reports of public school teachers throughout the state, see "Report," 1848, 6; "Report," 1849, 2, 7; "Report," 1851, 5, 16, 17, 23, 30, 37; "Report," 1854, 8-9, 56, 68, 79, 113; "Report," 1855, 20, 35, 41, 52; "Report," 1856, 11, 22, 52, 56, 90, 96, 99, 101, 103; "Report," 1857, 8-10, 33, 55, 89, 94; "Report," 1858, 6, 11, 28, 68, 89, 95; "Report," 1859, 10, 22, 37, 62, 65.

[28]"Report," 1849, 2. See also "Report," 1848, 6; "Report," 1849, 3-4, 9; "Report," 1855, 31; "Report," 1856, 69; "Report," 1857, 4, 16-17, 55.

[29]"Report," 1857, 55.

[30]"Report," 1857, 16-17.

[31]Ibid.

[32]"Report," 1852, 33.

[33]For comments concerning the inadequacy of state appropriations, see "Report," 1849, 4-7, 10, 13; "Report," 1851, 15, 20, 21, 27, 28, 32, 34, 41; "Report," 1852, 4, 10, 12, 19; "Report," 1854, 49, 63, 101 130; "Report," 1855, 41, 47, 51; "Report," 1856, 7, 10, 12, 20, 40, 54, 62, 101, 106, "Report," 1857, 4, 18-19, 27, 35, 40, 53, 83, 90, 92, 94; "Report," 1858, 18, 24, 28, 35, 46, 81, 95; "Report," 1859, 27, 35, 41, 65.

[34]"Report," 1849, 4.

[35]"Report," 1849, 8.

[36]"Report," 1853, 5.

[37]"Report of the State Superintendent of Education," *Louisiana Legislative Documents*, 1856, 4.

[38]"Report" 1856, 4; "Report," 1858, 44.

[39]"Report," 1858, 4; see also "Report," 1856, 3-16; "Report," 1857, 3-21; "Report," 1859, 3-6.

[40]"Report," 1853, 3-8; "Report," 1854, 8-9, 63, 68, 69, 79, 88, 101, 113, 117, 120, 130; "Report," 1855, 4-5, 31, 35, 41, 44, 47, 51-52; "Report," 1856, 3-11, 52, 54, 56, 64; "Report," 1857, 3-21.

[41]"Report," 1857, 44.

[42]"Report," 1853, 8.

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The Great Suppression: State Fire Policy in Florida, 1920-1970

Dave Nelson

Contrary to popular belief, fire suppression was not a widely practiced policy in Florida until well into the twenties. Up to that time, many Floridians practiced a primitive form of controlled/prescribed burning for land clearing, pest and disease control, fire fuel reduction, and the replenishment of native grasses. By the twenties, as Florida began to urbanize and its population grew, several groups, including foresters and the timber industry, pushed for state control over Florida's woodlands. Using scientific research on fire from the growing forestry field–most of which was developed in northern regions–foresters and the timber interests argued successfully for the creation of the Florida Forestry Service in 1927. For this anti-fire faction, such a service was essential to ending wasteful fire practices and ensuring future wood supplies. They also believed that unless controlled, nature not only will become unproductive, but will also prove dangerous to humans. Timber interests realized that such an agency transformed Florida's government into a virtual forester and a de facto business partner with a vested interest in the welfare of forests.

Over the next fifty years, the State of Florida–often in conjunction with the federal government–used laws, policies, government agencies, publicity, and public school programs to suppress all woods fires throughout the state. The results of such activities were not only destructive to native fire-dependent ecosystems, but they also increased the number of uncontrollable and damaging wildfires that injured the very interests the policies were meant to protect. By the seventies, fire suppression fell out of fashion, and land managers began to add controlled burning to their policies.

While the benefits of fire to Florida's landscape and the ill effects of widespread fire suppression to Florida native ecosystems have been thoroughly researched and written upon, what are not as well-known are those people in power who instituted and perpetuated Florida's suppression policy. That policy was never static, and instead changed and adapted to changing political, economical, and scientific conditions. The development and continuation of the suppression of woods fires in Florida stemmed from a combination of sincere beliefs held by land managers and foresters concerning fire with an ongoing vested relationship with the prevailing timber interests.

USFS posters, 1944 and 1949. <http://www.smokeybear.com/vault/images> (March 8, 2006).

"Fire destroys!" So began a small publication printed by the four-year old Florida Forestry Association (FFA), which in 1927 created an uproar within Florida's political and industrial circles. Entitled *Forest Fires in Florida*, and written by a United State Forest Service (USFS) district forester Harry Lee Baker, the pamphlet blamed many native Floridians for thousands of destructive forest fires across the state.[1] Using words and arguments as incendiary as the destructive wildfires he describes, Baker lamented the loss of an annual $8 million in timber sales that stemmed from over 15,000 yearly fires–97 percent of which Baker says were "man-caused."[2] Only the remaining 3 percent were started by natural means–namely lightning.[3] "Enough young growth is destroyed every year in Florida to build 100,000 six room homes," at 16,000 board feet each.[4] As for mature trees, Baker claimed that "fire scars develop into 'cat-faces' on saleable timber and are fertile spots for damaging fungi and insects," a statement accompanied by photos of longleaf pine rotting from the inside out.[5] Baker further claimed that fire impoverished forest soil–resulting native grasses dying out, killed native game animals ("fox, squirrel, and opossum are frequently killed outright by forest fires"), and robbed birds such as quail of their nesting areas.[6] As Baker concluded, "everybody loses when timber burns."

Baker's tract marked the escalation of a literal turf war that had been brewing for nearly a decade. Across the state and nation, a rising awareness of forest fires created rifts between land managers, politicians, and native residents. Tensions that stemmed from debates over forest management by the twenties erupted into outright hostility. In Florida, foresters and timber men united against turpentiners, "cracker" farmers, and–most of all–cattle ranchers. In *Forest Fires in Florida*, Baker wrote what many in the state had been quietly saying for years: cattle ranchers were Florida's largest and most damaging groups of woods burners. According to Baker, "cattlemen have for years been accustomed to burning off dead grass during the winter and spring" in order to provide fresh grass for their roving cattle.[7] Using words such as "apathy," "indifference," and a "need for education," Baker accused cattlemen of fostering an unprogressive and damaging burn culture. For him, cattlemen "had horns and a forked tail."[8] The publication achieved its goal, for a FFA-sponsored bill passed the state legislature that year, creating the State Board of Forestry. And the following year, the Board hired Baker as Florida's first state forester. But to understand the situation fully, one must go back to the turn-of-the-century Florida.

Former USFS forest ranger Inman Eldredge described the fire situation in Florida a half century earlier in a 1959 interview: "In those days, fire was looked on as an aid to living. Turpentiners burned over the woods so that they were open...cattlemen burned the woods to fatten his cattle...the farmer burned the woods because the turpentine men and the cattlemen were going to burn and it would burn him up to if he didn't burn first."[9] According to Eldredge–and many other observers–fire was integral part of rural Florida culture. Locals "felt that to kill the boll weevil and get rid of snakes and to take care of cattle ticks, and almost anything else," explained Florida State Forester C. H. Coulter in 1958, "you ought to burn the woods."[10] Land clearing through fire was a common practice for rural farmers and ranchers. For turpentiners, large wild fires were "a constant menace."[11] Not only did it damage equipment such as the zinc cups and gutters, but the trees were covered in highly flammable gum. Anything other than low-intensity ground fires would irreparably damage the resin-rich pines. In addition, turpentiners sought cleared, open forest floors to keep away spiders, snakes, and impassable vegetation from their laborers. Therefore, regularly controlled burns were common in turpentined forests, and were usually conducted at night when "the litter on the forest floor was damp" and there was little wind.[12] Ranchers also preferred cleared forest floors, as well as the fresh grass shoots that spring up after a forest fire. But after the turn of the century, such fire practices were being targeted by a new group on the scene: professional foresters.

Looking back upon that era fifty years later, the Florida Forest Service labeled such fire customs as "short-sighted," creating "uncontrolled wild fires that stripped much of the timber from the land."[13] The fear and frustration expressed in the 1950s began at the turn of the century. Large fires in many major cities, as well as several deadly wildfires out West–such as the Wisconsin fire in 1871, and the Minnesota fire of 1894–were widely reported.[14] In a world built almost entirely of wood, fire was rightly seen as a dangerous and unpredictable force that required eradication in urban areas. And it was not a large leap in logic to transfer the fear fire instilled to the woods. This new fear of fire coincided–especially in the South–with the growth of the timber industry, in large part fueled by the growth of cities. As with many industries, in-house studies, scientific experiments, and resource protection were seen as vital to the timber industry's survival, and led to the emergence of the professional forestry field. Forestry Schools were developed, most centered in the North, such as in Pennsylvania

and Michigan. Soon fire suppression became the most pressing issue in forest management. These timbermen and professional foresters saw arsonists behind every tree.

The leading agency for fire suppression was the newly created United State Forestry Service. Although there was some early research in the different causes and effects of woods fires, by 1908–for sake of securing long-term Congressional funding and for clarity of its public message–the USFS adopted a "simple, tough message" that all fires are bad, and must be prevented at all costs.[15] That uncompromising stance emerged out of the "light burning" controversy in California. Sometimes called "Indian burning," land managers in California were split on whether or not to use small-scale controlled burns to reduce fuel and fire hazards, just as the Native Americans of the area had done for centuries. Debates swirled around the issue for years, confusing the lay public, and threatened the young USFS's status and Congressional backing.[16] By 1910, most–but not all–foresters adopted a similar no-fire tolerance stance.[17] In Florida, support of similar policies pitted the powerful timber interests, who were thrilled at the anti-fire campaign, and emerging foresters against Florida's indigenous cracker culture: turpentiners and ranchers.

In Jacksonville in 1923, the stage was set for a showdown when timber leaders created the Florida Forestry Association, and immediately began publishing articles and pamphlets on forestry and fire.[18] May Mann Jennings–today often called the "Mother of Florida Forestry," and at the time the most politically powerful woman in the state–along with Ben Wand, publisher of the *Southern Lumber Journal*, headed the new organization. The bylaws stressed that it was "to represent the interests of all people, the sportsmen, and the wood-using naval stores, agricultural, and horticultural industries."[19] But the creation of a state forestry department was their ultimate goal. Wand and his associates sought governmental protection of their financial interests, while Jennings was more concerned with conserving natural resources for future use. Push for such an agency had grown since the passing in 1911 of the Weeks Act, a federal law that allowed states to accept federal funds to create forestry services, and enter into cooperative agreements with the U.S. government.[20] In 1924, the Clarke-McNary Act strengthened the Weeks Act, expanding the lands such funds could be expended upon.[21] Finally, widespread apathy towards fire issues further fueled their efforts. As Eldredge remembered: "Nobody cared. The people in the city didn't care; the people in the small towns didn't care. They were accustomed to having the air full of smoke at certain times of the year. The politicians didn't

even care."[22] In 1925, the FFA ventured to Tallahassee to lobby the state legislature with little luck. For the next legislative session–at the time, the state legislature only met every other year–the FFA would up the public relations ante.

In 1927, the FFA hired Harry Lee Baker to write *Forest Fires in Florida*. Born in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1888, Baker had grown up in Michigan.[23] Upon receiving his B.S. in forestry at Michigan State Agricultural College, he went to work for the USFS in several districts across the nation.[24] By 1927, he was the assistant forest inspector for the Southern region. To Baker, trained in the fire-vulnerable northern forests, the indigenous fire practices in Florida were truly abhorrent. In language that reflected the mindset of many foresters of the time, Baker wrote passionately against what he saw as foolish, even pre-modern, attitudes towards fire and natural resources. Words such as "scars," "menace," "destroyed," and "killed" are found throughout the text. As with later writings on fire, Baker described burned forests as both "destroyed" and "irretrievably lost." No mention was made of re-growth or fire adaptation. And as mentioned, Baker lay the fault of such losses at the collective feet of cattlemen.

The cattle industry's reaction was swift. A series of rebuttal writings appeared after Baker's publication. These writings took on Baker, point by point. In one essay entitled "Some Strictly Minor Details of Testimony," the anonymous writer analyzes Baker's illustrations, starting with the cover. "The cover's portrayal of a Florida woods fire being beaten with a pine bough. My, but what a bonehead!"[25] On page four of Baker's booklet, the essay points out that the photo shows "unmistakable evidence of [trees] having been killed by method of turpentining before they were burned."[26] The photo is only captioned with "Destroyed trees," leaving the impression that fire killed them, but never stating that fact overtly. Another photo–on page six–of a "healthy" forest is also clearly a turpentine forest, with a litter-free understory, signifying recent burning.[27] Another essay used deductions analogous to modern analysis to dispute Baker's claims. In "Just How Little the Outside Expert Knows," the writer describes how explorers Hernando DeSoto and William Bartram both reported–two hundred years apart–plentiful pine forests in North Florida. Furthermore, Bartram "records that the Indians habitually burned the woods–just as they must have been doing for ages."[28] Therefore the essay asks, why are pine forests still thriving in North Florida?

