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Submission Guidelines

All articles submitted to the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History* must be nominated by a professor at an accredited university or college. Teaching assistants may also nominate papers, but should receive approval from the course professor. The nominating professor certifies that the nominated article represents outstanding undergraduate scholarship. To nominate an article, the professor must send an email to cujh@columbia.edu, including: the name and position of the nominating professor; the the institution in which the undergraduate is enrolled; the class for which the paper was written; the title of the nominated article; and contact information for the nominated author.

Nominated articles must include footnotes and a bibliography that conform to the Chicago or Turabian style guide. Articles should be submitted as word documents or rich text files. Further details can be found at http://cujh.columbia.edu.

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February 10, 2009
Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Conference at Columbia University

Lectures by the Recipients of the
Fall 2008 Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Prize

The Scourge of the Poor: Rhode Island Temperance and Middle-Class Legitimation, 1829-1843

BY *JEFFREY MARTIN*

Uniting a Dismembered State: Secessionist Insurgency in North Carolina, November 1860-May 1861

BY *BARNES HAUPTFUHRER*

Mr. Black Man, Watch Your Step! Ethiopia's Queens Will Reign Again: Women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association

BY *KEISHA N. BENJAMIN*

Herbert Aptheker, a Brooklyn native, earned both his bachelor's degree and his doctorate at Columbia University. His doctoral dissertation was later published in 1943 as *American Negro Slave Revolts* and is a seminal work on slave resistance.

The Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Prize is awarded by the *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History* Editorial Board from the pool of papers submitted to the *Journal* for publication. Award-winning authors are invited to present their papers at the Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Conference, for which they will receive an honorarium of $150.

Introduction

The *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History* is pleased to present its second issue. While we began by only publishing papers written by students at Columbia University, for the current issue the editors solicited nominations from universities and colleges across the United States and Canada. We thank the professors who nominated more than sixty papers from nearly thirty universities and colleges. The editors are excited by the progress in fostering critical intellectual dialogue and recognizing outstanding undergraduate scholarship in the field of history, a process we hope continues at the upcoming Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Conference.

This issue includes five articles reflecting diverse historical interests and methods that both individually and collectively show the importance of the historical discipline.

Jeffrey Martin of Brown University impressed the editors with his rigorous interpretative framework and careful reading of archival sources. Exploring the key historical topics of power and the process of class formation, Martin uses the temperance movement in Rhode Island to examine class relations and middle class legitimation in the age of the market revolution and an emerging capitalist society.

Written while at Duke University, Barnes Hauptfuhrer's article likewise reflects a wide and careful reading of published and unpublished primary sources. Exploring the politics of unionism and secession in North Carolina, Hauptfuhrer cautions against historical narratives that stress the 'inevitability' of secession by revealing the complex and contested local politics from the election of Lincoln to the Fort Sumter crisis. Hauptfuhrer effectively uses an intensive local focus to examine

larger questions of Civil War politics.

Keisha N. Benjamin of Binghamton University offers an insistent intervention in the historical literature with her attempt to restore the voices of rank and file women to the historiography of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Only the perspectives of elite Garveyite women have been studied, Benjamin contends, and her use of the "Women's Page" of the *Negro World* provides an interesting attempt to reconstruct rank and file feminist sentiment.

In addition to publication in the journal, the articles by Jeffrey Martin, Barnes Hauptfuhrer, and Keisha N. Benjamin have been selected for the Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Prize. The combination of extensive archival research with attempts to ask and address important historical questions in their scholarship reflects the tradition of Herbert Aptheker, a Columbia undergraduate and pioneering historian of slavery whose work challenged generations of racist historiography. The editors eagerly anticipate the lectures that these scholars will give during the Herbert Aptheker Undergraduate History Conference at Columbia University on February 10, 2009.

This issue of the journal includes two additional articles. Jason Zuckerbrod, of our own Columbia University, contributes an excellent paper on consensus politics in Britain during the Second World War. Zuckerbrod uses a small but carefully analyzed selection of newspaper articles in prominent journals to explore how different ideological orientations from the right to the left understood and came to support educational programs for the military. Against interpretations that emphasize the Labour's post-war ascendancy, Zuckerbrod's analysis cautions against simplistically equating agreement over particular policies with ideological consensus.*

The editors are also eager to include Emma O'Brien's article, written at the University of Minnesota. Its contemporary focus and use of interviews and other unique sources distinguish O'Brien's work from the more traditional historical narratives published in this issue. Her study of the power of place within the hip hop scene in

* The editors would like to note that while Jason Zuckerbrod was initially on the editorial board of the journal, during the middle and final stages of selection for publication and prizes, Zuckerbrod recused himself from all editorial decisions and participation in the work of the editorial board.

Minneapolis provoked fruitful discussion within the editorial board about the boundaries of the historical discipline. In deference to the impressive research and intellectual creativity that O'Brien's research unquestionably represents, the editors include this article. However we also encourage our readers to reflect on how the historical discipline has in the past and should in the future define its boundaries and core practices of intellectual creation.

The *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History* is proud to publish these five articles, which are the very best undergraduate historical scholarship submitted from across the United States and Canada. The editors would like to thank all the departments, professors, and nominated authors for their assistance and collaboration in making the study of history a more collective, fulfilling, and rewarding endeavor. The next issue will commence the second volume of the journal, under new leadership and with great anticipation of growth. We look forward to continued support from the history faculty at Columbia and Barnard, the Columbia College Student Council, the Herbert Lehman Center for American History and others as we continue to build this important and exciting project.

The Editors
December 26, 2008
New York, New York

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Contents

About the Contributors

Keisha Benjamin, Binghamton University, Class of 2008, a native of Grenada, graduated with honors in history and Africana studies. She is currently writing an essay on the Commissions on the Status of Women for *Women and Social Movements in the United States*. She plans to pursue graduate study in American history.

Barnes Hauptfuhrer, Duke University, Class of 2008, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in both economics and history and with a minor in classical civilizations. He is currently working as an investment banker in New York.

Jeffrey Martin, Brown University, Class of 2010, specializes in early American history, with an emphasis on the economic and cultural history of the early republic and the antebellum period. His thesis will focus on Rowland Gibson Hazard, a Rhode Island industrialist who in the process of confronting railroads in the 1850s over their corporate practices raised pertinent questions about capitalism, democracy, and progress in America.

Emma O'Brien, University of Minnesota, Class of 2008, graduated with honors and a Bachelor of Arts in both history and urban studies. She is considering applying to graduate schools in England and Ireland.

Jason Zuckerbrod, Columbia College, Class of 2009, studies economics and British political history. His thesis will examine a group of British soldiers who started a mock parliament in Cairo during World World II.

The Scourge of the Poor: Rhode Island Temperance and Middle-Class Legitimation, 1829-1843

Jeffrey Martin

Mr. Langdon, the principal narrator of "The Beacon! Rhode Island Temperance Tale," a work of temperance fiction published in Rhode Island in 1839, cautions the children of the family whose residence he visits against two unfathomable evils. He relates the sad tale of William Smith, whom he had accompanied out to the middle of a pond in a boat without first consulting his parents to obtain their permission. William surprised Langdon when he produced a bottle of rum and proceeded to get drunk. Langdon abstained from the alcohol, yet when the inebriated William tipped the boat over, the narrator barely escaped the clutches of death. The drunkard, however, could summon neither the coordination nor the strength to make it to shore, and drowned. Langdon, speaking to his captivated audience, concludes, "That event, still fresh on my mind, as of yesterday, warned me against disobedience to parents; and it showed me how dangerous it is to drink rum, or even to associate with those who drink it."[1] This exhortation to the young recalls a long history of parental moralizing—Langdon cites the fifth commandment to support his argument; its pairing of obedience and implicit subordination with abstention from alcohol also reflects the vertical class structure of the antebellum economy from which the American temperance movement, and with it, the middle class, emerged in Rhode Island in the 1830s and 1840s.

The industrialization that began to take hold of the state in the initial years of the nineteenth century forged new social relations

[1] *Number Two. The Beacon! Rhode-Island Temperance Tale. By a Gentleman of Providence. Founded on Fact* (Providence: B. T. Albro, 1839), 14-15. I would like to thank Christopher Hudgens, Brenna Carmody, and Seth Rockman for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

and destroyed old ones. It resulted in vibrant industry and economic prosperity for many, giving birth to a middle-class striving for economic fulfillment between the ranks of the rich and poor. Nevertheless, many viewed the dissolution of traditional social bonds that accompanied these economic processes as a sign of disorder. The ascendant middle class, ambitious to assert its power in society and anxious about the precarious position it occupied, sought relief in reform programs. Temperance proved to be the most galvanizing cause that these reformers could advance. In their efforts to dissuade the Rhode Island population from imbibing alcohol, the middle-class reformers relied on notions of hierarchy as the organizing principle that would not only banish "demon rum" from the lives of their fellow countrymen but also reverse the impersonality of the industrial marketplace, reconstituting the social order that they felt their contemporary situation lacked.

The middle class' polymorphism often frustrates scholars seeking to ground it in wealth or occupation. Its consolidation occurred around cultural values whose wide dissemination complicates the idea of economic unity within the boundaries of a class. Jennifer Goloboy's recent rejection of "head work" as the sole basis for middle-class identity has done much to resolve the arbitrariness that any imposition of sociological categories onto the past harbors. However, by privileging "a cultural definition of 'middle class,' centering on a set of self-perceived 'middle-class values,' which became detached, in the nineteenth century, from their original utilitarian purpose", she stops short of exploring the social and economic contexts that informed those values. Additionally, she understates the functionality those values offered to an incipient class navigating uncertain economic straits.[2] Richard Bushman, on the other hand, has noted the intimate ties between the birth of the middle class and the economic process of industrialization: "The stable, hierarchical colonial order, anchored by a few leading families, gave way after the Revolution under the onslaught of new arrivals who derived their wealth from new sources of profit available in industrializing America."[3] This class drew upon its particular relationship to the means of production in order to establish its identity.

[2] Jennifer Goloboy, "The Early American Middle Class," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 538.

[3] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 209.