Many of the essays took on regional and class connotations. Baker's Northern origins were often remarked upon despairingly, as were the FFA's urban membership. In one sentence in an essay called

"Something for the Florida Cracker to Think About," the writer manages to invoke racism, regionalism, class, the land boom, states rights, and a rural-urban dichotomy:

> Certainly as a Democratic State that holds some manner of State Rights against the increasing absorption of power by the federal government, Florida can work out control and development of its own forests for its own people instead of for speculators and boomringers that never get nearer to what the country means than by golfing over forty acres after a little ball in company with a little nigger![29]

These essays point out the power struggles inherent in land management issues, especially as the federal government became more involved. Throughout the 1930s, many rural observers displayed dissatisfaction with the Clarke-McNary Act as a federal interference in rural Florida lifeways.

Many in the cattle ranching industry felt justified in their anger. Ranchers saw attacks leveled at them from several fronts. For starters, although the law would not be passed until 1948, there was much discussion about a fence law in the 1920s. Such a law would restrict the normal practice of allowing branded cattle to roam freely in common forests. This period also saw the emergence of the Cattle Tick fever which led to Florida's State Livestock Sanitary Board requirement that all cattle be dipped in an arsenic solution every two weeks. For ranchers who normally let their cattle roam freely, that meant an investment of time and intense labor for rounding-up and dipping the cattle in the state-approved concrete vats. For many small-scale ranchers, it meant an exit from the livestock industry as they buckled under the expense involved. Therefore, the proposed restriction on range and woods fires was the final straw, and the cattlemen retaliated. "The only practical way of keeping [ticks] down while dipping did whatever it could is by grass fires. Yet the same men whom live in cities...and are loud for dipping now intend us to stop burning the woods...."[30] As all interested parties knew, the creation of a Forestry Service in Florida was synonymous with the state's adoption of a strict fire suppression policy. In 1927, the cattle ranchers' fear was realized.

Baker's booklet, coupled with the rise in forestry across the nation thanks to the Clarke-McNary Act, made the creation of a State Board of Forestry inevitable. In May 1927, the State Legislature passed into law–written by May Mann Jennings with her son Bryan–a bill creating a governor-appointed forestry board. This board, to be made up of

timber industrialists and forest enthusiasts, would set state forestry policy and hire a state forester to enforce that policy. On August 1, 1927, Governor John Martin appointed the board. It held its first meeting on December 13, 1927.[31] As set up, the agency–which adopted the name Florida Forestry Service in April 1928–consisted of a board, a state forester, and four branches: Information and Education, Applied Forestry, Administration, and Fire Control.[32] At their second meeting, held February 23, 1928, the board chose Harry Lee Baker to be Florida's first state forester.[33] The newly christened FFS maintained that "practically all woods fires are caused by man, and therefore are preventable."[34] With Baker personally assuming the fire control branch, the FFS made fire suppression in Florida its main mission.

To accomplish this, the FFS embarked on an extensive public education program–a considerable undertaking when one considers their meager $12,000 annual budget–called the Southern Forest Education program, a cooperative effort with FFA and the American Forestry Association (AFA). "Two motion picture trucks" were sent out across the state, showing films such as "Burnin' Bill" and "Pardners."[35] The program originated with AFA president Ovid Butler, who brought together the "Dixie Crusaders," a group of foresters that traveled the South–focusing primarily on Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida–and lectured, set up fair exhibits, and showed educational films.[36] The Florida version of the program, which consisted of the movie trucks emblazoned with the slogan, "Stop Woods Fires–Growing Children Need Growing Trees," reached over 250,000 Floridians by 1930.[37]

But overall, the program remained small in scale until 1933. Newly inaugurated President Franklin Roosevelt used the Clarke-McNary Act to create to Civilian Conservation Corps. A lifetime conservationist, Roosevelt wanted a work-relief program to put young men to work while restoring the nation's vast forests. Included in that effort was forest fire suppression.[38] By October 1933, the CCC arrived in Florida. Over the next nine years, the CCC remained Florida's most effective fire fighting tool.

As famed CCC promoter Roy Hoyt wrote in the thirties, "Fire is the great enemy of men in the forest. Protection against fire, and the suppression of fire, are necessary if man is to gain or maintain its control over the natural resources."[39] A 1937 memorandum from Florida Forester Baker to all CCC camp superintendents contained the reminder that firefighting has "priority over all other camp work."[40] That year's instructions on fire control sent out to all Florida camps from the U.S. Forest Service likewise said that fire suppression had

priority "over all other jobs, regardless of the day or hour."[41] Similarly, the 1938-1939 Florida CCC fire plan stressed "work in firefighting takes precedence over all other work."[42] CCC veteran George Lecouris remembered that his Apalachicola National Forest camp's purpose was to simply "fight fires and build roads."[43] At the camp level, such priority was even stressed in the camp-printed newspapers. One example was from Gold Head State Park's newspaper *Tent Town Topics*, which mentioned, "It is the work of the camp to fight fires as well as prevent fires."[44]

Enrollees cut fire lanes fourteen feet wide throughout the parks and forests. Camps made cooperative agreements with local fire agencies, and each enrollee was trained in fire fighting techniques.[45] Enrollees worked rotating fire shifts, staying in camp every other weekend in case of a fire breakout. At Highlands Hammock, project superintendent A. C. Altvater required a minimum of seventy-five enrollees present in camp at all times.[46] Other camps had similar policies. Every camp was required to maintain two fire tool boxes, equipped with rakes, flaps, shovels, machetes, and back-pack water pumps.[47] Also required at the door of every building were two sand-filled barrels, the CCC equivalent of the modern fire extinguisher.[48]

Once a fire was found, the nearest CCC camp was called into action. Fires on state and federal lands, especially within the expensive state parks, took first priority. Below that fell any land owned by a person or group armed with a cooperative agreement with the state, which required the owner to aid in fire fighting and to follow state standards on forest maintenance. Finally, fires within a fifty-mile radius of the camp that could threaten state or federal lands might be considered for CCC extinguishing. Most of the fires fought were small affairs, few more than a dozen or two acres. However, a few were quite large. CCC veteran George LeCouris recalled working on one fire in the panhandle for two weeks.[49]

Enrollees knew from their training that "in fire control work, speed counts. Travel to a fire is not a pleasure trip. Every single minute counts."[50] Fires were usually fought by hand. "We had shovels, we had flaps, and you'd go beat the fire down" remembered LeCouris. Many carried a knapsack water pump on their backs.[51] "When we'd run out of water, we'd wade out into a pond or a lake, and we'd just sink down, and fill our water up."[52]

On March 3, 1941, everyone's worst fear was realized. That morning, newly appointed Florida Park Service (FPS) director Lewis Scoggin received the following telegram from Goldhead's park

superintendent L. R. Brodie: "Fire swept through park yesterday, and last night. Buildings all saved. Half of acreage burned. Under control now."[53] It was the beginning of Florida's fire season that year, and the long-leaf pine sand hill community was a prime area for forest fires. A fire had begun off park grounds to the south.[54] But as winds blew north, burning leaves were blown into the park. Within minutes, dozens of small fires ignited throughout the park. After Brodie shot off the telegram to Scoggin, the fire erupted again. By the time the fire burnt itself out, three-fourths of the park was burned, including the picnic area, the ravine, and the land surrounding the spring-fed Sheeler Lake. "There is no doubt but that these fires were deliberately set," concluded Brodie.[55] That June an emergency conference was held between the NPS and the state parks to discuss how to improve fire protection.[56] Too much federal money had been invested to neglect fire protection. The worries were misplaced, however. Goldhead's forests rebounded within months.

Fire prevention was also extended to the general public. Brochures, radio announcements, and newsreels at movie theaters warned of the ill-effects of forest fires. These efforts reached a climax in 1934 when Governor Dave Sholtz designated December 2-8 as Forest Fire Prevention Week.[57] CCC camps held parades in several cities that week, including Sarasota, Jacksonville, Ocala, Pensacola, Marianna, Tallahassee, and Lake City.[58] As promoted in these efforts, CCC enrollees were considered the "first line of defense," and followed the motto: "Fight a fire when found, and talk about it afterwards."[59]

Although the CCC ceased operations in 1942–an early casualty of the Second World War–public relations for fire prevention only increased. During World War II, forest fires in Florida were viewed as unpatriotic and dangerous to the state's defense efforts, which by 1944 numbered over 172 military installations.[60] A letter from the State Defense Council to the Department of Agriculture stated that "forest fires are a danger to military ports and camps for burning woods and the smoke from these fires result in loss of days of flying for aviators in training."[61] If the fires burn at night, they can also aid German U-boats by compromising the nightly black-outs. Because of these dangers in Florida and elsewhere, the military and the USFS launched a nation-wide fire prevention campaign. At first, they used Walt Disney's Bambi, an appropriate choice considering the role fire played in the recent Disney animated film, *Bambi*. But because of licensing issues, the USFS soon decided to create its own mascot.[62] In 1944, advertising artist Albert Stackel created Smokey Bear, who persistently and humorlessly reminded children and adults alike that "Only You Can

Prevent Forest Fires."[63] Although created during World War II, the Smokey Bear campaign continued well after the war's end. In Florida, the FFS created a series of radio shows featuring Smokey Bear–along with musical acts such as Jelly Elliot and the Knotheads and the Singing Woodsmen–sermonizing about the need for prevention of all woods fires. These radio shows were sent out on audio phonograph discs to radio stations across the state throughout the 1950s.[64] And as late as 1965, Florida governor Hayden Burns recorded two public service TV-spots alongside "Smokey Bear."[65]

Public relations were a necessity by the fifties. After thirty years of strict no-fire tolerance policies, the amount of forest "roughage"–the vegetative understory growth found in southern forests–was out of control. When wild fires did occur, they were usually large and dangerous affairs. And between 1954 and 1957, Florida entered into a three-year drought that resulted in several 100,000-plus acre fires.[66] "Florida has been branded for a number of years with the unenviable title of the state having the worst fire record in the nation," reported one FFS report.[67] The cause of these fires had not changed in the FFS' opinion, as they reported that "more than 50% of all forest fires are set purposely by human hands."[68] Likewise, the mission of the program had also not changed: "Reduction and control of forest fires has been and still is the most critical problem facing the Florida Forest Service."[69]

One thing that did change, however, was how the FFS justified its existence. From the 1920s on through the early fifties, the FFS operated in a permanent crisis mode. Every year was called the worst one so far on record, justifying increases in its budget and the need to stay vigilant. But in 1953–just as the FFS was about to enter a true crisis period with the three-year drought–Governor Charley Johns wrote to Forester Clinton Coulter that he had "noticed in the press recently figures that indicate Florida has led the nation...with respect to the losses caused by forest fires." Expressing his "considerable concern," he asked point blank: "Why do we have this staggering record of fire loss?"[70] Coulter blamed lax prosecution of laws and unfavorable weather conditions. But from that point on, the FFS changed its tactics. It no longer focused on the ever-impending "fire crisis" but rather on its successes and stricter enforcement of fire laws. In 1956, while admitting the they were suffering through one of their worst periods–with "fires unparalleled in FFS history"–the FFS nonetheless reported good news: the publicity created by the massive fires resulted in increased awareness of the fire prevention program.[71] And finally in

1958, with the drought ended, the FFS reported, "This was the finest fire record in thirty years."[72] And so while the FFS changed its tactics with the governor and legislature, so too was the Florida forestry field as a whole about to change.

The bombshell fell in March 1962 in Tallahassee. At Florida State University's Education Building, the Tall Timber Research Station held its first annual conference on forest fire ecology. Henry Beadel, the research facility's benefactor, spoke first: "Fire is not the timber-vegetation-game destroying demon it has been so often pictured...it is an essential factor in maintaining" Florida's forests.[73] This was a complete reversal of nearly forty years of fire policy amongst land managers. In many circles, this was akin to blasphemy. But as the conference's proceedings introduction stated, "the public at large, the conservation groups, and the leaders of our educational system must be re-educated to the concept that fire has a useful place, and may even be a necessity in the conservation of some of our natural resources."[74]

H. L. Stoddard followed Beadel to the podium and went even further in his fire iconoclasm: he sided with the cattlemen of the twenties. "Some with no first-hand knowledge of these hardy pioneers [cattle ranchers and turpentiners] would have us believe that they set fires just to see them burn."[75] A co-founder of Tall Timbers Research Station, Stoddard stated that the cattlemen were "much maligned" and had "valid reasons for burning."[76] And they were correct that fires killed chiggers, ticks, and other pests. Stoddard saw regional bias playing a role in the foresters actions, most of whom were from the Northeast, and trained in areas outside of Florida. "The liberty-loving natives began to be harassed by an influx of Northerners that neither understood them, nor had much consideration of them."[77] These remarks were a direct response to an article by USFS psychologist John Shea, who in 1940 wrote, "Our Pappies Burned the Woods" for *American Forest* magazine.[78] Based on interviews he conducted in the South, Shea wanted to see why so many felt the need to set fires in the South. He concluded that the answer resided in the poorer classes' pre-modern customs, and their "frustrated lives," in which the only excitement they experienced was in burning the woods.[79] The "crackers" belief that fire killed ticks, snakes, and had other benefits, wrote Shea, was ignorance coupled with out-dated folkways. The Tall Timbers Conference set about refuting each one of Shea's arguments, and just about everyone else who argued against controlled burning.

The origins of Tall Timbers and its fire ecology conference go back to 1894, when Henry Beadel first traveled to North Florida with his brother to hunt quail.[80] "Nothing in [Tallahassee's] aspect suggested to

us that the land had ever been burned off." But then one day "we saw the whole county on fire which within a few minutes left the ground black and bare...[it] looked irretrievably ruined."[81] When he saw the fast re-growth of the land with little apparent damage, Beadel became fascinated. Later, when he took over his uncle's pine plantation in 1899 in north Leon County, he continued the practice of annual burnings.[82]

In the twenties, just as the cattlemen and foresters were feuding over Florida's fire policies, Beadel hired H. L. Stoddard to conduct a long-term study of quail on his North Florida plantation. In 1924, Stoddard predicted "that the effect of woods burning on the ecology of which the bobwhite quail was a part would be the most important single aspect to be investigated."[83] Soon, Stoddard–like Beadel–was a confirmed controlled burner. In February 1929, Stoddard was asked to speak at the American Forestry Association in Jacksonville about his quail-fire findings. "I have never attended a meeting with a more pervasive hostile atmosphere,"[84] he noted later.

In 1931, the USFS finally published Stoddard's report on quails. But because the study advocated controlled burning to maintain quail habitat, the chapter on fire went through numerous cuts before the USFS and the Department of Agriculture approved it. The cuts had nothing to do with science, but rather with the agencies' stand "against any use of fire for any land-handling purpose."[85] That year saw two other important works that concerned prescribed burns: S. W. Greene's study of livestock, and Dr. H. H. Chapman's work on the effects of fire on timber. Greene discovered that soil did not diminish in nutrients, but added even more. These works formed part of an alternative fire history for Florida–one that remained hidden until the Tall Timber Conferences in the sixties.

One of the first foresters on the scene in Florida at the start was USFS Forester Inman Eldredge. Conflicted over the fire issue for most of his career, in 1909, he nevertheless advocated controlled burns.[86] In 1959, Eldredge explained that the large fires that occurred often were the result of second growth. "It was rare to see a crown fire. But when they get into second growth, that's all changed. It can burn."[87] For the rough that grows in those fire-protected second growth areas, "the palmettos and gall berries burn as though they'd been doused in kerosene in dry weather."[88] Eldredge was convinced that the second growth requires a higher level of vigilance than did annually burned old-growth forests. "Now we are more dependent than ever on getting public acceptance of the need for fire protection."[89]

Besides Eldredge, there were several attempts to alert people about controlled burning. In 1910, *Sunset* magazine published an article by

Alabama timber man G. L. Hoxie called "How Fire Helps Forests," which argued for light burning.[90] Everyone ignored the article.

Then in 1932, the USFS allowed limited controlled burns for research purposes–but the findings were not published until 1939.[91] According to Coulter, that was about the same time the USFS began backing off its zero-fire tolerance stance.[92] Limited controlled burns were conducted for fire hazard reduction. In 1943, the FFS quietly conducted a few controlled burns for seedbed preparation and fuel reduction on FFS-owned land. There was no publicity about this significant change in policy.[93]

Meanwhile as the USFS and the FFS were quietly re-evaluating their internal fire policies, law enforcement officials were having difficulty actually catching and prosecuting the woods burners and arsonists the foresters so feared. The frustration can be seen in several letters of the period. For instance Coulter write, "It is extremely difficult to catch woods burners and to get sufficient evidence for conviction."[94] In another letter, Baker explains to the governor that "Even our present rangers, whose speed to fires reported by look-outs have difficulty in actually seeing the party who threw away the match."[95] The unspoken explanation was that in many cases, the fires were natural in origin, and not the work of fellow humans.

This alternate history became common knowledge by the sixties. In the mid-sixties both the USFS and FFS began phasing out their policies of strict fire suppression. In 1965, Governor Hayden Burns wrote State Forester Coulter a worried letter about recent fires he saw flying into Tallahassee. Coulter responded that the FFS was conducting some "prescribed" burnings in the nearby forests to "clear certain areas of hazardous ground cover."[96] The term "prescribed burning" was coined by the USFS to replace "controlled burning" because it denoted an expert's activity–that a fire must be prescribed as a doctor would a patient, and therefore only a qualified foresters can make such a prescription.[97] This letter, and other contemporaneous speeches and writings, marked a complete reversal from policy for the FFS in a just a matter of a two or three years.[98]

By the late sixties, the Florida Park Service was the only state land-management agency not to partake in controlled burns. Originally created in 1935 as one of five branches within the FFS, the FPS became an independent agency in 1948. For the next twenty years, the FPS followed a strict no-fire policy. In fact, because of the nature of parks–natural resources combined with historical resources and visitor services infrastructure–the FPS was often less tolerant of fires than even the FFS. By 1969, the FPS was outdated and its new management was

aiming to modernize the park system, including improving resource management and restoring native ecosystems, among other activities. One of these new administrators was chief naturalist Jim Stevenson.

"In 1969, when I took over the office, I came across a brochure about Tall Timbers Research Station," explained Stevenson in a 1999 interview. "It sounded like a pretty neat place. So, I called up there–they're just a few miles north of Tallahassee–and talked to the director [Ed Komarek]. He invited me to visit. Up until that point, we permitted no prescribed fires on state parks. Fire was just the worst possible thing that could happen, and we would risk life and limb to put out any fire that occurred."[99]

Soon after his meeting, Stevenson "started selling our senior park managers on the need to burn."[100] After a few months, he finally convinced FPS director New Landrum to allow some experimental controlled burns in parks. "That year, I got Ed Komarek's wife Betty, who was the fire boss on the very first prescribed burn in a state park, and that was at Falling Waters State Recreation Area near Chipley. Met with the park manager, Frank Chesley, and his two rangers, and we started burning the woods. For those of us that had never done that before it was pretty scary, but Betty was the fire boss. She knew exactly what to do and we had a very successful burn."[101]

Another park that began experimental controlled burnings was Highlands Hammock State Park in Sebring, in South Florida. Starting in January 1972, the Division of Forestry–the post-1968 constitutional revision name of the Forestry Board–helped out. "We had what I called five o'clock specials. Along about four o'clock if the area that was planned to be burned was not quite done, they'd [indicates Forestry Division] finish it up. And the fire would go up to the top of the trees. Finally after a few years, the park service said, 'I think you've helped us enough and we can probably handle it by ourselves now.' Then after that, we burned every year."[102]

By the mid-seventies, every park with a fire-dependent ecosystem performed annual burns. However, there was one main difference between the parks and the state forests fire programs. The Forestry Division burned to reduce fire hazards and fuel loads to protect Florida's timber. The park service, on the other hand, burned out of ecological concern. The goal was the restoration of native ecosystems, not to protect marketable commodities. Nevertheless, both agencies shifted in less than a ten-year period from fire suppression to fire application.

In 1985 during a particularly active fire season in Florida, the *Delray Beach Times* ran the following editorial cartoon: Smokey Bear,

standing amidst clouds of smoke and approaching flames says, "Remember only you can prevent forest fires–Now get me the hell out of this crazy state!!"[103] For centuries, human immigrants to Florida have had to deal with fire in this "crazy" state. According the H. L. Stoddard, in the early twentieth century, many citizens rectified the clash between conservation and capitalism by making fire the "scapegoat" in instituting fire suppression.[104] By 1970, Floridians used fire as a tool to develop both capitalism and conservation, by creating healthier, timber-producing forests, as well as restoring native ecosystems for wildlife management and for visitor service. While the leaders and industrial interest had not changed, public attitudes and forestry practices had. Either way, after fifty years, the Great Fire Suppression was finally over.

Notes

The author would like to thank Dr. Frederick Davis, Dr. Brad Bond, and Dr. Elna Green for their comments, as well as my colleagues at the State Archives of Florida: Crista Hosmer, Miriam Spaulding, and Boyd Murphy.

[1]Harry Lee Baker, *Forest Fires in Florida* (Tallahassee, 1927).

[2]Baker, *Forest Fires*, 1.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Baker, *Forest Fires*, 1, 7.

[6]Baker, *Forest Fires*, 6-9.

[7]Baker, *Forest Fires*, 26.

[8]Herbert Stoddard, *Memoirs of a Naturalist* (Norman, 1969), 244.

[9]Inman Eldredge oral history (hereafter OH), by Elwood Maunder, February 3, 1959, 47, <http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/Biltmore_Project/OHIs/Eldredge.pdf>.

[10]Clinton Hux Coulter OH, by Elwood Maunder, February 6, 1958, 7, <http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/Biltmore_Project/OHIs/CoulterOHI.pfd>.

[11]Pete Gerrell, *Illustrated History of the Naval Stores (Turpentine) Industry* (Kearney, 1997), 45.

[12]Gerrell, *Illustrated History*, 44.

[13]Florida Forest Service, *13th Biennial Report, 1952-1954*, 12.

[14]Steven Arno and Steve Allison-Burnell, *Flames in Our Forest: Disaster or Renewal?* (Washington, 2002), 14.

[15]Stephen Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wild Fire and Rural Fire* (Princeton, 1982), 171.

[16]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 102-106; Amo and Allison-Bunnell, *Flames in Our Forest*, 17.

[17]See Pyne's *Fire in America* for more on the "light burning" controversy.

[18]Their first publication was *The Common Forests Trees of Florida* in 1925, Coulter OH, 6.

[19]Linda Vance, *May Mann Jennings: Florida's Genteel Activist* (Gainesville, 1985), 119.

[20]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 115; Arno and Allison-Bunell, *Flames in Our Forest*, 19.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Eldredge OH, 47.

[23]Kiwanis Club of Tallahassee, *Who's Who* (Tallahassee, 1933), 26.

[24]Ibid.

[25]M82-8, Box 23, folder: "Forest Farming," FSA. Incidentally, Coulter mentions in 1958 the use of "pine-tops" in fire fighting before the advent if fire flaps. Coulter OH, 17.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Florida Board of Forestry, *First Biennial Report, 1927-1930*, 7.

[32]Florida Board of Forestry, *First Biennial Report, 1927-1930*, 1, 8.

[33]Baker was chosen at 2:30 P.M., for $4200 a year. Minutes of the Board of Forestry, February 23, 1928, 5.

[34]Florida Board of Forestry, *First Biennial Report, 1927-1930*, 14.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 170.

[37]Florida Board of Forestry, *First Biennial Report, 1927-1930*, 14

[38]The best source of the CCC is John Salmond's *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Chapel Hill, 1967).

[39]Roy Hoyt, *We Can Take It* (New York, 1935), 66.

[40]Baker to All Camp Superintendents, November 12, 1937, State Park Projects files 1936-1945, Box 3, folder: "Gold Head Protection–Fire Control," FSA.

[41]"Fire Control Instructions to District Rangers and Project Superintendents," n.d. (1937), General Correspondence–ECW Inspections, AL-TX, Box 30, folder: "ECW Inspections–Florida National Forests, 1937," RG 95, NARA.

[42]"Firefighting Plan for 1938-9" by C.H. Vinten, 1938, State Park Projects files 1936-1945, Box 3, folder: "Gold Head Protection–Fire Control," FSA.

[43]George LeCouris OH by the author, November 2, 2002, 9, New Deal Initiative (NDI), Florida State University (FSU).

[44]*Tent Town Topics*, December 7, 1934, Co. 1421, SP-4.

[45]Highlands Hammock hosted one fire fighting school in 1938. Every state park project superintendent attended, along with several foremen, FPS employees, and a few enrollees. "Report of the Fire Suppression and Prevention School, November 18, 1938," State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 4, folder: "Highlands Hammock Protection–Fire Control," FSA.

[46]Altvater to Highlands Hammock foremen, December 6, 1938, State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 4, folder: "Highlands Hammock Protection–Fire Control," FSA.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Associate Civil Engineer J.H. Stone to Regional ECW Officers, 8 December 1938, General Correspondence–ECW Inspection, Box 28, folder: "Inspection Reports–Florida, FY1937," RG 95, NARA.