Yet Bushman, too, ultimately privileges a shared material culture of refinement and respectability as the basis for middle-class identity without fully exploring the class interests that culture served. Stuart M. Blumin's "experiential hypothesis of middle-class formation," on the other hand, accounts for a plethora of cultural, social, and economic components that would come to define middle-class life as the nineteenth century rolled onwards. Blumin offers "work, consumption, residential location, formal and informal voluntary association, and family organization and strategy," all located firmly within the larger social contexts in which they evolved, as the areas in which the middle class coalesced and defined itself.[4] Konstantin Dierks has also provided a promising model, albeit one derived from experiences a century earlier. Investigating both the consumer culture to which the eighteenth century colonial American middle class adhered as well as the economic purposes that those values served, he finds "more than one cultural route to modernity in the eighteenth-century anglophone Atlantic world. Beyond the modernity of the refined consumer, there was also the modernity of an extractive and productive empire and the modernity of utilitarian function."[5] Though the nineteenth century saw a shift in emphasis from empire to domestic industry, in both cases the values of "middling folk" operated simultaneously as a standard of refinement and as a legitimating force for the economic processes that propelled the middle class to their position in society.

Scholarship on the nineteenth century American temperance movement has likewise concerned itself with the ideological constructs that the middle class erected for its own support. Scott C. Martin examines the intersection of the temperance movement and the cult of domesticity in antebellum America, concluding:

> In seeking to define and justify itself in relation to those above and below in the American socioeconomic order, this nascent middle class emphasized the moral advantages of middling status,

[4] Stuart M. Blumin, "The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals," *American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (April 1985): 312.

[5] Konstantin Dierks, "Letter Writing, Stationary Supplies, and Consumer Modernity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," *Early American Literature* 41, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 485.

> finding depravity in both the lavish excesses of the rich and the abject squalor of the poor.[6]

Matthew Warner Osborn finds that intemperance served as a useful explanation for the poverty that industrial capitalism engendered in antebellum Philadelphia. Moreover, it exorcised the middle class' lingering anxieties about the stability of their own position by ascribing economic misfortune exclusively to drink, in which they did not indulge.[7] Paul E. Johnson, on the other hand, sees temperance reform not solely as a means of explaining industrial poverty, but as a mechanism for adapting the multitudes to "the discipline and monotony of modern work."[8] John S. Gilkeson contextualizes these middle-class values within the disorder caused by urbanization. "Dislodged from the moorings of stable family and community life by the rapid growth of antebellum towns and cities," he writes, "migrants joined associations for new forms of social solidarity to take the place of attenuated kinship bonds." He posits that these associations, among which temperance enjoyed a privileged position, acted as vehicles for middle-class consciousness.[9]

A significant amount of historiography has also focused on the religious grounds upon which reformers situated the temperance movement. Steven Mintz locates the origins of nationwide temperance agitation in "evangelical revivals in the 1820s and 1830."[10] However, one should not underestimate the social and economic functions to which temperance advocates put their agenda solely because it first flourished on religious soil. As Mintz observes, "To a rising middle class of professionals, small businesspeople, and manufacturers, temperance became a critical symbol of self-improvement, self-respect,

[6] Scott C. Martin, *Devil of the Domestic Sphere: Temperance, Gender, and Middle-class Ideology, 1800-1860* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 7.

[7] Matthew Warner Osborn, "Diseased Imaginations: Constructing Delirium Tremens in Philadelphia, 1813-1832," *Social History of Medicine* 19, no. 2 (August 2006): 197-9.

[8] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 6.

[9] John S. Gilkeson, Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 9-10.

[10] Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers*, ed. Stanley I. Kutler (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 73.

progress, respectability, and upward mobility."[11] William R. Sutton, by identifying the heterogeneous roots of temperance, offers a nuanced interpretation that similarly advises the reader to look beyond religion for the significance of temperance. "Protestants had long condemned drunkenness on the basis of scriptural demands," he argues. "But the desire for rationality, control, and efficiency so central to Enlightenment attitudes played a more important role in this period, as did the tenets of classical republicanism."[12] Cultural currents beyond the religious informed the motives of temperance reformers. Robert H. Abzug, while focusing on the religious nature of temperance reform, likewise perceives the stirrings of a temperate conscience outside of staid religious doctrine. He details "a world fast abandoning outer orders or undercutting them with relativistic judgments on their validity" and posits that religious leaders responded by seeking to establish an "evangelical order...based on the individual's commitment to holiness, not simply to social order as communicated by a sacred social structure."[13] The dictates of temperance would counsel individual self-restraint to ensure the viability of this order. Temperance exceeded the religious context in which it first emerged. Its advocates drew upon the industrial, urban society that unfolded before their disbelieving eyes in order to define the ends that they pursued. As I will subsequently demonstrate, temperance advocates looked beyond the religious movements in which they often found inspiration in order to comment on and attempt to affect change upon their transformational times.

In this paper I will argue that the Rhode Island temperance movement between 1829 and 1843 allowed for the consolidation and legitimation of the middle class in a vertical class structure. I will approach these temperance values not as a rallying point for middle-class individuals to recognize one another in society and construct a horizontal sense of community, but rather as actively working to further the hierarchical relationship that they bore to the emergent industrial

[11] Ibid., 74.

[12] William R. Sutton, *Journeymen for Jesus: Evangelical Artisans Confront Capitalism in Jacksonian Baltimore* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 267.

[13] Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 79-80.

capitalist economy.[14] Elaborating the content of middle-class values exposes the conversations that their adherents had with themselves; it misses, however, their conversation with the rest of their contemporaries and the inevitable negotiation of power relations in which they took part.[15] If one adopts Anthony Parent's useful formulation of class, then an analysis of horizontal identification tells only half the story. He writes, "A historical category of social and economic relationships, class, and its cultural derivative class consciousness assist analysis of the distribution of power in a society."[16] Though an exploration of the middle class as a set of social networks through which a people

[14] This horizontal construction of community, however, invariably occupied a prominent place in the nineteenth century consolidation of the middle class. Indeed, one can expect that any era of cultural change and conflict will see the emergence of rallying points for shared identities. See Kate Haulman, "Fashion and the Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (October 2005): 625, for fashion as a comparable rallying point in revolutionary America: "Having long functioned as a means of distinguishing among and within social groups in urban areas, fashion possessed intense local and individual significance, helping people read and locate one another in the social landscape." Moreover, one cannot maintain that the horizontal construction of community and the forwarding of economic class interests do not intersect and overlap with one another. See also *No. 1. Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance. Quarterly Report of the Committee, for July, 1830* (Providence: Hutchens & Weeden, 1830), 9, for a recommendation that the Committee subsequently adopted: "It has been suggested to your Committee, that it would be useful to adopt a regulation, authorizing the Board of Directors to give to any member of the society, in good standing, who may desire it, a certificate that he is a member of the Society, and in good standing. Such a certificate, it is believed, would often be found advantageous to young men, or other members of the Society, who may visit places where they are strangers, in pursuit of employment, or business." The creation of social networks likewise created economic networks that individuals used to better pursue their economic interests.

[15] See Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review,* no. 181 (May-June 1990): 95-118, for the economic and social power relations that prompted the racial ideology of the United States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Fields demonstrates that ideologies do not appear out of thin air. Rather, they are called into being in support of distinctly practical concerns, such as the oppressive labor regimes characteristic of early American agriculture. In the case of Rhode Island in the early 19th century, the dislocations of the industrial revolution unfolded alongside the growing prosperity of the middle class. This divide necessitated an apologetic ideology that legitimated the social and economic power of those who saw their incomes steadily increase.

[16] Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 3.

felt common cause with one another is important to a comprehensive understanding of class in the 19th century, to do so without reference to a vertical, hierarchical class structure fails to account for the power relationships that construct themselves along class lines. In the words of Parent, this approach obscures "the totality...of society" instead of illuminating it.[17]

I will then turn to the attempts that middle-class temperance reformers made to reconstitute the social order of which industrialization and urbanization had deprived them. They reaped the material benefits of industrialization and then used that material power to reconstruct the social and cultural hierarchies that market relations had begun to dissolve. While part of this process doubtlessly involved a self-consciously social and horizontal identification as middle class, I will instead focus on the vertical bonds characterized by hierarchy that the reformers envisioned holding society together. These bonds elevated the middle class above their lower-class brethren and further legitimated the position that the former occupied in society. With this method, I will attend to Dierks' suggestion that scholars "interrogate rather than reproduce the cultural myopia of the middle class"[18] and will situate the values of the early nineteenth century middle class within the larger framework of cultural legitimation and economic will-to-power.

The Rhode Island industrial economy grew significantly in the first half of the nineteenth century. By the early 1830s, a number of industrialists had undermined the supremacy that maritime ventures previously enjoyed. In their place rose a hegemonic industrial manufacturing system that would define economic power relations in the state through the remainder of the nineteenth century.[19] During this period the state's cotton manufacturing industry trailed only Massachusetts in its number of mills, amount of capital, and quantity of operating spindles.[20] Constituting 9,071 laborers in 1832, it employed more people than the corresponding industries in every

[17] Ibid., 2.
[18] Dierks, "Letter Writing," 488.
[19] Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1963), 71; Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence*, 18-19.
[20] Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence*, 92.

other state except Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.[21] Though cotton manufacturing formed the focal point of the Rhode Island economy, a number of other enterprises, most notably the manufacturing of woolen textiles, expanded rapidly throughout the 1830s and by the end of the decade boasted the capital and markets necessary to thrive.[22]

The pro-manufacturing attitudes that many inhabitants, along with the legislature, maintained may partly account for the prosperity of industrial manufacturing in Rhode Island through the 1830s. From its inception, manufacturing in Rhode Island met with few ideological or legislative barriers to expansion.[23] As Peter J. Coleman has observed, "public officials almost without exception and by long tradition operated on the premise that their purpose was to support, not to check, Rhode Island's entrepreneurs."[24] In addition to favorable public opinion, industry in Rhode Island profited from a surplus of labor in many parts of the state.[25] These workers exhibited a high rate of geographic mobility, which functioned as yet another boon to manufacturing.[26] Industrial entrepreneurs also availed themselves of the services of skilled artisans within the state. Their "mechanical aptitude" allowed for the development of innovative industrial equipment that increased efficiency and aided manufacturing's ascent to economic hegemony within Rhode Island.[27]

Alongside the prosperity that rapid industrialization brought, there lurked a number of social problems with origins in the changing economy. The competitive market system that facilitated the remarkable expansion of Rhode Island industry during the antebellum period also contributed to its inherent instability. The years 1819, 1823, 1829, and 1837 witnessed economic downturns that affected all those engaged in industrial production, from mill owner to unskilled laborer.[28] Furthermore, the threat posed by British manufacturing contributed

[21] Coleman, *The Transformation*, 92-93, n. 26.