[49]George LeCouris OH, 22.

[50]Fire Control Instructions to Project Superintendents, 1937, p. 3-4, General Correspondence, ECW Inspections, folder: "ECW Inspections, Florida National Forests, 1937," RG 95, NARA.

[51]Harry Bush OH, by Ben Houston, July 2, 2000, 22, Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida (UF); LeCouris OH, 11.

[52]George LeCouris OH, 11.

[53]L. R. Brodie to Scoggin, June 21, 1941, State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 3, folder: "Gold Head–Fire Control," FSA.

[54]On March 6, 1941, Brodie wrote a three-page memo to Scoggin describing the fire. State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 3, folder: "Gold Head–Fire Control," FSA.

[55]Ibid.

[56]"Notes of Fire Protection Conference, Florida State Parks" June 20, 1941, State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 1, folder: "Florida Caverns–Fire Control," FSA.

[57]*Tent Town Topics*, December 7, 1934; *Jacksonville Journal*, December 8, 1934.

[58]*Jacksonville Journal*, December 8, 1934.

[59]Baker to All CCC Camp superintendents, November 12, 1937, State park project files, 1936-1945, Box 3, folder: "Gold Head–fire control," FSA.

[60]Gary Mormino, "World War II," in Michael Gannon, ed. *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville, 1996), 323.

[61]May 18, 1942, S 406, Box 39, folder: "Forest and Park Service, 1942," FSA.

[62]For more on Bambi and fire prevention, see Ralph Lutts, "The Trouble with Bambi: Walt Disney's Bambi and the American Vision of Nature" in *Conservation History* 36 (October 1992).

[63]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 176. For more on Smokey Bear, see Charles Little, "Smokey's Revenge" in *American Forests* 99 (May/June 1993).

[64]Copies of many of these radio shows can be heard at the Florida State Archives, collected as S 1877.

[65]C. H. Coulter to Burns, February 9, 1965, S 131, Box 24, folder: "Forestry Board, 1965," FSA. This file also contains the scripts and budget for the two ads.

[66]Florida Forest Service, *14th Biennial Report, 1954-1956*, 2-4.; *15th Biennial Report, 1956-1958*, 10.

[67]Florida. Forest Service, *13th Biennial Report, 1952-1954*, 20.

[68]FFS Report to Governor Collins by Coulter (1955), S 776, Box 12, folder: Forestry Board, 1955," FSA, 2.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Johns to Coulter, June 5, 1953, S 569, Box 7, folder: "Forestry Board, 1953," FSA.

[71]Florida Forest Service, *14th Biennial Report, 1954-1956*, 2.

[72]Florida Forest Service, *15th Biennial Report, 1956-1958*, 11.

[73]Tall Timbers Research Station, *Proceedings of the Fire Ecology Conference, 1962-1970* (Tallahassee, 1970), 5.

[74]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, v.

[75]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 35.

[76]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 32.

[77]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 37.

[78]John Shea, "Our Pappies Burned the Woods," *American Forests* (April 1940) can be found at <http://flame.fl-dof.com/Env/pappies.html>, (June 1, 2005).

[79]Ibid.

[80]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 3.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 4.

[83]Herbert Stoddard, *Memoirs of a Naturalist* (Norman, 1969), 243.

[84]Stoddard, *Memoirs*, 246.

[85]Stoddard, *Memoirs*, 244.

[86]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 112.

[87]Eldredge OH, 48-49.

[88]Eldredge OH, 49.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Arno and Allison-Burnell, *Flames in Our Forest*, 17-18.

[91]Pyne, *Fire in America*, 115-16.

[92]Coulter OH, 8.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Coulter to Baker, May 4, 1936, S 278, Box 46, folder: Forestry, 1936, FSA.

[95]Baker to Sholtz, June 22, 1935; S 278, Box 45, folder: 14, FSA.

[96]Coulter to Burns, December 10, 1965, S 131, Box 24, folder: "Forestry Board, 1965," FSA.

[97]Stoddard, *Memoirs*, 251.

[98]Another example can be found in Coulter's speech to the 5th Annual Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference in 1966, Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 203.

[99]Jim Stevenson OH, by Dr. Robin Sellers, September 24, 1999, 8, Reicheld Oral History Program, FSU.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Jim Stevenson OH, 9.

[102]Jamie Trescott OH, by the author, April 5, 2003, 10, Reicheld Oral History Program, FSU.

[103]Clipping found in S 1876, Box 132, folder 4.

[104]Tall Timbers, *Proceedings*, 34.

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Book Reviews

James Agee. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, A Death in the Family, & Shorter Fiction*, Library of America, 2005, 818 pp. $35.00. ISBN 1-931082-81-2.

James Agee. *Film Writing & Selected Journalism. Agee on Film: Reviews and Comments, Uncollected Film Writing, The Night of the Hunter, Journalism and Book Reviews*, Library of America, 2005, 748 pp. $40.00. ISBN 1-931082-82-0.

Early in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee lists some artists who have achieved what he bitterly terms "the emasculation of acceptance." After deriding people who listen to Beethoven "over a bridge game, or to relax" and hang Cezanne reproductions on their walls, he sarcastically observes that "Blake is in the Modern Library; Freud is a Modern Library Giant." So there was certainly some irony when Martin Scorsese selected *Agee on Film: Reviews & Comments* for inclusion in the Modern Library the Movies series in 2000. Now the irony deepens with the Library of America's printing of two volumes of Agee's work, edited by film critic Michael Sragow. Publication by The Library of America is like being designated a protected landmark and Agee's work gets the full treatment: two hardcover volumes with sewn bindings that lay flat at any page, editorial and textual notes, and a detailed biographic chronology. Yet the question of whether Agee has been neutered by canonization remains. Put another way: is his work still dangerous? Re-reading these books assures us that it is, despite the lovely new woven rayon cloth covers.

The larger of the two volumes contains Agee's masterpieces, the ambitious and initially neglected *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) and the posthumously published, Pulitzer Prize winning *A Death in the Family* (1957). Also included are *The Morning Watch* (Agee's guilt-drenched novella about a young boy's religious fervor), and three short stories ("Death in the Desert, "They That Sow Shall Reap" and "A Mother's Tale"). But the two major works are the draw here, particularly *A Death in the Family*, which features long-overdue revisions based on the manuscript Agee left behind when he died of a heart attack in 1955.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men defies genre categories. What began as an assignment for *Fortune* magazine to report on the living

and working conditions of Alabama sharecroppers was transformed by Agee's disgust with journalism (he calls "honest journalism" a paradox) and his deep affection for the families he stayed with into a sprawling book that challenges the feasibility of Realism itself. Agee knew he was writing about people, real people who were living in abject poverty and would continue to do so long after his book was done. Throughout, Agee grapples with the terribly real problem of how to make readers aware of the awful exploitation of the people he writes about without exploiting them himself. The result is a work of great lyricism and emotion, filled with lengthy descriptions of cotton picking, catalogues of everyday household items, character sketches, confessions, excoriations (of both the reader and himself) and political and artistic manifestos. Agee clearly wants his subject to spill over and leak through as much as possible–too perfect a work of art, he argues, would do these people the injustice of seeming complete and total: "If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs, the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food and of excrement.... A piece of the body torn out by the roots might be more to the point." *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* succeeds in its quest for imperfection, sometimes at the expense of the reader's patience, but it also succeeds in its loftier aim of capturing the essence of these difficult lives without sentimentalizing or reducing them.

A Death in the Family is a more hushed and private book; a careful, loving depiction of a family much like Agee's own "in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away." The virtues many felt Agee overindulged in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are strengths here–his love for the people he portrays, his keen ear for voice, his potent imagery and musical phrasing that crosses the boundary between poetry and prose at will; his ability to imagine his way into characters or scenes with incredible vividness. The everyday moments and small, loving gestures that pass unnoticed between people have Agee's special attention and he imbues them with cosmic significance:

> When grief and shock surpass endurance there occur phases of exhaustion, of anesthesia in which relatively little is felt and one has the illusion of recognizing, and understanding a good deal. Throughout these days Mary had, during these breathing spells, drawn a kind of solace from the recurrent thought: at least I am enduring it. I am aware of what has happened, I am meeting it face to face, I am living through it.

Set during the few long days between the death and the funeral, Agee's novel abounds with such moments as he depicts the ways people are quietly warped by grief. Rufus, a young boy deprived of his father, is at the center of the novel as he struggles to comprehend the scale of his loss and the confusing, even cruel, behavior of adults that is born of love in all its grief-distorted forms. Though Agee died before he could finish *A Death in the Family*, it is a remarkably complete and satisfying work. Its final pages may be Agee's greatest accomplishment, a triumphant depiction of a child's desperate reasoning.

The heart of *Film Writing & Selected Journalism*, is *Agee on Film: Reviews & Comments*, here supplemented with twenty-one previously uncollected film reviews and profiles. Agee's reviews remain instructive and entertaining though many of the movies are all but forgotten. His one-sentence panning of *Tycoon* (a forgettable John Wayne picture) could still apply to any number of blockbusters: "Several tons of dynamite are set off in this movie; none of it under the right people." Like any critic, Agee's pronouncements do not all stand the test of time. While the popular "Comedy's Greatest Era," an infectiously fond tribute to the comic art of Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton and others, is still an unalloyed pleasure, his surprisingly unenthusiastic review of Billy Wilder's "Sunset Boulevard" seems cranky. He is ambivalent about Orson Welles, makes petty fun of the dialogue in *Casablanca* (especially Ingrid Bergman's line "Oh, Victor, please don't go to the underground meeting tonight") and then devotes five pages to William Wellman's competent *The Story of G.I. Joe* calling it "A GREAT FILM." Yet these dated judgments are part of the fun, as are opportunities to rediscover gems like the B-movie masterpiece *The Curse of the Cat People*.

Unfortunately, the selections that make up the rest of *Film Writing & Selected Journalism* are not as satisfying. Now out of print, the original second volume of *Agee on Film* was comprised of Agee's screenwriting, including *The African Queen* (for John Huston), an adaptation of Stephen Crane's *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, and an un-produced teleplay based on the life of Gaugin (*Noa Noa*). None of these is included. The sole representation of Agee the screenwriter is *The Night of the Hunter*, a problematic choice since it is still unclear whether the published version (at 93 pages) is actually Agee's, or whether it is director Charles Laughton's re-write of the 350-page screenplay Agee is rumored to have submitted. The selection of journalism is also disappointingly thin. Certainly some of Agee's strongest reportage is here: "Cockfighting," "Tennessee Valley

Authority" and several shorter pieces, but there are some unforgivable omissions. Where is "Havana Cruise," Agee's wry critique of middle-class values disguised as an account of a six-day-long singles cruise? Where is "Smoke," his proto-environmentalist piece about air pollution? Where is "The American Roadside," a fascinating study of the culture of motels and diners that evolved with the popularity of the automobile? The scope of the selections should also have been expanded. Omitting Agee's highly mannered verse is understandable, but excluding his fascinating essays about photography is a loss, as is the absence of his lively correspondence–especially the wonderful *Letters to Father Flye*.

Agee is often faulted for his hyper-lyrical prose, but his critics too lightly dismiss the deeply empathetic bursts of unsustainable love that are its source. If Agee's writing can tend towards the precious and purple it is never because of falseness of feeling. His greatest gift is his ability to simultaneously write with utter abandon and absolute precision. At his best, he helps us to hear the music in all things, to see the fragile beauty and love that connect humanity–and while his unrequited faith in what people are and could be may seem simplistic or naïve to us now, our jaded response may be the very reason that Agee's work is still dangerous, and still worth preserving.

Seamus A. Thompson — Oakland, California

William L. Andrews, ed. *North Carolina Slave Narratives: The Lives of Moses Roper, Lunsford Lane, Moses Grandy, & Thomas H. Jones.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003, 279 pp. $27.50. ISBN 0-8078-2821-1.

"In the war of words that presaged the ultimate downfall of slavery in the United States," William L. Andrews notes at the beginning of his introduction to this outstanding edition, "those affected most by the South's 'peculiar institution'—black people themselves—played a central role." The importance of the testimonials of the enslaved—the many books, shorter memoirs, and interviews collectively known as slave narratives—has by now been widely acknowledged. Although the value of these texts was once questioned by many historians, scholars now recognize slave narratives as essential entrances into historical understanding, and a few narratives—especially Frederick Douglass's 1845 narrative and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*–have come to be considered as major texts

of U.S. literary history. It's fair to say, though, that the challenge of learning not only how to appreciate these texts but also how to read them has barely begun. Even in literature classrooms, these texts are often read for only a generalized voice from the past, a kind of antislavery lecture event more than a century removed, with the authors of these narratives reduced to once again revealing details of degradation and oppression so as to persuade audiences of the immorality of enslavement, a conclusion that today's readers are both happy and quick to reach.