[22] Ibid., 199, 133-6; see also B. Michael Zuckerman, "The Political Economy of Industrial Rhode Island, 1790-1860," (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 1981), 203-204.

[23] Coleman, *The Transformation*, 73-75.

[24] Ibid., 74.

[25] Ibid., 73.

[26] Ibid., 228.

[27] Ibid., 73.

[28] Ibid., 233; Zuckerman, "The Political Economy," 208.

to the adoption of power-driven equipment.[29] This in turn rendered the putting-out system, on which manufacturing had previously relied, obsolete.[30] The demise of this system broke up family labor units that withstood economic turmoil by appropriating the unwaged labor of wives and children.[31] Coleman has noted that, as a result, "a landless class of factory workers came into being, a class for whose health and safety many mill owners showed little concern."[32] While some mill owners built villages for their workers, they used these apparatuses of paternalist supervision more to enforce morality than to ensure the wellbeing of those on their payrolls.[33] Working conditions remained poor. The workweek stood at seventy-eight hours through the 1840s.[34] Wages, too, continued at exceptionally low levels: the average income of a family employed in a textile mill rarely rose above eight dollars a week.[35]

Unsurprisingly, these poor industrial conditions, especially when combined with a growing population, urbanization, and the attenuation of social bonds that accompanies any rapid expansion of a community, resulted in varying degrees of social disorder.[36] Contemporaries fretted about rises in crime, as well as, importantly, the prospect that alcohol was destroying the state and its inhabitants. Foreigners, most notably the Irish, bore some of the brunt of public opinion for the breakdown of

[29] Coleman, *The Transformation*, 88.

[30] Ibid., 88, 105.

[31] See Coleman, *The Transformation*, 80, for information on the putting out system. See also Ibid., 97, for comparison: "Throughout the postwar difficulties, and especially during the crisis of 1819, many ventures remained in business by relying on family members for most of their labor needs, and by not having to pay dividends." See also Gerda Lerner, "Rethinking the Paradigm: Class and Race," in *Why History Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 179: "The possibility of choosing singleness without severe economic loss did not exist for most women until the development of mature capitalism, which allowed them direct access to employment and economic independence. But we need to keep in mind that even today single, self-supporting women are economically disadvantaged compared with their brothers, by operating in a gender-defined and gender-segmented labor market."

[32] Coleman, *The Transformation*, 229-230.

[33] Ibid., 231-232.

[34] Ibid., 232.

[35] Ibid., 233.

[36] Ibid., 246-247; Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence*, 19.

social order.[37] However, as Bruce Dorsey has persuasively argued about Philadelphia, "the burgeoning poverty problem had less to do with immigration than with the market revolution, the transition to industrial capitalism, and the concomitant spread of wage labor."[38] While the system of industrial capitalism produced profits for its middle-class and upper-class investors, it also created various social disruptions and dislocations, which problematized its overall effectiveness.

It was in the ambiguous divide between industrial wealth and industrial poverty that the Rhode Island middle class coalesced. Affirming their class identity required middle-class members to legitimate the means by which they arrived at their relationship to the modes of production. Drawing on the membership lists of the 1833 Providence Young Men's Society and the 1835 Union Temperance Society, the only such lists to survive from the period, Gilkeson has confirmed the preponderance of those "who clustered in the middle ranks of...[Providence]'s property owners" amongst temperance reformers.[39] Middling occupations predominated within the leadership of the movement as well. "Of the fifty-two officers of local temperance societies from the 1830s who can be identified," Gilkeson writes, "twenty-four were shopkeepers, clerks, and small manufacturers. Another five were skilled craftsmen, and one drove a stagecoach."[40] In particular, the shopkeepers who sold the products of industrial manufacturing, the clerks who administered them, and the manufacturers who produced them benefited greatly from the prosperity that economic change brought to Rhode Island. Yet because of the surfeit of maladies that accompanied industrialization, members of the new middle class required a means to justify their successes. For this ideological legitimation, they turned to temperance.

[37] Coleman, *The Transformation*, 247.

[38] Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men & Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 60.

[39] Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence*, 29.

[40] Ibid. The old guard, though, apparently felt less of an imperative to reconcile themselves to the new social order: "Only seven were merchants or gentlemen, the men who had led previous community reforms." It should be noted that the previous discussion of occupations is a general and by no means comprehensive sample of middle-class jobs that one would expect to find active in the temperance movement. I impose few occupational restrictions on the middle class in this paper. I choose instead to foreground the ideology of temperance as particularly suited to legitimate the incomes of those on the bourgeois side of economic power relations.

Middle-class temperance reformers recast industrial poverty as stemming not from neglectful social and economic policy, but rather from indulgence in drink. The 1829 annual report from Dexter Asylum, following closely on the heels of that year's economic downturn, drew a firm moral line between the 80 temperate and 83 intemperate patients they had admitted.[41] The Board of Attending and Consulting Physicians and Surgeons decried the patients' lack of "*honest poverty*, which is a misfortune, but no disgrace," and scorned the excessively common "indulgence in *habitual intoxication*, that crying evil, which has entailed on man more misery than the three great enemies, war, pestilence, and famine."[42] They made no mention of the porous border separating the virtuously destitute from the vice-ridden. W.J. Rorabaugh, in his seminal work on early American drinking habits, *The Alcoholic Republic*, notes the correlation between the impact of rapidly changing economic conditions on social groups such as city dwellers, factory workers, and skilled artisans, and the steady increases in those groups' drinking patterns that occurred over the first half of the nineteenth century.[43] He writes, "it becomes apparent in a study of the period that those groups most severely affected by change were also the groups most given to heavy drinking."[44] While the morality of drinking as a method for coping with social and economic dislocation is beyond the scope of this paper, one may fairly note the absence of the connection between these phenomena in the Board's report. They expressed no sympathy for those eighty-three souls that crossed from urban turmoil to alcoholic dissipation. For those concerned with temperance, the 'habitual intoxication' of these patients alienated them from the conditions that produced it and absolved those conditions of

[41] *First Annual Report, of the Board of Attending and Consulting Physicians and Surgeons, of the Dexter Asylum* (Providence: Carlile and Parmenter, 1829), 3.

[42] Ibid., 11.

[43] W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 125-146.

[44] Ibid., 125.

culpability.[45]

Nevertheless, the mere existence of Dexter Asylum's eighty temperate patients raised pointed questions about the mechanisms that relegated the sober to a state of poverty. The Board's vague classification of "honest poverty" as a "misfortune" gave way through the 1830s and the early 1840s not to a clarification of its source in urban and industrial conditions, but rather to a greater equation of poverty with intemperance, a more easily identified and condemned deviance. In 1831 the doctor Usher Parsons delivered an address to the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance in which he reflected on the intemperance plaguing the lower classes a mere four years previous: "our alms-houses, our bedlams, and our penitentiaries were thronged with the slaves of this vice,—still temperate drinkers became drunkards, and drunkards with all their accumulated poverty, crime and disease, multiplied throughout the land."[46] The causal connection that Parsons implied between drinking and poverty minimized the possibility of social disorder unconnected to intemperance. The Board of Managers of the above-mentioned association likewise represented intemperance as the active force in the production of poverty. They claimed in their 1834 report that "drunkenness not only makes its wretched victim and his immediate dependents poor, but more than any other evil, destroys the general wealth of the community."[47] Their portrayal of poverty exceeded that of Parsons in equating drinking with indigence, since they explicitly depicted alcohol use, instead of the economic changes of the early nineteenth century, as the agent of downward mobility.

[45] See Dierks, "Letter Writing," 428: "Because the representation of production and labor was selective in the commercial dictionaries of the 1750s, so, too, was the representation of the global economy and of Britain's imperial expansion. It was a global economy emptied of suffering and struggle, and a British empire emptied of violence." By effacing exploitation from the representation of the productive enterprise necessary to middle-class property accumulation, these upwardly mobile middle-class temperance reformers acquired a legitimating ideology to undergird their material culture.

[46] Usher Parsons, *An Address, Delivered Before the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance, May 27, 1831* (Providence: Weeden and Knowles, 1831), 3.

[47] *Report of the Board of Managers of the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance, presented and read at their quarterly meeting, held in the vestry of the rev. Mr. Wilson's church, on Monday evening Jan. 27th, 1834* (Providence: William Marshall & Co., 1834), 11.

Only after the Panic of 1837, though, did truly radical causal explanations linking poverty to intemperance emerge. In November 1838, the *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald* accused the rumseller of "aiding in producing three quarters of all the vice, pauperism and crime in his own town."[48] Likewise, the same issue bore the testimony of a doctor going by the pseudonym "Medicus" who reported that, in Albany, New York, "I was frequently called upon to attend upon paupers under the charge of the overseers of the poor, but have no recollection of a single instance of a pauper, but what was made such by intemperance, directly or indirectly."[49] When he reiterated his point, he did so with a broader purview in mind: "In short, in this as in all other districts in our fertile country, whenever and wherever you find absolute poverty, disorder and crime…you will find it in connection with, and the immediate offspring of, this *monster crime, intemperance*."[50] Five days later, on November 8, 1838, the paper printed the allegations of Reverend John S.C. Abbot that "it is the dram shop—the dram-shop—which more than any thing and every thing else, is the scourge of the poor. Were it not for these our native population would hardly know the name of poverty."[51] The Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union looked in 1840 to Dublin, Ireland, for analogous circumstances. They reported, "The pauper population is said, by well informed judges, to amount to 60,000, who are, *without exception*, addicted to intemperate habits."[52] Providence's City Temperance Society turned a critical eye not abroad but rather to domestic circumstances in their 1841 publication, *Crime, Pauperism, Intemperance. Report.* They concluded, "*nearly nine tenths of the crime*, and *at least four fifths of the pauperism* of this community, are caused by the use of intoxicating liquor."[53]

By focusing on alcohol as the cause of poverty, the middle-class temperance advocates redirected the energy of reform away from confronting and potentially resolving the contradictions of their

[48] A. Freeman, "The Difference," *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 3, 1838.