North Carolina Slave Narratives is a valuable contribution to the field, and a great service to those who understand that not all slave narratives are alike, that the craft of slave narratives is largely an art that today's readers have yet to learn, and that the ethical challenge of reading these narratives cannot be reduced to easy pronouncements on what is often taken to be the closed book of the past. Aside from Henry Louis Gates Jr., no one has done more to recover and publish (on line and in print) nineteenth-century African-American texts than Andrews, and this latest edition is a particularly striking example of his tremendous service to the field. Serving as General Editor, Andrews leads a team of careful editors in presenting authoritative editions of four important narratives from men once enslaved in North Carolina. Included are *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper* (published in Philadelphia in 1838), *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane* (published in Boston in 1842), *Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy* (published in London in 1843), and *The Experience of Rev. Thomas H. Jones* (published in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1885).

Together, the narratives tell both highly individual and collective stories of the system and experience of slavery in the United States, offering a number of entrances into the complexities of nineteenth-century American history and culture. The life of Thomas Jones's narrative, for example, is itself an interesting commentary on antislavery and racial culture in the United States. The first version of Jones's story was published in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1849 under the title *Experience of Uncle Thomas Jones, Who Was for Forty Years a Slave*, but an 1855 edition capitalized upon the publication of the famous novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe by offering the story of "Uncle Tom Jones," including a frontispiece that included an illustration both of Uncle Tom and of his cabin. Later versions fortunately separated Jones from Stowe's character, making Jones's narrative somewhat a corrective to the development of sequential versions of another man's life, Josiah Henson, whose narratives similarly were popular both before and after the Civil War, but who

with each new version became more fervently associated with Stowe's Uncle Tom. In other words, slave narratives, those stories of the journey from enslavement to nominal freedom, often undertook journeys of their own and can reveal much about the assumptions, the publishing forums, and the deeply restrictive social contexts that shaped this genre over time. There are worlds to read here, worlds that won't be revealed by an exclusive focus on Douglass and Jacobs.

Each of the narratives included here is important, but together they go far towards making a larger claim—namely, that it is important to attend to the geographical roots of African-American literary production. Although it is obvious that the story of nineteenth-century American literary history can no longer be told simply by focusing on New England, New York, and the South, not many have considered the implications of regional origins in African-American literary production. Too often, this story is reduced to a generalized "South" from which African Americans needed to escape, a South that would later become a bittersweet touchstone in post-Reconstruction and post-migration African-American writing. This collection argues strongly that we should attend carefully to the dynamics of geographical influence, an argument that should lead to reconsiderations of the historical process by which African-American history, culture, and literature have been shaped and of the frameworks through which this complex history should be read.

The edition is thoroughly professional, wonderfully readable, and eminently useful. The book includes a general introduction by Andrews along with introductions to the four narratives by the other editors. The text notes are brief, accurate, and informative. Altogether, this book offers the best introduction to these texts and these writers available, and it also provides a strong foundation for the work yet to be done.

John Ernest West Virginia University

Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2005, ix, 239 pp. Cloth, $45.00, ISBN 0-8078-2929-3; Paper, $19.95, ISBN 0-8078-5593-6.

In W. E. B. Du Bois's 1934 *Black Reconstruction*, the Civil War defined black manhood not by how black men attempted to save human life, but by their efforts to drive a bayonet into the body of another person. Steve Estes's *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the*

Civil Rights Movement continues this debate about how black men might establish their manhood in United States society. In doing so they create space for all African Americans as citizens of this nation to help shift the debate to human rights. This work details the ongoing mid-to-late-twentieth century contest between white and black men over the definitions of what makes a man, race, racism, gender, and sexuality. According to Estes, *I Am a Man!* "is a book about men emerging from the shadows of prejudice and discrimination to challenge stereotypes about who they were and the types of men they could be." Additionally, "at its heart" this is the story "of men *and* women working together to fight for their rights." This theme and the book's title originate from the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike. Estes also sought to present "connections between race and manhood in the civil rights movement [that] will inform new histories of this struggle and guide campaigns for social justice today and in the future."

Estes argues that, "World War II altered conceptions of African-American manhood and how these changes [for black veterans especially] set the stage for the civil rights movement." Global war made men and helped call into question white male supremacy. Domestic events such as the 1943 Detroit race riot also undermined white men's supremacy in defining both race and gender. Eroded white supremacy gave African Americans new confidence to challenge white dominance after the war.

Black assertions of self-determination and a changing national popular culture influenced by television and movies attacked white manhood in the 1950s. White Citizens Councils in response utilized massive resistance and violence to defend "their race...region, their women and children, and their status as white men." While white resistance was intended to discourage blacks' pursuit of equality, it was also supposed to maintain white loyalty to white supremacy. White resistance, however, backfired as it mobilized blacks to act against white dominance and attain manhood through nonviolence.

While black men such as Charles McLaurin came of age becoming men and leaders giving courage to black women as nonviolent men, Estes contends that white supremacy continued attempts to protect white male power using sexuality against the movement and white moderates. The third chapter focuses on Freedom Summer where Civil Rights advocates sought to challenge white antiblack violence and assaults on black sexuality in the movement by inviting northern white men and women to assist in grassroots organizing. One goal of Freedom Summer was "the careful deconstruction of...racial barriers" liberating both races and the sexes. It also

freed white moderates who had been feminized by white supremacists and then "silenced by economic reprisals and social ostracism." In the end, however, antiblack violence took its toll on non-violence causing movement members to look to armed self-defense not only as a way to protect black women and children but to define black manhood.

Armed self-defense took the movement North, West, and into the realm of public policy in Washington, D.C. Malcolm X provided the vision of "our manhood" tying race, gender, and poverty together as civil rights shifted to deal with economic and social justice. The Great Society used public policy to usher black men into the realm of true twentieth century American manhood, the breadwinner. Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan looked back to his single parent female headed childhood in Hell's Kitchen as he constructed in ninety days the report that became the flawed *Beyond the Melting Pot.*

In the West, the Black Panther party emerged with "bold...explicit claims to manhood as the basis for its struggles against racial and economic oppression." Black veteran, Bobby Seale and antipoverty program worker Huey Newton "wanted to show young black men in America's inner cities that they too could be 'The Man,' that they too could have power." The Black Panthers' search for power for African Americans proceeded upon an evolutionary track. Beginning with Revolutionary socialism and violence party members both men and women believed socialism could be used to end police invasion of black communities. When Huey Newton left prison in 1971 he attempted to move the party away from revolution to reform. The shift, Estes argues, was part of the Black Panthers' wrestling with the exclusionary manhood of revolutionary violence. They sought to embrace a human rights focused agenda by inviting all of the oppressed including women and the gay community to join a broad-based effort to overcome white supremacy.

I Am a Man! will spark debate and considerable thought about how manhood has been defined in American society over the past two generations. The work, however, is weakest in its analysis of Robert Williams's evolution to manhood. Williams came to some of his definitions of manhood in a marriage with Mabel Williams where she helped define armed self-defense and manhood while white supremacy thrived. Also, Anne Moody's coming of age is absent from this work. She developed under the unrelenting pressure of white supremacy. White supremacy's enduring power in American society, exploitative capitalism, and predatory violence make exploration of manhood,

sexuality, gender, poverty, jobs, and violence still the focus of the search for human rights.

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Glenn Feldman, ed. *Before Brown: Civil Rights and White Backlash in the Modern South.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004, xiii, 430 pp. Paper, $27.95, ISBN 0-8173-5134-5; Cloth, $60.00, ISBN 0-8173-1431-8.

In 1968, Richard M. Dalfiume published a study, titled "'The Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," in the *Journal of American History*. Although Dalfiume addressed the early 1940s in the study, his thesis sparked an interest in locating the roots of contemporary civil rights well prior to the sweeping *Brown* decision of 1954, which somehow came to represent the benchmark for contemporary civil rights. In fact, the scholarly community had manifested no consensus on the origins and development of modern civil rights even prior to Dalfiume's work, but his article proved, nonetheless, a sort of watershed in the study of the influences of both individual and collective actions during the pre- and post-*Brown* eras. Editor Glenn Feldman and the eleven contributors to his *Before Brown: Civil Rights and White Backlash in the Modern South* add an interesting series of studies furthering this exploration, but whether this "collection is a major contribution to the enterprise,"as Patricia Sullivan states in the Foreword, is a question many readers will view with suspicion. Moreover, many readers will cast a dubious eye on Feldman's anti-periodization assertion that during "recent years civil rights scholars have stressed that the movement did not suddenly begin with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision...." Certainly, a wide range of recent studies have purported to reconceptualize the origins and development of civil rights, but these works, in reality, have simply complemented a steady flow of such scholarship originating even prior to Dalfiume's contribution to the field.

As with most collections of this kind, Feldman, an associate professor at the Center for Labor Education and Research in the School of Business at the University of Alabama, and his contributors have completed a book with both strengths and shortcomings. Feldman begins with a lengthy, and somewhat disjointed Prologue, which attempts to delineate the thematic and conceptual parameters of the

book and place in focus the work's major strength, the "still largely unheralded civil rights battles fought during the 1940s and early 1950s." The Prologue is useful, but it leaves the reader wondering if the book as a whole is going to be a "stretch" in regard to proving that other recent works along with this one represent "an advance in scholarship" on the subject. Feldman might better have substituted "continuation" for "advance" in his statement. Feldman is at his best in the equally long Epilogue in which he perceptively traces the influence of white supremacy over the transition from a once-solid Democratic South to a now-solid Republican South. Situated between these two sections are nine other essays shedding light on numerous persons, groups, and actions that both illuminate and explore the struggles, nuances, and failures of local, state, and interstate civil rights subjects prior to *Brown*. Raymond Arsenault and Adam Fairclough provide two of the more useful studies in their discussions of a precursor (Irene Morgan) to Rosa Parks and the subsequent CORE Journey of Reconciliation in 1947, and the civil rights struggle at the grass roots in Louisiana from 1940-1954. The other authors, some of interesting qualifications (per the contributors pages) write specifically on the pre-*Brown* trajectory of civil rights, proffer additional studies of measurable worth, none of which, however, "rewrites" the body of knowledge regarding this subject and period. Even so, taken in the broad sweep the essays prod the reader to think carefully about the role of the white backlash to civil rights, southern mores and folkways, lesser-known civil rights leaders and groups, and the depths and true measure of the sacrifices these forerunners to *Brown* endured. Equally significant is the book's contribution to a better understanding of important issues, such as "religion baiting," race as the "fault line" of twentieth-century America, the perils of labor identity, and women and white southern supporters as co-principals in many pre-*Brown* struggles.

Similarly, the organization and development of this book shed much light on the deep currents of struggle to end segregation and disfranchisement prior to *Brown*. Many of the essays highlight forgotten heroes of this struggle through recapitulation of events and personal accounts. The essays provide, as well, useful studies of well-known and not so well-known organizations in this era, the span of which runs virtually from A to Z. Perhaps more importantly, the few essays of multi-layered themes (for example, those of Arsenault and Fairclough) seem to suggest in their own developmental ways a near-unanimity of southern, white opposition to any form of or movement for civil rights in the decades preceding *Brown*. When the "Solid South" is understood in this context, the sacrifices of those–black and

white–who participated in the southern struggle for racial justice take on new dimensions. Students of this chapter in American history have long known the sweep and scope of these struggles, but the studies in *Before Brown* challenge readers to continuously reach out to grasp the depths and repercussions of the white backlash to civil rights.

Certainly, the editor's and authors' careful research and stimulating analyses suggest to the reader that the seeds of protest were sewn well before *Brown*, but most students of the subject already know, and acknowledge, this. Indeed, the black press and Carter G. Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* (begun in 1916) provided a steady illustration of a tradition of civil rights struggles prior to *Brown*, as did studies of such scholars as John Hope Franklin, Vincent Harding, Lerone Bennett, Aldon Morris, August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, and Robert L. Zangrando, who have long-been documenting early activists, groups, leaders, and campaigns (e.g., Zangrando's study of the NAACP's national *and* grassroots anti-lynching efforts through 1950 is a stellar example of formative actions evolving into the sustained civil rights actions many scholars now term "the civil rights movement"). More recent scholarship flowing from the pens of Maribel Manning, John Ditmer, and even the works of Adam Fairclough, to name but a few of many, have also spoken volumes to the forerunners of *Brown*. Collaterally, important recent studies like Ben Green's *Before His Time: The Untold Story of Harry T. Moore, America's First Civil Rights Martyr* (2005), and Michael Dennis's *Luther P. Jackson and a Life for Civil Rights* (2004), join Feldman's work in offering an important sampling of activists and direct actions laying the groundwork for *Brown*. In this sense, *Before Brown* will prove useful to readers interested in extending the linkages of *Brown* and the subsequent movement, but it will not in itself provide a reconceptual bridge to those advocates and actions.