[49] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 3, 1838.

[50] Ibid.

[51] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 8, 1838.

[52] *Report of the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union, 1840* (New York: S. W. Benedict, 1840), 81, italics added.

[53] *Crime, Pauperism, Intemperance. Report.* (Providence: City Temperance Society, 1841).

position and the system that supported it. Instead, they focused on matters of personal irresponsibility whose correction would leave the economic and social structures upon which they founded their position intact.

While the figures above may seem so staggering as to lead one to suspect the liberal use of hyperbole, they may nevertheless indicate substantive increases in the alcohol consumption of those subject to the brunt of industrial poverty. The social problems that accompanied the rise of industrialization in Rhode Island during this period would certainly lead one to expect such a trend to prevail among the lower, working classes caught up in the dislocations of the market economy. However, simply because one may accept the general implications of these statistics with only slight reservations does not indicate that they did not serve middle-class interests. As Michel Foucault has recognized, knowledge occurs in the same spaces that power occupies: "We should admit…that there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[54] The benefits that the middle class enjoyed as a result of the rise of industrialization and market economics placed them in a position of power within society. The legitimation of this power required a concurrent legitimation of the system from which they derived it.[55]

To this end, middle-class temperance reformers constituted a field of knowledge that identified poverty as intimately connected with and nearly inextricable from intemperance, even without any consideration of the extenuating circumstances that economic misfortune could introduce into the lives of working-class individuals. Where poverty obtained, so did intemperance. While some did question the reformers' causal explanation of indigence – the American Temperance Union maintained in 1842, "All former estimates of the connection between intemperance, pauperism and crime must be false, or the reform of thousands on thousands of the most reckless and destitute of the community, must be followed by tenantless jails and almshouses" – the belief that the source of downward mobility lay not in the unstable

[54] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 27.

[55] See Martin, *Devil*, for a parallel trend in regards to the dependence of an ideologically coherent market economics on the cult of domesticity.

social conditions of industrialism, but rather in the lower class' intemperate habits, continued to dominate the social discourse of the 1830s and 1840s.[56]

By casting intemperance as the basis for nearly all the poverty to occur in early industrial Rhode Island, middle-class reformers affected a moral hierarchy that differentiated individuals based on their presumed agency. Francis Wayland, the Baptist president of Brown University, asserted the primacy of self-determination and self-control in an address before the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance in 1831. After declaring his intention to explore the moral consequences of intemperance, he postulated that man's "passions and appetites were designed to be subjected implicitly to *reason* and to *conscience*" and that drink inverted this natural hierarchy.[57] Usher Parsons, the above-mentioned doctor and temperance advocate, similarly contended in 1831, "Few habits enthrall by so potent a spell, the voluntary and reasoning powers of man, and so enslave his moral faculties, as that of intemperance; and few are there from whose shackles he less frequently becomes delivered."[58] While intoxicated, according to Parsons, the intemperate man finds his moral capacities diminished and restricted. The 1838 Constitution of the Providence County Temperance Society forwarded a comparable argument: deflating the popular anti-temperance claim that cider lacked alcohol, they observed, "it is found to contain that which will deprive men of their reason and place them on a level with the brute."[59] Alternately, a letter published in the November 8, 1838 issue of the *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald* exalted the human power of reason: "The triumph of principle over appetite and passion, is one of the noblest that can be accomplished," the author declared.[60] These remarks, which

[56] *Report of the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union, 1842* (New York: American Temperance Union, 1842), 53-54.

[57] Francis Wayland, *Address of Francis Wayland to the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance, October 20, 1831* (Providence: Weeden and Knowles, 1831), 6.

[58] Parsons, *An Address*, 13-14.

[59] *Constitution of the Providence County Temperance Society, Together with an Address of the Board of Officers to all the Local Societies within the County* (Providence: H. H. Brown, 1838), 9.

[60] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 8, 1838.

likened intemperate individuals to aberrations of a natural and divine order based on rationality, imbued drinking with highly moralistic overtones. Insomuch as the reformers equated drinking with poverty, these statements suggested that a moral inferiority presided over the intemperate lower class, and in doing so, they worked to bolster the moral superiority of the middle class.

Yet the middle-class reformers did not debase lower-class drunkards simply to sustain their own sense of moral self-worth. Rather, they reduced these individuals to ethically incompetent, passive agents, so as to establish a relationship of dependency with them. Rumsellers acted as the antagonists whose sway over the lower class the middle-class reformers had to usurp before social harmony could return to Rhode Island. Ultimately, they envisioned this hierarchical relationship as the basis for the reconstitution of the social order that Rhode Island's rapid conversion to industrialization had disrupted.

As the 1830s wore on, the spotlight of public opinion turned to the rumseller as the question of alcohol license laws rose to prominence in Rhode Island political discourse. Francis Wayland's prompt to rumsellers anticipated the tone of many later temperance attacks. He questioned their culpability in the misfortunes resulting from drink and compared its sale to furnishing a murderer with his weapon or serving as the navigator of a slave ship.[61] By June 1838 the temperance reformers had gained enough political ground to push a local option law through the state legislature, under which each Rhode Island township, as well as the city of Providence, could determine whether or not to sell alcohol licenses. On August 28, the city of Providence voted to ban the sale of alcohol licenses. The Supreme Court of Rhode Island subsequently upheld this legislation.[62]

The middle-class temperance reformers' assault on the sale of alcohol tested the coherence of their pro-market values. The controversy surrounding the local option law – especially its quick repeal in October 1838, a mere four months after its initial passage – impelled temperance reformers to articulate the motivations behind their criticisms of rumsellers.[63] This process required more of the

[61] Wayland, *Address of Francis Wayland*, 15-16.
[62] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838.
[63] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 15, 1838.

middle-class reformers, however, than simply demonstrating general trends between the consumption of alcohol and social maladies. They found themselves caught at this time between the moral values they espoused and the capitalist spirit they celebrated. Scott C. Martin has described the ambivalence of the early nineteenth century middle class to the market revolution occurring around them. He notes their "great optimism" about the new "regional, national, and international market ties" from which their incomes could benefit.[64] Nevertheless, they feared the ramifications of the unrestrained pursuit of self-interest.[65] The sale of alcohol seemed exemplary of the depravation that an amoral market could spawn.[66] A correspondent from Tiverton reporting on the political battles over licenses in the town in 1838 noted, "Although the re-establishment of this traffic in Tiverton had opened afresh in many a heart a fountain of sorrow that had been for years sealed, yet of what consequence was that to a rum-seller? His profits would increase, and that was sufficient."[67] In the case of rumsellers, the virtue underlying the profit motive conflicted with temperance morality. Martin has offered a succinct summation of the middle-class reformers' dilemma: "Pro-market, pro-economic development temperance advocates needed to find a way to condemn and rein in the liquor trade without implying that the entire marketplace should be regulated or that economic individualism might be morally suspect."[68] The middle class needed to construct a moral system through which it could feel itself to be a cohesive entity. However, this construction of culture also had to support the economic position of the middle class and legitimate their market activity. For the sake of ideological cogency, the temperance reformers sought a resolution of the rumseller quandary.

In their attempts at reconciliation, the reformers debased the agency of drinkers and reduced them to passive agents in their own undoing. To this end, they characterized outright intemperance as the necessary and inevitable end of even the most moderate drinking. A *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald* article entitled "What is Moderation?" lampooned the subjectivity of the term in question. The crux of the satire came

[64] Martin, *Devil*, 110-111.
[65] Ibid., 111.
[66] Ibid., 111-112.
[67] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 3, 1838.
[68] Martin, *Devil*, 112.

when an unnamed character of jovial and deferential disposition declared that his fourteen drinks a day amounted to "not one drop, master…but what is necessary for health."[69] Given that a drinker could qualify any daily quantity of alcohol as "moderate," the article implied, there existed few barriers keeping the truly moderate from sliding into outright overindulgence. Another article held that moderate drinking is "a course which tends so directly to" utter intemperance and degradation.[70] Likewise, in *The Beacon!*, Dr. John Spencer's moderate drinking habits soon tended towards the immoderate, and, as Langdon reports, little time passed before "the man, the gentleman, the Doctor, the husband, the father, the esteemed and popular Spencer, that distinguished scholar, that truly talented *man*, became such a brute, that his wife fled from him, his children were dispersed, and he became a vagabond!"[71] Alcohol exercised an awesome power over the individual's will. It subverted all rational impulse and cast even the respectable portions of the community, such as Dr. Spencer, into disrepute. Temperance reformers emphasized this potency in order to depict alcohol as an unusual commodity whose properties set it outside of a normal, rational political economy. With this tactic, they preserved the coherency of their market-oriented ideology.

This depiction of the helpless drunkard lacking overtly malicious intent left the immorality of drinking incomplete. If the drunkard's sin amounted to little more than the occasional moderate imbibing of drink, how could the concerned citizen account for the monumental social evils that alcohol had wrought?[72] To echo the title of a *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald* article, "Where Does the Blame Lie?"[73] As noted above, temperance reformers characterized the consumption of alcohol as an intense moral failing, casting blame on the intemperate. However, they simultaneously offered a seemingly contradictory but no less sincere answer. This response resounded heartily from the

[69] "What Is Moderation?" *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838.

[70] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838.

[71] *Number Two. The Beacon!*, 28.

[72] For an 1840 testimony to the consensus regarding the evils of alcohol, see *Report of the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union, 1840*, 39. See also, *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 15, 1838: "The whole community know that a business fraught with such enormous evils is morally wrong."

[73] "Where Does the Blame Lie?" *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 15, 1838.

breast of every temperance advocate in the state: with the rumsellers, they cried.

Temperance reformers represented the active evil of the rumseller as complementing the passive complicity of the drinker. Francis Wayland, that ever-vigilant proponent of temperance values, posed the rhetorical question:

> Can it be right for me to derive my living from that which is debasing the minds, ruining the souls, destroying forever the happiness of the domestic circle, filling the land with women and children in a condition far more deplorable than that of widows and orphans; which is the cause of nine-tenths of all crimes which are perpetrated in society, and brings upon it nine tenths of all the pauperism which exists;—which accomplishes all these *at once*, and which does it *without ceasing*?[74]

In keeping with the view of drinking as inevitably leading to immoderation, Wayland took the demand for alcohol as a given and instead attacked the trade as inherently destructive and immoral. The perversion that temperance reformers sensed in rumsellers emerged in the report that a Valley Falls temperance society delivered to the Rhode-Island State Temperance Society in 1843. They announced, "One man is licensed to sell, and sells, we suppose, to all, whether minors, common drunkards—men, women or children!"[75] Four of the five of the rumseller's patrons – the minors, drunkards, women, and children – functioned during the period as models of dependency requiring the supervision and guidance of morally virtuous, rational individuals (i.e. men). In Valley Falls they encountered not a benevolent superior, but rather the parasitic rumseller, who indulged in the moral villainy of selling them drink. Rhode Island law, too, reflected this ethical bias against rumsellers. The *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald* reported that, when a black man consumed twelve drinks in four-and-a-half hours and died as a result, the police arrested the rumseller "to answer the

[74] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, November 8, 1838.

[75] *Report of the Rhode-Island State Temperance Society, for 1843* (Providence: B.T. Albro, 1844), 5-6.

charge of having caused the death of deceased."[76] Though middle-class temperance reformers previously indicted the moral fortitude of lower-class drinkers by comparing them to irrational "brutes," when rumsellers entered the equation as active, malevolent social agents, the reformers partly absolved drinkers of responsibility for their actions.[77] While they did not wholly forgive the moral abomination that the sight of a helpless drunkard presented them, both public opinion and the law attached more explicit blame to the rumsellers for their illicit economic activity and the untold amount of suffering it invariably produced.

The existence of a lower class of indigent, powerless, and morally dubious drunkards on which a malicious gang of profit-crazy rumsellers preyed allowed the middle-class reformers to assert their own importance in society as moral exemplars and to fashion bonds of dependency with their unfortunate and helpless contemporaries. The July 1830 quarterly report of the Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance denigrated the influence of "any citizen who indulges in an habitual temperate use of ardent spirits."[78] The authors of the report emphasized the active role they imagined the sober middle class filling, and questioned whether the moderate drinker could "exert the healthful influence that as a moral, an enlightened, and

[76] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838. Though it lies outside of the purview of this paper, research into the correlation of class hierarchies with racial hierarchies within the ideological universe of the temperance movement would complicate and enrich our understanding of social turmoil and reform. For one formulation of the interconnected nature of these categories, see Gerda Lerner, "Rethinking the Paradigm," 196: "Gender, race, ethnicity and class are processes *through which hierarchical relations are created and maintained in such a way as to give some men power and privilege over other men and over women by their control of material resources, sexual and reproductive services, education and knowledge. Such control over others is maintained by a complex weave of social relations among dependent groups, which offers each group some advantages over other groups, sufficient to keep each group within the dominance system subordinate to the elite*."

[77] Dorsey, *Reforming Men & Women*, 93-134, dates the shift in emphasis from blaming the intemperate to blaming the rumsellers to the late 1830s, when more working class reformers involved themselves in the temperance movement. However, one must take care not to overemphasize the autonomy or influence of the working class in the cause of reform. As noted below, 22-23, temperance-minded working class individuals internalized middle-class aims and failed to significantly redirect the movement to an explicitly working-class agenda.

[78] *No. 1. Providence Association for the Promotion of Temperance*, 21-22.

above all a *Christian* member of society, he ought to exercise?"[79] The drunkard's passivity precluded any attempt he might make to extricate himself from his situation, and the rumseller, though able to act, did so with evil intent. It was left to the temperance reformer to apply his "healthful influence" to those portions of the community that depended on the middle class' capacity for moral action. Moreover, the report defines this role specifically with reference to drunkards. The duty of "a *Christian* member of society," a designation which applied most fully to a moral, reform-minded middle-class man in antebellum Rhode Island, demanded that he aid others. The dependency of poverty-ridden drunkards on the benevolence and moral wisdom of the middle class bound the two together in a hierarchical relationship.

Likewise, the Reverend C. Robinson urged the Woonsocket Falls Temperance Society in 1832 to obey the command of God and help those portions of the community that might not otherwise find relief. "[I]t is impossible for us to abstract our own feelings from the welfare of our fellows," he claimed. "It is the unalterable law of our nature, and was instituted by the God of Heaven, for the noblest purposes, that its operation might induce us to exercise our abilities to stop the progress of disease, and to alleviate human suffering."[80] In his view, the active, middle-class reformer should work to bring prosperity and health to helpless lower-class drunkards. The dependency of drunkards on the reformers, Robinson indicated, followed from the law of charity as implemented by God. Society rediscovered the cohesion it had lost during its rapid industrializing campaign in the moral reform that some could enact on others.

The triumph of the middle class' view of society, in which the moral influence they exerted bound them to the unfortunate lower classes overcome by drink and poverty, may be best represented with reference to an organization that drew its members from that lower class. A number of formerly intemperate men founded the Washington Temperance Society in Baltimore in 1840, and the group quickly spread to other cities across the United States, including Providence.[81] The Panic of 1837 led a number of "skilled artisans, clerks, and laborers" to

[79] Ibid.

[80] C. Robinson, *An Address, Delivered Before the Woonsocket Falls Temperance Society, January 15, 1832. By Rev. C. Robinson* (Pawtucket: S.M. Fowler, 1832), 3.

[81] Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 74.

fill their ranks. These men had experienced both economic misfortune and, frequently, the barren wastelands of intemperance. They testified to "the social degradation they suffered under the influence of alcohol" in their temperance meetings.[82] The October 8, 1841 report of the Providence Washington Total Abstinence Society, a regional adaptation of the Baltimore organization, offered the same integrated view of social relations as their middle-class counterparts. The authors of the report pleaded for prosperous members of the community to help the sixty impoverished families in their jurisdiction who suffered from the lingering aftereffects of intemperate habits. They lamented, "how these sixty families are to be assisted I know not, unless that the rich and benevolent portion of the city come up to our assistance and help us out of our difficulty."[83] The economic power of the wealthy allowed them to reconstruct the social bonds between rich and poor that industrialization had dissolved. However, these bonds consisted exclusively of charity. This specificity differentiated the enterprising, civic-minded middle class from the elites, who attached themselves less wholly to social causes.[84] It likewise reinforced the power of middle-class individuals at a moment when they sought to assert their growing affluence and importance to society.

The charitable role that temperance reformers dictated for those with money led some middle-class reformers to denounce the decadence of the upper class.[85] If the elite continued to indulge in

[82] Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 74.

[83] *First Quarterly Report of the Providence Washington Total Abstinence Society, Made Oct. 8, 1841* (Providence: S.M Millard & Company, 1841), 7.

[84] See note 35, above, for the apparent dearth of elites in leadership positions of the temperance movement.

[85] Andrew M. Schocket has "[proposed] two bifocal lenses through which to conceptualize how historians might better define and analyze elites in the early republic." While the first of these lenses looks at how elites manipulated the economics and politics of their particular locales in order to accumulate significant degrees of power, the second focuses more on culture and identity. Schocket writes, "Some people pictured themselves as part of a small cadre of individuals who were to some extent superior to their neighbors." They expressed this superiority through "affectations, consumption patterns, and social attitudes." If the testaments of temperance advocates are any indication, Rhode Island elites signaled their social status and differentiated themselves from the middle class through defiance of the dictates of teetotaling abstinence. "Thinking About Elites in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 547-555. The quotations are from pages 548, 552, and 553.

alcohol, the reasoning went, they would not only fail to participate in the harmonious society of dependency that the middle class imagined; they would also exert a destructive influence by virtue of their prominent and visible position. The Providence County Temperance Society resolved in 1838 "that the use of *wine* by the higher classes of society, is one of the chief obstacles to the progress of Temperance reform; and we call on such persons in the name of God and humanity, to *relinquish a habit*, which is constantly causing their weaker and less influential brethren to fall."[86] The intemperance of the Rhode Island elite, this resolution signals, impeded the spread of temperance through all of society. Their money and status counteracted the moral influence of the middle class. Indeed, the last few clauses of the resolution imply, albeit in a somewhat ambiguous manner, a causal relationship between the "*habit*" of the rich and the fall of "their weaker and less influential brethren."

Similarly, the 1843 report of the Rhode-Island State Temperance Society foregrounded the danger of elite drinking as detrimental to the whole of society: "The danger which most threatens us and our children is in what is called fashionable society. Our young men and youth in the city are now exposed to become drunkards...not more by the enticements of the abandoned, than by the *example* of high minded men who persist in tampering with this worse than Egypt's last plague."[87] These reformers identified the same functions of economic power that Richard Bushman highlights in *The Refinement of America*. He writes, "The most obvious social fact about power is that it exercises influence, not just physical coercion, but influence over hearts and minds…the fact remains that people at the top have an immense advantage in influencing cultural forms."[88] Middle-class temperance reformers recognized this power both in themselves and in the decadently rich. The importance they ascribed to exercising a moral influence over society and their alarm at the continued intemperance of elites betrayed a growing recognition of their power within society. Having risen to social, cultural, and economic prominence through

[86] *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838.

[87] *Report of the Rhode-Island State Temperance Society, for 1843*, 12; emphasis added.

[88] Bushman, *The Refinement*, 405.

industrialization, the middle class preoccupied itself with the effects of power and sought to reconstitute a harmonious society that revolved around the strength of the example it set.