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Brian R. Rucker. *Floridale: The Rise and Fall of a Florida Boom Community*. Bagdad, Fla.: Patagonia Press, 2001, 142 pp. $14.95 ISBN 1-88269-517-8.

Tim Hollis. *Florida's Miracle Strip: From Redneck Riviera to Emerald Coast*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2006, 238 pp. $25.00. ISBN 1-57806-627-8.

When most non-residents think of Florida their thoughts likely turn to the theme parks in and around Orlando. Many others might imagine relaxing on the white-sand beaches of Miami, the Florida Keys, or perhaps those in Fort Myers, Sarasota, or Saint Petersburg. In many ways, people's conception of the state is informed by current and recent popular culture. Television shows like *Miami Vice* and *Seinfeld*, movies like *Goodfellas* and *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, and books by authors like Carl Hiasson have famously depicted one or more of these areas while at the same time confirming stereotypical perceptions. They have also constructed a view of Florida based almost entirely on the areas south of the Orlando and Tampa areas.

This perception of Florida has contributed to the widely held view—both by Floridians and non-Floridians alike—that the northern and southern portions of the state are not only separated geographically, but also culturally and economically. Such views are not entirely creations of popular culture, but have historical roots as well. In 1939 the New Deal's Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Florida State guide, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State*, famously quipped, "Physically and socially, Florida has its own North and South, but its northern area is strictly southern and its southern area definitely northern." Historical treatments of Florida have variously examined the Tampa cigar industry, southern agricultural production, and the state's larger theme parks. In addition, historians often use the Florida land boom in the southern portion of the state in the 1920s to foreshadow the onset of the Great Depression at the end of that decade. Yet as local historians Brian R. Rucker and Tim Hollis demonstrate in their respective books, *Floridale: The Rise and Fall of a Florida Boom Community* and *Florida's Miracle Strip: From Redneck Riviera to Emerald Coast*, such a dichotomous view obscures many similarities that the northwestern panhandle shares with the southern and central portions of the state. Like the central and southern parts of the state, residents of Florida's panhandle tried to capitalize on the 1920s real estate market. While in the post World War II era, citizens and business interests in the panhandle attempted to buttress the area's economy by attracting tourists to its white sand beaches and constructing numerous roadside attractions and amusement parks.

Brian R. Rucker's *Floridale: The Rise and Fall of a Florida Boom Community* examines the aborted creation of an "agricultural utopia" in northwest Florida during the early and mid 1920s. The town's founders and financiers, a group that included Richard Ringling (of the famed Ringling circus family), sought to take advantage of the increased consumption of fresh fruit in the 1920s. The Satsuma orange

stood at the center of this "boom" in agricultural production, which appeared (to Floridale's investors at least) perfectly suited to northwestern Florida's climate. Rucker also places the founding of Floridale in the 1920s Florida land boom. In attempting to attract future residents, its backers undertook a large advertising campaign. Floridale's founders hoped to entice settlers to construct poultry farms and plant various orchards. They placed numerous advertisements in magazines and produced pamphlets that touted the area's climate and potential to produce an abundance of agricultural products. At first the investors successfully attracted a number of developers and residents to the fledgling area, including one investor who began the construction of a lavish hotel that remained as the doomed settlement's longest lasting physical reminder. Unfortunately for the boosters, a number of developments, most notably the collapse of the Florida land boom, eventually doomed Floridale in the development's infancy.

Tim Hollis's book, *Florida's Miracle Strip: From Redneck Riviera to Emerald Coast* studies the same geographical region as Rucker, but his narrative is concerned with the development of the tourism industry from the late 1950s and early 1960s to the present. Hollis writes in a style that is oftentimes as deliberately kitschy as the many roadside attractions that he describes. He often ends passages or sections with silly one-liners, such as "Today, there are many people who believe Sir Goony's invaders in Pensacola were part of the original course design, but those who subscribe to this idea are just goony, Sir," which he used to describe a local miniature golf course. The geographical area that Hollis examines, roughly from Pensacola in the west to Panama City in the East, is blessed with natural beauty in the form of some of the nation's best beaches. Moreover, given its proximity to other "Gulf States," like Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana the area held the potential as a vacation mecca for Deep South families. Yet the area lacked the convenient access to other attractions, such as Disney World, which locations like Saint Petersburg and Sarasota did or the famed nightlife of cities like Miami. In an attempt to compensate for these deficiencies, entrepreneurs and investors constructed a variety of roadside attractions to create a "fun" experience that would complement the area's natural attractions and entice tourists to spend their money. The combination of shoddy roadside attractions and Deep South visitors lead derisive critics to christen the area the "Redneck Riviera."

Hollis touches upon many varieties of local tourist traps that are endemic to Florida, but highly concentrated in the northwestern portion of the state. He organizes the book thematically, treating

similar attractions across different eras. In so doing, he describes the many evolutions the area has undergone, from family vacation center to spring break hotspot, as well as the more recent trend of scaling back some of the more extravagant qualities of the attractions. The attractions Hollis investigates range from amusement parks, wildlife exhibits, miniature golf courses, and "Wild West" themed towns to souvenir stands and observation towers. He enlivens his treatment with many photographs that show the slogans and gimmicks businesses utilized to attract people. He also uses attraction operators' and designers' personal reminiscences to explore the reasons behind the seemingly misshapen designs of some of the tourist traps. All this contributes to a highly detailed narrative that does justice to its subject.

Yet, however detailed these two books are, they both share the same fundamental weakness: both are almost completely bereft of any attempt at analysis. In treating the Floridale marketing campaign, Brian Rucker fails to evaluate the manner in which the community's boosters promoted the development, beyond the area's mild climate and its potential to produce agricultural products. However, from the photos and written evidence he presents, he could have connected the boosters' marketing strategies to Progressive era concerns about urban vice and crime. In fact, it appears that Floridale's boosters intended the community to be an ideal mixture of rural and urban life. The settlement's design called for a city center surrounded by a variety of agricultural pursuits. Rucker does not comment on this and thus misses the opportunity to add a further dimension to his study. Also, he does not adequately analyze the drastic environmental changes in northwest Florida that enabled the community to be built, nor those wrought by Floridale's construction. Rucker notes the decline of the turpentine industry and deforestation in the area prior to Floridale's founding. He also mentions that the few settlers the community did attract often brought with them a crop regime, including Satsuma oranges, blueberries, and pecans that did not exist in the area prior to their arrival. He does not explore the agricultural changes which have persisted in the area for years following Floridale's demise. This failure is particularly notable given the author's interest in agricultural history.

In subject matter and presentation, Tim Hollis's book most resembles John F. Kasson's *Amusing the Million*, a book that focuses on the cultural and social significances of New York's Coney Island. Like Kasson's study, the examination of amusement parks could have conceivably opened a vista into which one could study the mixing of racial, ethnic, and/or class groups. However, the reader is left with little idea of who actually visited the parks or why they chose to do so.

Moreover, Hollis does little to examine whatever cultural and social significance the parks in northwestern Florida held for visitors. Even when his discussion does turn to the area's visitors, most notably in his discussion of spring breakers, little is said of the experience. Hollis is content to simply state that young, college-age kids offended the sensibilities of the area's residents. But left unanswered is exactly why their behavior did so. While their hedonism was undoubtedly a factor, there may have been other reasons. What role did the possible mixture of people, across gender, class, and/or racial lines, play in the community's concerns? How did the offended parties attempt to reconcile their moral/social concerns with the financial boom brought by spring break activities? Hollis only briefly discusses the latter aspect. Instead he simply describes the parks and their structures, with no comment on the images they projected about their themes.

Despite their detailed narratives, both authors do not incorporate sufficient analysis or place their studies in wider contexts which ultimately limits the appeal of their books. Thus these books will appeal most to local residents and those seeking a nostalgic reminiscence of past vacations.

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Samuel C. Hyde, ed. *A Fierce and Fractious Frontier: The Curious Development of Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1699-2000.* Forward by Hodding Carter. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004, xiv, 256 pp. $21.95. ISBN 0-871-2923-2.

On September August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina blasted the Gulf Coast, wreaking havoc on the City of New Orleans and neighboring communities along the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama coastline. Among those areas suffering devastation were Louisiana's "Florida Parishes," so named because these parishes that lay between the Pearl and the Mississippi rivers were once a part of Spanish West Florida. No scholar has done more to lay bare the historical roots and national significance of this "fierce and fractious frontier" region than the editor of this fine volume, Samuel C. Hyde Jr., Director of the Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies at Southeastern Louisiana University. The author of *Pistols and Politics* (Baton Rouge, 1998), and numerous other articles and book chapters on this perplexing and habitually violent region, Hyde writes that these eight parishes "collectively form a distinct region linked by geography

and a peculiar common heritage." Hyde notes that he hopes the collection might "serve to encourage the emergence of a new era in the study of Louisiana, and perhaps the wider South, one that abandons generalizations and stereotypes through inclusiveness and a broader awareness of diversity." Hyde goes on to argue that, "A primary strength of local history is that it permits the revelation of the previously less considered. The essays included in this survey suggest the relevance of subregional studies. We hope they will provide a starting point for further research that abandons preconceptions in celebration of our differences."

Fierce and Fractious Frontier collects ten essays derived from an SLU conference held in 2000 entitled "Louisiana's Florida Parishes: Continuity and Change, 1699-2000." Charles N. Elliot explores French and Indian alliances on the colonial frontier. Robin Fabel looks at land speculation and town planning under British rule. Gilbert C. Din, Bill Wyche, and Adam Fairclough examine the African-American experience in the colonial, progressive, and New Deal eras. Agricultural and economic developments in the Reconstruction Era and in the contemporary context are the subject of essays by Latimore Smith and Paul Templet. Gene A. Smith and Hyde study the region's military experiences in the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

While this collection holds together remarkably well and all of the essays are of first rate quality, this reviewer was particularly impressed with several of them. For example, in a chapter exploring slavery in the Florida Parishes during Spanish Rule, Gilbert Din finds "Spanish law as generally milder than French or English slave practices, especially in punishment or manumission, particularly in allowing bondspeople to purchase their freedom." Din's findings mirror the path-breaking research of Jane Landers and others who find similar patterns in Spanish East Florida. He attributes this situation to tradition, outside developments in Spain's crumbling colonial empire, and finally, Spanish officials' striving toward a policy of "cooperation, not opposition from its inhabitants." "Within Louisiana and West Florida," Din writes, "Spain sought reconciliation with the different factions in society, and this policy extended all the way from masters at the top down to slaves at the bottom."

In another essay Adam Fairclough, uses the research notes of educator Horace Mann Bond compiled in Washington Parish in the 1930s detailing extensive evidence of miscegenation between white and black families to make a number of broad observations about the frequency and effects of racial mixing. Fairclough speculates that while the Washington Parish experience can not necessarily be extrapolated

to other areas of the South, the Washington Parish experience "may have been a microcosm of the South."

In a probing and introspective forward (which is in itself worth the purchase price of the book) Hodding Carter III offers a personal perspective to the region of his ancestors, as well as articulating the importance a sense of place lends to the southern and indeed human spirit. Carter deplores the "the disconnect of...tens of millions of Americans from place, from the history of their place and sense of place." This, he argues, "has proceeded in tandem with their disconnect from civic enterprise and identity. And that disconnect, I am increasingly persuaded, carries within it a poison that already sickens and can ultimately kill the fundamental virtues and essential institutions of this democratic republic." Carter argues that history offers a way to overcome this problem. "It is precisely because these physical connections are so tenuous in our time that the intellectual ones must be cultivated, encouraged, and nourished," he argues. "The active engagement...as a way to make a place better starts by knowing its history and appreciating its heritage."

As the citizens of the Florida parishes and other victims of Hurricane Katrina struggle to rebuild their communities, perhaps *Fierce and Fractious Frontier* can offer some historical perspective to their current condition. This excellent collection adds extensively to our understanding of one of America's most interesting and complex regions.

James M. Denham Florida Southern College

Raymond A. Mohl with Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth. *South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004, 263 pp. $39.95. ISBN 0-8130-2693-8.

Although the subject of this book is a worthy one and the story often compelling, the work, taken as a whole, is disappointing. The author's objective is to tell the history of the civil rights movement in Miami through the lives and words of two Jewish women who played central roles in the struggle from the mid-1940s to 1960. But these two women were involved in part of a larger movement, and their tenure did not last to the end, so that the history has a truncated quality about it.