Though middle-class reformers depicted the lower class as benefiting from their temperate influence, they also foresaw good accruing to themselves through increased worker efficiency and, as a result, higher returns on their capital investments. They emphasized the value that sober hard work produced in the market economy. These claims served their class interests by instilling in workers the industrious and reliable habits that would, in fact, return to the bourgeois proprietors of industry greater profits. In 1831 Usher Parsons remarked that danger lay not in the laboring class' occasional consumption of ardent spirits, but rather in the immoderation that would follow "till finally nearly all power becomes dependant on artificial stimulation."[89] He suggested a remedy that would not only render laborers more productive, but that would also work to divide and conquer any working class opposition to capitalist exploitation, assuming that opposition rallied around drinking: "cold bathing, exercise on horseback, employment of body and mind, *change of situation and associates*, and break up every train of suggestion that revives his ardent longings."[90] Francis Wayland likewise told a horror story of inefficient labor that contained the power to frighten any middle-class audience. He described the relationship between drinker and rumseller: "The drunkard gives him money for a poison which takes away the power as well as the desire to labor; which so stupefies the intellect that the very labor done is profitless; which takes away every stimulant to honorable exertion; which in a few years reduces the body to helpless decrepitude, and invariably consigns it to an early grave."[91] The stark, portentous tone of Wayland's pronouncement, connecting sloth and drunken idleness to death,

[89] Parson, *An Address*, 11.

[90] Ibid., 14; emphasis added. See also, Coleman, *The Transformation*, 243-4, which notes that some Rhode Island communities permitted their Catholic populations to hold Mass in taverns. See also, *Report of the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union, 1842*, 6, for an anecdote from Lonsdale about a politician "selling liquors without a license, in front of the Town House Door" on election day. Alcohol served as a rallying point for much political and social activity in antebellum Rhode Island. Alienation from drink and all those who partook would likely result in alienation from those who shared one's class interests.

[91] Wayland, *Address of Francis Wayland*, 11.

found a more pragmatic contrast in a temperance article directed at an audience in a position to employ laborers. The author of the article praised the progress of the temperance movement and the local option law that enforced sobriety:

> It was once almost impossible for them to procure a gang of workmen uniformly sober and industrious: and many a contract, which might have turned out profitable, has proved the means of much loss, because they could not depend upon those whom they employed. That the progress of the present reform has changed the aspect of things for the better, is evidenced in the numerous steady and well ordered gangs of workmen now engaged by our principal mechanics.[92]

The author spoke of the workmen in question as no more than a commodified labor source meant to procure a profit. He paid no attention to the good that would accrue to them as a result of their sobriety, but instead recognized temperance as a means of maximizing the profits of those who required a dependable labor force. The values of industriousness and sobriety, then, did not solely function as a means to identify oneself with the middle class. Instead, they directly benefited those in a position to control labor and profit from it. In short, they served middle-class interests.

Members of the middle class in antebellum Rhode Island, looking around themselves, observed a society in an incredible state of flux. The sense of newness that accompanied industrialization between 1829 and 1843, as well as the destruction attendant upon it, compelled them to use the values of the temperance movement to structure and conceptualize these changes. Temperance reformers articulated an ideology revolving around sobriety, and in doing so indicated their coordinates within the economic schema of society, their aspirations for upward mobility, and their expectations that the triumph of the middle class would signal the reconstitution of a harmonious and hierarchical social order. Temperance additionally aided middle-class individuals when they sought to establish relationships with one

[92] "Mechanics," *Rhode-Island Temperance Herald*, October 13, 1838.

another. In an era when the impersonal hourly wage seemed poised to triumph as the basis for human association, temperance provided an opportunity for people to fraternize without reference to overtly monetary concerns. The historian may look at the sense of horizontal kinship that emerged from temperance as an explicit form of class consciousness: temperance reformers set boundaries; they defined themselves and their compatriots; they created an exclusive group that was aware of itself.

However, in this paper I have approached temperance not as a set of horizontal bonds, but rather as a particular sort of class consciousness that never fails to engage in negotiations of power with the rest of society. The middle-class temperance reformers operating in Rhode Island defined poverty as nearly inextricable from intemperance. By negating the possibility of a morally sound poverty, arising from the conditions of an industrial economy and in no way connected to the vice of drinking, the reformers legitimated their relations to the means of production and the capitalist market system that supported them. Moreover, they devalued the agency of drinkers, portraying them as powerless to save themselves from the misery of intemperance. Despite the tension to which this position gave rise when considered alongside their condemnation of the immorality of drinkers, this helplessness, in conjunction with the rumsellers' exploitative ways, created a social responsibility for the middle class. They perceived themselves as singularly positioned to do good for society, and this perception endowed them with a social power that they lorded over others. Temperance served the middle class' interest in accumulating power by taming the supposed excesses of the workers in their employment. Beyond the sheer force that increased profits could command in a market-oriented society, a sober, disciplined workforce appealed to the power interests of the middle class by representing the triumph of its values. The laborer who no longer stopped for occasional drams of alcohol during the workday not only produced more; he displayed for all to see the middle class' cultural hegemony permeating and overtaking him.

The antebellum middle-class temperance reformers constructed an ideology that not only allowed them to identify one another but also supported their economic and social position. They used this ideology to instruct themselves on how to perform their class role.

Yet, in so doing, they never let their position between a dwindling though powerful elite and an overwhelming population of laborers and paupers stray far from their thoughts. One may best describe middle-class consciousness, then, not as self-identification, but rather as consciousness of another. They constantly accounted for the totality of their circumstances and established themselves in an ideologically supported position of privilege. From this, their social power flowed.

Uniting a Dismembered State: Secessionist Insurgency in North Carolina, November 1860-May 1861

Barnes Hauptfuhrer

It was still early on the morning of April 12, 1861, but North Carolina Governor John W. Ellis was undoubtedly having yet another sleepless night. Just hours earlier, several regiments of South Carolina militia had opened fire on the federal garrison stationed at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. All over the state, telegraph wires crackled with news of the first shots of the Civil War, yet North Carolina was more than a month away from officially seceding from the Union. For most North Carolinians, Lincoln's attempt to resupply the fort was a disaster of an unprecedented scale – a betrayal of promises that the fort would be evacuated and peace preserved, which they believed had come from President Lincoln himself. For others, Fort Sumter fit the definition of the "coercion" policy perfectly: Lincoln was forcing a state to remain in the Union at gunpoint, and it was just the sort of action they had been waiting for. As North Carolina Senator John A. Gilmer had noted a month earlier, "the seceders in the border states and throughout the South ardently desire some collision of arms… [they would] give a kingdom for a fight."[1]

The reaction among North Carolina's "seceders" was immediate and electrifying. "We received to-day news of the attack on Sumter," a young William Calder of Wilmington wrote in his diary. "The excitement was great," he noted. "All knew that civil war was upon us, and all felt that the

[1] John A. Gilmer to William Seward, March 7, 1861, in Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 258. In this paper, quotations appear with the spelling and punctuation of the original; when emphasis has been added it is noted in a footnote.

time had come to act, ay, in the fullest sense of the word, *to act*."[2] Barely able to control the popular outcry in eastern North Carolina, Governor Ellis gave orders to militia leaders in Wilmington to control secessionist mobs threatening to destroy an unmanned federal fort in the city: "You will proceed with such troops under your command as you may deem requisite for the purpose, to Fort Caswell and take possession of the same in the name of the State of North Carolina."[3]

Before most North Carolinians could fully comprehend the attack on Fort Sumter, however, they were hit by news even more shocking and devastating to any remaining hope of preserving the Union – Lincoln had issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 troops to put down the rebellion in the Southern States. Throughout North Carolina, church bells tolled and local militias paraded in the streets. The popular uprising was so great that on April 17 Governor Ellis sent a telegram to Confederate President Jefferson Davis with the news: "WE ARE READY TO JOIN YOU TO A MAN. STRIKE THE BLOW QUICKLY AND WASHINGTON WILL BE OURS. ANSWER."[4]

But the responses of secessionists across North Carolina in mid-April were only the loudest cracks of lightning in a popular storm that had been brewing for months. At some times, in certain places, the agitation for secession had dominated public opinion without a single objection. Other times, the storm's intensity had petered and threatened to disappear under the weight of Unionist dissent. On February 28, 1861, North Carolina voters had refused to call a state convention to even consider secession. Had the convention call been approved, Unionist candidates would have outnumbered Secessionists by almost three to one.[5] By the beginning of March secession fervor seemed to be coming to a standstill. The attack on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, including two regiments from North Carolina, however, gave the movement new life and enough force to carry North Carolina out of the Union for good. Soon letters from

[2] William Calder, journal entry, April 13, 1861, William Calder Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[3] John W. Ellis to John L. Cantwell, April 15, 1861, *The Papers of John Willis Ellis* vol. 2, ed. Noble J. Tolbert (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1964), 609.

[4] John W. Ellis, "Telegram to Jefferson Davis, 17 April 1861," *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 623.

[5] Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 373.

all over the state offering military service flooded the governor's office. "I tender you with my services," wrote one Halifax County native, "if the State has to be forced by Lincolnites I am willing on my part to be where the balls may come first and heaviest."[6] The state had exploded with outrage.

Several scholars have studied the leaders both for and against secession in North Carolina, examining in great detail the political debates among the prominent and elected men of the state. Despite careful accounts of the secession movement in Virginia and Tennessee, Civil War scholarship has largely ignored popular secession opinion in North Carolina. Though politicians such as John Ellis, John Gilmer, and William Holden certainly had a significant influence on their fellow citizens, secession would have never been possible in North Carolina without widespread popular support. On the local level, popular groups and mobs worked to keep the secession movement alive during the secession winter of 1860 and 1861 and fought desperately at times to preserve the emotional intensity that had initially erupted at the election of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party to the Presidency. Men formed militias, held meetings, listened to speeches, wrote to newspapers, and drilled their local regiments in town squares. Women organized parades, prepared musical programs and food for demonstrations of Southern pride, volunteered medical services, and even threatened to take up arms if the men of their county refused to stand their ground in defense of 'Southern Honor.' At the same time, in some parts of the state, groups of concerned citizens struggled with difficulty to preserve peace and the Union they so dearly cherished, ardently proclaiming that South Carolina should be "pushed into the ocean" for precipitating such a national crisis.[7] They fended off insults of "Black Republican," "Submissionist," and "Abolitionist," and did their best to keep their state in the Union safely.

This paper examines the popular insurgency of common people across North Carolina, both for and against secession, during the secession winter from the election of Abraham Lincoln in early November 1860 to the official secession of North Carolina on May 20, 1861. Though often overlooked, the work of determined local groups on both sides and their

[6] R. H. Walker to John W. Ellis, April 19, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 637.

[7] Conway D. Whittle to Lewis N. Whittle, May 10, 1861, Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 335.

willingness to speak out and organize grassroots support in the face of often overwhelming opposition shaped the outcome of the secession debate in North Carolina.

For most of 1860, North Carolinians were more concerned with internal affairs than the impending national crisis. Beginning in 1859, popular insurgencies in the Piedmont and Mountain regions of the state urged politicians to adopt a new tax code that would tax slaves at a much higher rate, one roughly equivalent to their purchase price, rather than the lower flat-tax rate. The widespread support this new tax code gained in several parts of the state worried many Piedmont and eastern North Carolina slaveholders. Viewing support of the new tax code as hostility to slavery, one Eastern North Carolina slaveholder lamented that he was living in a "dismembered state," while another believed the debate would lead to "nothing but discord in a Slaveholding State."[8] "What a pity," declared a Piedmont slaveholder from Caswell County, "that at a crisis in our federal relations, we should be divided in our Domestic policy, especially upon the very question which now distracts the union… why not let the [state] constitution alone for the present, until our relations to the federal government are upon a more solid basis, than that upon which they now rest."[9] The taxation debate of 1859, however, was just the most visible example of long standing hostility to slavery in North Carolina. Though many historians have documented antislavery sentiment in Appalachian North Carolina, some of the most fervent opposition to the institution came from the Piedmont region. In the area around Greensboro especially, North Carolina Quakers advocated an end to slavery, holding abolition meetings and distributing antislavery literature all over the state.[10]

Other non-slaveholders opposed slavery for economic as well as religious reasons. The most famous of these advocates was Hinton Rowan Helper. In 1857, Helper published an extensive condemnation of slavery in his book, *The Impending Crisis in the South: How to Meet It*.[11] He argued

[8] Asa Biggs to John W. Ellis, February 29, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 380-381; Weldon N. Edwards to John W. Ellis, March 2, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 383-385.

[9] Stephen E. Williams to John W. Ellis, January 31, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 365-367.

[10] William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 336-340.

[11] Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis in the South: How to Meet It*, ed. George M. Frederickson (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1968).

that "tens of thousands of voters in the Slave States" secretly supported Republican antislavery yet were afraid to express their views because of the "terrors of lynch law."[12] Though Helper claimed no "special friendliness or sympathy for the blacks," he argued that slavery meant the freedom of poor non-slaveholders was "merely nominal."[13] His infamous diatribe against slavery achieved national prominence, becoming a symbol of Republican support and eventually playing a key role in the Speakership election of 1860.

Because the national crisis had been largely, if not completely, concerned with slavery until 1860, many North Carolina non-slaveholders like Helper saw no reason to support secessionists from South Carolina or the Deep South. These secessionists had constantly complained that abolitionists and the Republican Party represented a dangerous menace to slavery and an insult to slaveholders that could only be honorably avoided through secession. Though their opinions of slavery encompassed a wide range of views, most North Carolina non-slaveholders disagreed with these Southern firebrands, believing that the interests of non-slaveholders were best served in a continued union with the northern states.

It is not surprising, therefore, that as the 1860 Presidential election approached, most North Carolinians developed a significantly different political outlook than their neighbors to the South. Unlike South Carolina, North Carolina lacked fire-eating aristocrats like John Calhoun or Robert Barnwell Rhett who had been schooled in the politics of secession since the Nullification Crisis of 1828. On the other side of the political spectrum, North Carolina also had fewer prominent citizens staunchly opposed to slavery than its more mountainous western neighbor, Tennessee. Despite these differences, popular opinion on secession still varied widely across the state. For the sake of simplicity or organizational purposes, most historians have mistakenly classified these opinions into one of two categories – Unionist or Secessionist[14], but these categories grossly misrepresent popular views on secession and the debate over slavery in North Carolina. Prior to Lincoln's election on November 6,

[12] Helper, *Impending Crisis*, ed. Frederickson, 409-410.

[13] Ibid., 43-44, 409.

[14] Such scholars include, among others, John G. Barrett, James H. Boykin, William C. Harris, and Guion G. Johnson. There are, however, a few scholars who have recognized this important distinction among upper South Unionists, including Daniel W. Crofts and James M. McPherson.

the vast majority of North Carolinians were best described as *Conditional* Unionists.

Conditional Unionists supported neither immediate secession nor total "submission" to anti-slavery and anti-Southern sentiments attributed to the newly formed Republican Party. As one Piedmont banker wrote, "I am for the Union as long as I can be with honor. As a last resort, I am for secession, peaceably if we can – forcibly if we must."[15] For a very few North Carolinians, the conditions of their Unionist support were violated as early as July 1859, with John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. After reading about jubilation and parades in several Northern cities hailing John Brown as a martyr, one eastern North Carolinian privately admitted, "I have always been a fervid Union man, but I confess the endorsement of the Harper's Ferry outrage… has shaken my fidelity and… I am willing to take the chances of every possible evil that may arise from disunion, sooner than submit any longer to Northern insolence."[16]

Most North Carolinians, however, did not view Brown's raid or the existence of a Republican Party opposed to the spread of slavery as a sufficient reason to risk disunion. An October letter from Governor Ellis to an ardent South Carolina secessionist best describes the variety of views present in the state prior to Abraham Lincoln's election:

> Our people are very far from being agreed as to what action the state should take in the event of Lincoln's election to the Presidency. Some favor Submission, some resistance and others still would *await the course of events that might follow*. Many argue that he would be powerless for evil with a minority party in the Senate and perhaps in the House of Representatives also; while others say, and doubtless with entire sincerity, *that the placing of the powers of the Federal Government into his hands would prove a fatal blow to the institution of negro slavery in this country*.[17]

[15] DeWitt C. Johnson to William W. Holden, March 3, 1860, William W. Holden *Papers*, vol. 1, ed. Raper and Mitchell (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History, 2000), 103.

[16] William A. Walsh to L. O'B. Branch, December 8, 1859, in Avery O. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism 1848-1861* (Baton Rouge, 1953), 311.

[17] John W. Ellis to William H. Gist, October 19, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 469-470.

The fractured sentiments of North Carolinians in October of 1861 reflected a much different political landscape than the one Governor Ellis would describe to Confederate President Jefferson Davis just a few months later.

Not surprisingly, the 1860 Presidential election reflected the lack of political consensus in North Carolina. Unlike in most upper South states, as in Virginia and Tennessee, political activists were unable to effectively motivate voters with fears of disunion, or, as in most of the Deep South, Republican threats to slavery. Voter turnout for the presidential election was comparable to earlier presidential elections and significantly lower than most local and state elections. North Carolinians who did cast votes in the presidential election tended to vote along previously established party lines.[18] Democratic counties in Eastern and Appalachian North Carolina supported John C. Breckinridge, with a few dissenting votes for Stephen Douglas in both areas. John Bell and the newly formed Constitutional Union Party received votes from traditionally Whig Piedmont counties, yet were unable to recruit former Democrats in large numbers with promises of continued peace

[18] The 1860 Presidential Election is truly one of the most remarkable in the history of the United States. By 1860, the two parties that had dominated national politics since the Presidency of Andrew Jackson had almost completely unraveled. The former Whig Party had all but disintegrated over the political battles of the Compromise of 1850 and the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act. A number of new parties formed by former Whigs sprung up between 1854 and 1860, including the Free Soil Party, the Know-Nothing or American Party, and the Republican Party. Many of these smaller parties eventually funneled into the Republican Party, along with deserting Northern Democrats.

The Democratic Party, under severe strain in Northern states since 1854, finally split at the Democratic national convention in Charleston in April of 1860. There, representatives from several Southern states refused to accept Stephen Douglas' "Popular Sovereignty" platform and walked out of the convention. Deep South Democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, while Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas of Illinois.

From the remnants of the Southern wing of the former Whig Party, John Bell was nominated on a platform of "Constitutional Unionism," which stood roughly equivalent to ignoring the slavery question whenever and wherever possible. Finally, the fast-growing, though still completely Northern, Republican Party nominated Abraham Lincoln. Thus the four candidates for the Presidency included two former Democrats (Breckinridge and Douglas), one former Whig (Bell), and Abraham Lincoln as the Republican candidate.

in the Union.[19] It appears that most North Carolinians simply did not anticipate the fire-storm that Lincoln's election would trigger across the South. Just a month later, a Democrat from Stokes County in the northern Piedmont regretted this mistake. "If they [Democrats] had to vote again on the Presidents Election," he predicted, "Bell would get them."[20]

It did not take long, however, for North Carolina secessionists to join their fellow Southerners in outrage at the election of a sectional President opposed to slavery.[21] A flood of propaganda and newspaper articles from South Carolina and the Deep South aroused fears of slave rebellions and abolitionist officials sent by a Republican President to fill patronage positions in the state. One article from South Carolina reprinted in the Charlotte *Daily Bulletin* claimed that the Republican Party intended "war [on] our domestic tranquility, peace and happiness, by stimulating our slaves to insubordination, insurrection and rebellion, and thereby imperriling our lives and those of our wives and our children."[22] With such encouragement, secessionists in many Eastern counties began to mobilize, holding community meetings and forming militias. "The first Secession meeting was held in Cleveland several weeks since," Governor Ellis noted in his private journal, "Both parties participated and there was entire unanimity. The second was held in Wilmington on the 19th inst. Both participated and the resolutions were for immediate secession."[23] Though isolated secessionists certainly existed in North Carolina before Lincoln's election, these meetings represented the beginning of grassroots secessionist support in North Carolina.