The first of these women is Matilda "Bobbi" Graff, who was in her middle twenties when she and her husband and a daughter moved to Miami in 1946. Bobbi and her husband had been active in leftist

politics in their native New York and then in Detroit, where they had lived most recently. So it was natural that the couple continued their political activities, which included working in the presidential campaign of Progressive political party candidate Henry Wallace in 1948, and, for Bobbi, serving as an officer in the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), which could fairly be called a communist-front organization. Years later, in the 1970s, Graff completed her baccalaureate, and, for a class assignment, she wrote an extended essay on her life as a political activist in Jim Crow Florida. This previously unpublished essay, which takes nearly a third of the text, is easily its most engaging part.

The Graffs actually had two associated enemies during the eight years that they spent in Florida. First were the local racists, most violently led by the Ku Klux Klan. Cross burnings were common, and the murder of blacks not uncommon. Called at the time the "Little Scottsboro Case," the legal battle known as the Groveland case involved four Negro youths who were accused on flimsy evidence of raping a young white woman. Two of the black youths were killed and the other two were found guilty, and as with the earlier Scottsboro case, the Communist Party, in the guise of the CRC, competed with the NAACP to represent the accused. While the remaining defendants were appealing their convictions, NAACP leader Harry T. Moore and his wife were murdered in a bombing of their house in December 1951.

As the anti-communist crusade of the 1950s moved into high gear, not only the federal government, in the guise of the FBI, investigated local communists, but state and local authorities were doing so as well. And the Graffs were vulnerable, as they had been (and perhaps still were, the point was not made clear) party members. Bobbi Graff was served a subpoena in her hospital room soon after the delivery of her third child. Rather than face the possibility of jail, her husband had served time for refusing to "name names," she fled to Canada, where he later joined her. In her essay she makes a reasonable (but to this reader not convincing) apologia for her party membership.

Shirley Zoloth, the other subject of this book, moved to Miami with her husband in late 1954, only a few weeks after Bobbi Graff had left for Canada. Like the Graffs, both of the Zoloths were from New York and had been active in left-wing causes, most recently in Philadelphia, where they previously lived. Like the Graffs, the Zoloths had supported Wallace for president in 1948, but unlike them, they were not communist party members.

Shirley Zoloth, who seems to have been a woman of nearly boundless energy, was taken up with two aspects of the civil rights

struggle: to implement the 1954 Brown decision by desegregating Miami area schools and to integrate the lunch counters of the local department stores. The chapter devoted to Zoloth reproduces about three dozen letters, memoranda, reports, and minutes of meetings, most written by Zoloth. They describe the activities of the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality of which she was an officer. Although some of this material is worthwhile, and a report she wrote on the state of the integration of public accommodations in Miami as of the fall of 1958 is very interesting, taken as a whole the material makes for confusing and disjointed reading. Unfortunately, unlike Bobbi Graff, Zoloth never wrote an account of her years as a civil rights activist.

In an introductory chapter, Mohl attempts to place Graff and Zoloth into the larger story of the struggle for civil rights in Miami. This he largely fails to do; for example, almost nothing is said about whether Dade County African Americans could vote. Various elections are alluded to, but voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns are all but ignored. Mohr seems more interested in the historiographic questions: local versus national histories of the civil rights movement, and the role of southern Jews in the civil rights movement. More than once he seems to bemoan the fact that only a tiny minority of southern Jews was involved in the movement, and in the case of Miami, the activists were almost always, like the Graffs and Zoloths, recent arrivals. But truth to tell only a small minority is ever going to be "activist" in almost any cause. For an interesting book on this potentially emotional subject, see Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (2001). In a final irony, if one were needed, Bobbi Graff and Shirley Zoloth, given their intelligence and energy, would today probably be stressed-out career women, too busy for political activism.

Stephen J. Goldfarb — Atlanta, GA

Gary R. Mormino. *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005, xvii, 457 pp. Photographs, maps, and tables. $34.95. ISBN 0-8130-2818-3.

This is a very good book. In it Gary Mormino captures the spirit of a state which, since 1950, has attracted around one thousand new residents every day while at the same time has seen several hundred leave, disappointed, disillusioned, or just sick of it. It is a state where William Jennings Bryan was once said to observe that a lie told at

breakfast would become the truth by lunchtime. A Land of Sunshine and a State of Dreams, that's Florida.

In so many ways, Florida is America a little ahead of itself. When Americans fell in love with the automobile, there was Florida, ready for them to visit. When Americans began to look to technology to make their lives more comfortable, there were Floridians spraying DDT to kill the mosquitoes that forced people indoors and installing air conditioners to get people out of the climate that attracted people to the state in the first place. "Have it your way" could have been the Florida slogan.

There is the paradox of Florida. For most of the twentieth century promoters have been using technology to make Florida perfect, even as they were selling the wonders of its natural state. And at mid-century, when the American dream was focused on a house, an automobile, and a vacation, Florida offered all three. Vacation in Florida, drive down, and while you are here, buy yourself a piece of the future–$10 down and $10 a month–so when you retire you can sell the house in Cleveland, leave the snows of winter, and live out your days in Florida.

And many people did.

Despite all the MTV publicity for Spring Break in Florida, senior citizens have done as much or more than college students to define the modern state. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say that those who worked so hard to entice senior citizens to Florida are the real definers.

In the first place, promoters, developers, and businessmen in all stripes and sizes changed a state made up of white, protestant, southerners into one of the most ethnically diverse states in the union. They enticed Jews to come to Miami, whites to come to Destin, old money to Palm Beach, Midwesterners to Clearwater and Naples, blacks to American Beach, Finns to Lake Worth, Canadians to Broward County, and college students to Daytona, Fort Lauderdale, and Panama City. And they provided the visitors something to do. Silver Springs, Cypress Gardens, Weeki Wachee, alligator wrestling Indians, snakes-a-rama, and more, all enhanced by man to appeal to the eye and the pocket book.

There are so many Floridas and so many aspects of each that for simply identifying them and organizing them into a single book the author deserves our congratulations. The many insights he adds to the story are icing on the cake. Here is Florida, a state with a $50 billion tourist industry that has created 663,000 jobs, yet many if not most of them are low paying, no benefits service jobs. Here is a state

which, if it were a nation, would have a GNP greater than Argentina, yet manufacturing makes up less that 6 percent of the economy and the median income is below the national average. It is a state of first world luxury and, in the migrant camps and the slums of its larger cities, third world poverty. A state where retirees are a $55 billion-a-year business, and yet flying deceased transplants back "home" to be buried, the so called "coffin run," kept at least one airline solvent, for a while at least.

And it is a state where everybody is close enough for a day trip to the beach.

In *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams,* Gary Mormino gives readers a fast paced, readable, enlightening account of modern Florida. If you live there, have visited there, or just want to go there, this book is for you.

Harvey H. Jackson III Jacksonville (AL) State University

J. Todd Moye. *Let the People Decide: Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945-1986.* Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, xi, 281 pp. Cloth, $55.00, ISBN 0-8078-2895-5; Paper, $19.95, ISBN 0-8078-5561-8.

The author, who is director of the National Park Service's Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project, states that a major goal of his work "is to examine the ways that the men and women of Sunflower County shaped and reacted to events on the local level, operated within a political culture unique to the state of Mississippi, and altered their goals and strategies in response to 'national' civil rights events and policies over time." The book's title, "Let the People Decide," was the motto of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which first sent workers into the county in 1962.

Sunflower County lies in the heart of the Mississippi Delta and contains some of the region's most fertile and productive farmland. African Americans have always outnumbered whites in its population and made up the bulk of the farm labor force. White planters own most of the land, and, until the late twentieth century, they controlled the county's politics. The county's two most notable citizens, both of whom are now deceased, are U.S. Senator James Oliver Eastland, who lived on his plantation just southwest of the small town of Doddsville, and the late civil rights' heroine, Fannie Lou Hamer, of Ruleville. In

the prologue Moye provides the details of a lynching, in 1904, of a black farm laborer on the Eastland plantation, which was said to have been orchestrated by the senator's father, Woods Eastland, in retaliation for the murder of his brother and the senator's namesake, James Oliver Eastland. The author contends that the Eastlands, father and son, created and supported an atmosphere of fear and domination that thwarted efforts by African Americans in Sunflower county to claim their basic rights of citizenship. "In a very real sense," Moye asserts, "the fight for civil rights in the Mississippi Delta was an effort to dismantle the world the Eastlands had made."

Although Moye presents a rather extensive and impressive list of research material in his bibliography, he appears to rely quite heavily on oral history interviews–especially those of white moderate Jack Harper Jr., the longtime Sunflower Chancery Clerk, and black political activist Charles McLaurin, who came to the Delta county in the early 1960s to direct SNCC's organizing strategy. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) had led to the organization of the Citizens' Council in Sunflower County, and white resistance stiffened as blacks worked to increase the moderate gains they had made earlier in voter registration. After registering to vote in the early 1960s, Fannie Lou Hamer endured threats, intimidation, and acts of violence, but those bitter experiences only served to strengthen her resolve to fight. Hamer helped to organize the Freedom Democratic Party, and she drew attention at the 1964 Democratic national convention to the intimidation and violence that Mississippi blacks had faced in their attempts to register to vote and become first-class citizens. The following year Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which enabled African Americans to register and take part in the political process under the protection of the federal government.

White volunteers trained by the Council of Federated Organization (COFO) arrived in the Delta in 1964 to participate in the Freedom Summer project. They helped SNCC workers Charles Cobb and Charles McLaurin to establish Freedom Schools throughout Sunflower County to motivate black students and older adults to protest racial injustices and stand up for their rights. Under a freedom of choice plan offered by the Drew Public School system in 1965, Matthew and Mae Bertha Carter enrolled their children in the white schools. As a result, Matthew lost his farm job, and the family had to move into Drew. Despite harassment and gunshots fired on their home at night, they stood firm, but no other black parents in the community followed their lead. By the late 1960s, however, African-American parents in Indianola began to work for desegregation of the

public schools. U.S. District Judge William C. Keady ordered the complete integration of the county's public school system in 1970, and white parents subsequently withdrew their children and sent them to Indianola Academy, which had been established a year earlier.

Ninety per cent of the students and teachers in the Indianola public school system were African American in1985, when a crisis arose over the refusal of the white majority on the school board to appoint a qualified black applicant to the vacated post of superintendent. In a 3-2 vote along racial lines, the board bypassed the capable black principal of the local elementary school and appointed a white man instead. Middle class black leaders organized a successful boycott of local merchants, and white and black community leaders formed a bi-racial committee to work out their differences. The white members of the school board finally changed their minds and asked the newly appointed white superintendent to resign, but he refused. After white businessmen collected enough money to buy out his contract, the protests ended, and the qualified black principal secured the school post. "The superintendent's crisis and its resolution," Moye concludes, "can be read as the culmination of the struggle for black equality in Sunflower county."

This book is well-written and informative, but the author seems to be less than even-handed and misleading in some areas of his presentation. The photograph of "a Mississippi Delta plantation owner," for example, is hardly typical of that class. Bilbo & his followers opposed rather than supported Eastland in the senatorial election of 1942. The account of the lynching and other comments in the prologue detract from the book, because these events appear to have had no relation to the stiff and often violent white resistance of the post-World War II years. The author correctly asserts that Senator Eastland played a major role in fighting efforts by blacks to become first-class citizens, but he fails to mention that during his last term in office "Big Jim" appointed an African American, Ed Cole, to his staff; or that he "broke bread" a year before he retired with blacks at the Mississippi Democratic Party's Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in Biloxi (*The Reporter*, Jackson, Oct. 20, 1977). Despite these points of criticism, the author covers new material in the events relating to the hiring of the black school superintendent, and his book creates an overall better understanding of the civil rights' movement from 1954 to the mid-1980s in this Mississippi Delta county.

Thomas N. Boschert Delta State University

S. Scott Rohrer. *Hope's Promise: Religion and Acculturation in the Southern Backcountry*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005, xxxiv, 266 pp. $42.50. ISBN 0-8173-1435-0.

In *Hope's Promise*, S. Scott Rohrer carefully explores the creation of American and southern identity among the settlers of the multi-cultural society of the southern backcountry. The Hope of the title is a small settlement of English-speaking former Anglicans who came to North Carolina shortly before the American Revolution. They migrated from Maryland, where they had converted to Moravianism, and established their town within the larger area of Moravian settlement, Wachovia. Despite the book's title, though, Rohrer has much to say about the other settlements in Wachovia, not just Hope.

The process of acculturation in Wachovia, according to Rohrer, progressed through three stages. The first involved the creation of an Anglo-German world, as the English-speaking settlers in Hope gradually formed a bond with the German-speaking residents of other towns in Wachovia. Moravian evangelicalism, with its emphasis on the experience of the new birth, formed the basis of this new unity. As the Germans and English participated in the governance of the Moravian church and joined each other in religious festivals, they "met, mingled, and eventually married." In the process they created "a new ethnicity based not on language and cultural heritage but on an evangelical religion."

During the years of the American Revolution, Rohrer's second stage, the residents of Hope and Wachovia developed a more complex identity as both evangelicals and Americans. Although the pacifist Moravians at first tried to avoid involvement in the war with the British, they could not. Eventually they provided supplies for the American armies, carried the wounded, and participated in the politics of the new nation. As they did, they embraced a new nationalism, coming to consider themselves Americans, as well as a new individualism and other American values. After the Revolution, in Rohrer's third stage, the Moravians incorporated yet another identity, that of Southerners. In the early 1800s, their communities became more prosperous, and, at the same time, outsiders who owned slaves moved into the area. The residents of Hope and other settlements soon embraced slavery, easily justifying owning other human beings as a means to fulfill their traditional responsibility to care for their families. They not only kept slaves but also drew stark lines between white and black, including adopting segregated worship. Religious practices

changed in other ways as well. The Moravians abandoned some of their distinctive rituals, such as the kiss of peace to welcome new members and the practice of prostrating themselves in prayer during communion. Yet they also exhibited a new emotionalism in their services and participated in revivalism. They no longer shunned unbelievers but instead sought to convert them. They had become, Rohrer concludes, Southerners as well as Americans and evangelicals.

Rohrer's discussion of changes in religious practices provides a good example of his imaginative but rigorous use of evidence in order to make his case for changes in the Moravians' cultural attitudes. Other examples include an examination of how brickwork on houses became more ornate and a careful count of the usage of pietistic language in wills. He also provides solid statistics on categories more traditionally used by social historians—intermarriage, family size, church membership, landholding, tax values, and the like. Providing such a variety of concrete measures of evolving cultural practices makes Rohrer's case for the formation of a new, more complex identity convincing. Too many cultural historians simply assert the existence of some vague sense of identity rather than demonstrating it with solid evidence of behavioral changes.

Although *Hope's Promise* makes a convincing case for acculturation and changing sources of identity, its conceptualization of Moravian theology may puzzle scholars of religion. Most of them categorize Moravianism as pietistic, not evangelical, and might well argue that Rohrer's study actually traces the Moravians' transformation from pietists to evangelicals. Rohrer mentions pietism on occasion but does not adequately explain why he chooses to interpret Moravianism as evangelicalism. Even if evangelicalism is considered another of the new identities that Moravians developed in their new home, rather than the starting point and basis of their acculturation, it does not undermine Rohrer's complex discussion of how settlers in Wachovia became Americans and southerners. Readers will learn much about Moravian history and the formation of American and southern identities from Rohrer's book.

Gaines M. Foster Louisiana State University

Richard Scott, Stella Pitts, and Mary Thompson. *Family Recipes from Rosedown and Catalpa Plantations*. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005, 216 pp. $19.95. ISBN 978-1-58980-211-7.

In recent years old recipes and cookbooks have become increasingly popular with culinary historians, food anthropologists, and researchers of material culture for gaining an accurate glimpse into foodways of the past. *Family Recipes from Rosedown and Catalpa Plantations* contributes to the understanding of the kitchen and dining customs of nineteenth-century plantation life through its presentation of over one hundred family recipes gathered from two southeastern Louisiana estates.

Rosedown plantation, currently owned and operated by the state as a historic site, was originally built in 1834 by Martha and Daniel Turnbow, descendants of two wealthy and influential planter families. During its antebellum zenith Rosedown covered over thirty-five hundred acres and featured an elaborate manor house, extensive gardens, and several latticed summerhouses. Neighboring Catalpa plantation, though smaller, was no less elaborate with its artificial lake, iron fountains, pigeon houses, and huge greenhouse.

Rosedown and Catalpa barely survived the harsh deprivations of the post-Civil War period and even leaner times during the 1920s and 30s. After 120 years of family occupancy, Rosedown was sold in 1956 to a Texas couple who launched an eight-year, $11 million restoration project. The state acquired the property in 2000 and opened it daily for tours.

Catalpa, unlike Rosedown, has continued through the years to be privately owned by descendants of the estate's original owners. It was in the attic of Catalpa that the collection of recipes making up this volume was recently discovered. Scribbled on scraps of yellowing paper the recipes, or "receipts" as they were then called, were written by several generations of women living at both plantations over roughly a sixty-year period in the nineteenth century. Some are thought to have been copied from earlier published cookbooks; others are obviously written out by one family member to be given to another.

The book contains seventeen chapters devoted to different categories of recipes, including the usual sections on soups, salads, and meats, as well some not so usual classifications such as "Fritters, Etc.," and "Doughnuts, Waffles, Etc." Although many of the recipes would be comfortably at home in a modern Southern kitchen, many would today seem quaint, confusing, or even peculiar. For example, the recipe

for "Calve's Head Soup" calls for "1 calve's head skinned and 1 set of feet—well cleaned." After the meat is boiled tender and the bones removed, "marjorum," cloves, black pepper, "some small dumplings," chopped boiled eggs, lemon and a "tea cup of wine" are added, along with a flour and butter thickener. This recipe matter-of-factly follows more mundane ones for three types of potato soup and turkey gumbo.

Other unusual offerings include turkey jelly, minced mutton with poached eggs, and pond lily salad. The largest section is devoted to sweets, understandable since sugar cane was one of Rosedown's largest cash crops. Recipes abound for cakes, pies, ice cream, sherbets, candies, fudge, syrups and jellies. The pudding section includes such curious entries as Queen Pudding, Dandy Pudding, Polly Penny Pudding, and Monkey Pudding.

Besides recipes, the book contains a brief history of the two plantations, a discussion of the provenance of the recipes, and an overview of the food, cooking and hospitality customs of antebellum plantations. One chapter summarizes the family lineages of the plantation owners, explaining in a convoluted manner how the two estates became interrelated through two marriages.

Also included is a section listing menus for special meals. A 1923 entry entitled "Papas Birthday Dinner" indicates that the family continued to cook on a grand scale even in lean economic times. The seven course dinner included oyster cocktail, oyster gumbo, stewed oysters, red snapper, roast turkey, chicken salad, both Irish and candied potatoes, parched pecans, rice, peas, artichokes, white and chocolate cakes, and fruit pies.

Although the book offers a realistic glimpse into the everyday life of a plantation kitchen, the authors seem to have downplayed the adverse conditions under which the kitchen slaves worked during the estate's antebellum days. The authors do recognize and laud the integral role of the slave in kitchen management, stating that the African Americans "provided astonishingly diverse and delicious meals under difficult and uncomfortable circumstances." The authors, however, do not elaborate on or attempt to describe those "difficult" and "uncomfortable" circumstances. This omission leaves the reader with a somewhat romanticized view of the slave's life in the kitchen.

Despite presenting a somewhat sanitized image of slavery at the two plantations, the book offers entertaining and historically significant primary sources for the culinary researcher. Through reading the recipes and menus utilized by these families over almost a century the reader can gain understanding of the role of food and hospitality under

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Uxbridge, Ontario, Canada

South Alabama

nmodifying Everything: Relationships of the
l London: Routledge, 2003, 298 pp. Cloth,
590-6; Paper, $26.95, ISBN 0-415-93591-3.

General Versus
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new words. Susan Strasser points out in her
well-crafted collection of essays on
he last two centuries that the word itself first
when it was introduced by art critics. No doubt
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rabbit hole, virtuality has surely opened a trap
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nuance and reflection. Neither bemoaning nor lauding the market, the scholars recognize the complexities of modern life. The market has been used in creative ways that empower no less than victimize or exploit. Jean-Christophe Agnew's perceptive essay on the "give-and-take of consumer culture" opens the book with a textured, sophisticated consideration of the leading issues, literature, and conceptual frameworks brought to bear on the study of consumption. At stake in the study of consumption, he tells us, is the modern project of self-construction. What we do with our things shapes who we are because our stuff broadcasts to others who we are in relation to them and the things they buy, sell, display, and exchange. Basic to this process of self-formation through consumption is the transformation of commodities into the properties of self-hood.

The authors of the chapters that follow explore this idea in their own ways in a fascinating series of essays that speak with one another in ways that readers will find engaging. Katherine Grier focuses on the history of American pets, considering how pet owners morphed an animal-commodity as consumer good into an "individual, even [a] family member." Pets are more than things. To their owners, they are children or friends, companions that deepen one's own humanity. Reading the stark history of animals as mass-commodities, shipped around the globe, dying in massive rates, sold on a large scale that bends to the fickle rhythm of fads and consumer desires displays the 'industrial' side of the pet-as-commodity business. Helen Sheumaker examines the history of jewelry fashioned from human hair, a practice that intimately linked consumption with gifting, two intersecting, but discrete economic practices that many of the book's authors shed important light on. If the idea of giving someone a locket made from your hair seems, well, repulsive today, that's because this nineteenth-century practice of sentiment ran head-on into the powerful ethos of twentieth-century medicine, whose theory of germs transformed the Western conceptions of the body, hygiene, and the nature of illness and its remedy. Nancy Tomes and Barbara Mann Wall each write about medical service and healthcare, and illuminate the subtle ways in which healthcare has sought to resist commodification, but has inevitably interacted with the forces of the marketplace, though that is a story that is far from over in the present day. Brent Tharp studies the trade in coffins, showing how varied it has been in its economic history. Lest one assume that American society has secularized itself out of religious belief, an astute essay by John Giggie about the constructive marriage of religion and commerce among African-American preacher-peddlers

in the South reminds us that religion is alive and well in the modern world, especially the pragmatic religions of immigrants, transnationals, and ex-slaves, who find in religion a flexible, dynamic social means for expanding their spheres and finding a new place in the sun.

The last four essays of the book expand the field to India, Mexico, China, and Italy. Each is an instructive case study in the importance of the market for the experience of national and local community. Anne Hardgrove's chapter on the politics of clarified butter, or ghee, in early twentieth-century Calcutta demonstrates that religion and commerce are able partners, that the former is by no means necessarily the victim of the latter. When tainted ghee was found to pervade the Calcutta market, polluting the ritual purity of Brahmins and other high-caste Hindus, it was religious ritual, possibly staged by the very producers of impure ghee, that helped restore public confidence in the ghee market. On other occasions, as Andrew Fisher explores in his study of property reform measures in Mexico, as Karl Gerth studies in Chinese nationalism and food flavoring, and as Cristina Grasseni considers in her fascinating ethnography of marketing cheese produced by an Italian mountain community, it is community (national or local) itself that is marketed, and often with the intervention of the state.

This book offers students and scholars alike a model of historically-grounded, theoretically informed, and clearly written studies of commodification, which give the term a historical specificity and weight that the art critics of the 1970s were right to intuit as something worthy of a name.

David Morgan Valparaiso University

A Last Word

During the 1988-89 academic year I walked into the offices of the History Department at the University of South Alabama and found Mike Thomason talking with a group of faculty about the recent departure of the book review editor of the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* (as it was then known) for Birmingham and the need for someone to take the position. Somewhat unsure of myself, I stepped forward and though a new instructor, two years post-PhD, tentatively volunteered to take on this responsibility. Little did I realize after Mike accepted my offer that this position would last for approximately sixteen years and influence me to shift my academic interests to Gulf South affairs.

Unfortunately, everything comes to an end, and with this Spring 2006 issue the journal ceases publication. I thank Mike for his devotion to the journal, nurturing it from a new and obscure publication to one now seen as a legitimate scholarly outlet for articles on the Gulf South. Sadly, there was no one to take his place at USA as he retired, and money for publication, though sought diligently, could not be acquired from financially hard-pressed schools in and near Katrina's path, or from other philanthropic and educational sources.

Mike always allowed me leeway in picking books, and I tried to include some books that dealt with broad cultural and social themes in the South, since they certainly touched upon the Gulf South and gave insight into its historical development. Highlights of recruiting reviewers include persuading Gregory Benford, an outstanding physicist at the University of California-Irvine and one of the most famous science-fiction writers of our day, to review a biography of Edmund O. Wilson, a Harvard scholar who spent his early years on the Alabama gulf coast. It has also been a privilege to include reviews from my friends Charles Belcher Jr. (pen name Thomas Beltzer), poet, novelist and deeply committed Orthodox Christian, and Seamus Thompson, writer, political commentator, and strong supporter of the labor movement around the world. Charles's recent honor, having his first novel accepted for publication, is an important step for him, and I hope his work for this journal helped him on the way. And I must include the indefatigable Irv Winsboro, who provided reviews when I came up short or agreed to review a hard-to-classify work. Many more outstanding academic scholars contributed reviews to the journal, and they constitute a list too long to recognize one by one. Their excellence has been self-evident and without them, I would have accomplished nothing. I thank each one sincerely and profusely.

Thanks also is extended to our readers, academic or otherwise, who enjoyed the reviews, encouraged me to keep at soliciting authors from every part of the country, and congratulated me for my work. Their compliments, though often undeserved, were and are keenly appreciated.

James B. McSwain Auburn, Alabama

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