Similar meetings across the state drew large crowds as secessionists began to build the support that would sustain their movement until the

[19] For a more detailed and statistical analysis of the 1860 presidential election in North Carolina, see Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, chapter 3.

[20] A. Loth to John F. Poindexter, November 27, 1860, John F. Poindexter Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[21] Since Lincoln received no electoral votes from Southern states, and in fact was not on the ballot in most Southern states including North Carolina, he was labeled by many the nation's first purely sectional president.

[22] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), December 3, 1860, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[23] John W. Ellis, journal entry, November 22, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 472-473.

momentous events of April. The Charlotte *Daily Bulletin* described the enthusiasm that accompanied one such meeting in Mecklenburg County:

> Before the hour appointed for the meeting, the Court House was literally crowded, and the sidewalks leading to the house were lined with the patriot sons of Mecklenburg… All other meetings held in Charlotte since we have resided here, when compared with the one held on Saturday, sink into utter insignificance. – It was truly a congregation of the masses.[24]

By the end of November, open meetings "expressing the strongest Southern feeling," had been held in most Piedmont and Eastern counties.[25] Descriptions of these meetings by participants usually focused on their ability to bridge previous political divides and voice unanimous community support for secession, even when this was a less than accurate view of popular opinion. One citizen from Anson County in the southern Piedmont boasted that the people of his area, "regard Secession as the last and only hope of the South… we think here *now* is the time to strike for a Southern Confederacy," yet later qualified this statement, admitting that for some citizens, it was simply a matter of resisting the "coercion" of seceded states back into the Union, rather than a vote for secession.[26]

Despite opposition in many areas, secessionists in Eastern and Piedmont North Carolina stressed community action and visible participation in the burgeoning movement. "For the last 10 days," declared the same Anson County citizen, "a Secession flag on a pole 100 ft high has been proudly floating to the breeze."[27] Participants at one meeting in Fayetteville made no secret of their intention to influence popular opinion and encourage secession; "Resolved," they declared, "That we recommend that all citizens approving these [secessionist] resolutions are requested to adopt and wear a cockade, composed of the colors red, white and blue… in adopting and wearing this cockade, neighbor will show neighbor and (as the soldier)

[24] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), December 3, 1860.

[25] John W. Ellis, journal entry, November 28, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 472-473.

[26] S. W. Cole to John W. Ellis, November 26, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 521-523.

[27] Ibid.

will feel strengthened by the touch of each other's shoulder."[28] This sort of visible support for secession would play a key role in the movement throughout the months leading to secession.

In many areas, secessionists seized the opportunity to organize community support by forming militia companies to protect 'Southern Honor.' In the foothill town of Shelby, a meeting was held "to consider the state of the Union and the propriety of organizing companies of Minute Men, to be ready for our defence, and the defence of the South."[29] Citizens of Granville County in the northern Piedmont organized a militia called the "Granville Independent Greys," declaring, "[we] do not give into the blue light doctrine of the existence of… a *nation* of the U.S." [30] Similar militias were formed across the state in response to Lincoln's election.

Beginning in November, these newly formed militias would continue to represent and sustain community support for secession throughout the state. One Halifax County woman complained, "Mr. E. has been so busy with his Troop, Company meeting, drilling, officers drill & what not that I have seen little of him comparatively… he says he is preparing for War! I can't believe it; but as the 'price of Liberty is eternal vigilance,' maybe he is only laying down his purchase money!"[31] Through these meetings and public demonstrations, secessionists hoped to win and sustain popular support for secession and present a united front to discourage any dissenting views. Open meetings and the formation of Southern militias led one Eastern North Carolinian to declare, "Secession is forced… we cannot stop the movement if we would, we should not if we could."[32]

Despite these enthusiastic displays, however, many North Carolinians recognized that secession was far from a foregone conclusion in the state. One citizen from eastern North Carolina feared that "a large majority of

[28] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), December 5, 1860.

[29] North Carolina *Standard*, November 24, 1860, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[30] George W. Wortham to John W. Ellis, November 16, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 486-487.

[31] Catherine A. Edmondston, *"Journal of a Secesh Lady": The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston 1860-1866* (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History, 1979), 17-18.

[32] John H. Wheeler to John W. Ellis, November 27, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 523-525.

our people are too weak, in the back" to support secession.[33] In many Piedmont and Appalachian areas of the state, especially in the 'Quaker Belt' around Greensboro, widely supported meetings were held to condemn the secessionist fervor. "I have not yet seen the message of Gov Ellis but learn that he is in favor of secession," wrote one Stokes County native, "All and every Democrat I see is opposed to it even old Bill Fallen."[34] A meeting in Forsyth County expressed hope that "the extremists of the South will become more calm & desist from any rash action at any rate – until we see what Lincoln will do."[35] "[We] fear that the [fire-eaters] of [the] South will bring trouble on us prematurely," they declared, and "hope there are enough good men in this State & Legislature to stay any disunion storm that may arrise."[36] Grassroots organizers in these areas of the state would continue to frustrate secessionists looking for unanimity until the eve of secession and after.

Though North Carolina secessionists dominated public discussions during most of November, they were unable to silence more conservative Unionist and dissenting views for long. Community meetings held in November in response to Lincoln's election had claimed to represent the "unanimous" views of the people, yet the month of December clearly showed the shortcomings of these statements. One North Carolina Unionist from Warren County in the northeastern part of the state wrote to the North Carolina *Standard* : "Resolutions have gone out from this County. *The sense of the people has not been obtained*."[37]

Throughout December, the *Standard* was filled with letters from North Carolinians eager to repudiate those they considered irrational local secessionists and show their continued faith in the Union and the 'true' sentiments of the people. "A Caswell Democrat… writes us as follows," reported editor William Holden on December 4: "I am glad you have taken the position you have… the people are at last heartily tired of the yoke which selfish demagogues, and now it appears *disunion* demagogues have placed on their necks."[38] Another farmer from Wake County in the

[33] Henry M. Shaw to John W. Ellis, November 26, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 521.

[34] A. Loth to John F. Poindexter, November 27, 1860, Poindexter Papers.

[35] B.J. Bitting to John F. Poindexter, November 30, 1860, Poindexter Papers.

[36] Ibid.

[37] North Carolina *Standard*, December 4, 1860.

[38] Ibid.

central Piedmont wrote an unusually prophetic letter to Holden, showing fierce resistance to secession among farmers in the central part of the state:

> You are for the Union. You are right. Thousands of our farmers will go with you. We farmers hardly make enough corn and wheat this year to support our own families, and how then can we support all the soldiers that disunion would raise up? Now, Sir, the man who is for breaking up this blessed Union without good cause, is a traitor to mankind, and is aiding the abolitionists in the bargain; for mark my words, violent dissolution without good cause will destroy slavery… Besides, who are going to fight? The non-slaveholders? [39]

Even areas of Eastern North Carolina that most historians have portrayed as solidly pro-secession showed a strong reaction against secessionists in the month of December. One Wilmington native wrote: "We conservatives of Wilmington are not of the few – we are not outvoted as to numbers. The cause of our whole country gives us nerve and resolution; and while we would not see North Carolina submit to unjust power, we intend to do all we can to quiet the turbulent waves of disunion."[40] Letters like this one show both the uncertainty and complexity of the secession debate among North Carolinians – an issue that is often overlooked by historians who focus simply on debates in the state legislature and amongst the prominent men of the state.

In line with the Conditional Unionism that pervaded North Carolina politics prior to Lincoln's election, many other North Carolinians backed away from the secessionist ultimatums of November in favor of a more diplomatic approach to saving the Union. "Resolved," declared one community meeting in Halifax County, "That we recommend that a convention of all the States be held at an early day, for the purpose of defining their positions in the present political crisis; that the South require of the States (in convention) good and sufficient guarantees, to be faithfully observed, that the just rights of the South shall be secured."[41]

Other Conditional Unionists debated just what concessions would be

[39] North Carolina *Standard*, December 4, 1860.
[40] Ibid.
[41] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), December 5, 1860.

necessary to avert a national crisis and stop the secession movement. "I would be very much pleased to here from you and your opinion on the state of the Union," wrote one R. D. Golding of Stokes County to his business partner, "is there yet a hope of a compromise or to establish a geographical line for this Union I think that if it could be done that this would give peace to this much troubled country such a line with the enforcement of the fugitive slave law ought to satisfy the nation."[42]

Instead of calling for political concessions, other North Carolinians adopted what would soon be dubbed the 'watch-and-wait' policy towards Lincoln's administration. These Conditional Unionists refused to support secession unless Lincoln made an overt act against slavery or the South. "I think the prevailing disposition in this vicinity is to wait and give Lincoln a chance to show his hand," wrote one *Standard* reader from Chatham County.[43] Another citizen of Wilkes County in the Appalachian region of the state begged future governor Zebulon Vance to stand up for Conditional Unionists, whose voices were being ignored by a few secessionist leaders in the state legislature:

> It is True [secession] would be a shame to our grand and glowing Nation Which will prove its down fall. Mr. Vance Stand up to [the secessionist] Mr. Clingman and let him know that all the good old State is not Such a turncoat as he is, Nor neither are we all willing to unfurl the great Flag of our Country for the Cause of Lincolns Election until We have seen his Ways & does require such an act to be don.[44]

Many of these views manifested themselves in the state capital of Raleigh during December, even as commissioners from South Carolina and the Deep South begged the people of North Carolina to join them in secession. In his book, *Apostles of Disunion*, historian Charles Dew argues that these commissioners were key to advancing secession in the Upper South, yet December reports from North Carolina complicate this argument. "On Friday evening last… members of Congress from

[42] R. D. Golding to John F. Poindexter, December 3, 1860, Poindexter Papers.
[43] North Carolina *Standard*, December 4, 1860.
[44] B. F. Eller to Zebulon B. Vance, December 17, 1860, *The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance*, vol. 1, ed. Johnston (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1963), 73-74.

South Carolina… addressed a large audience in the reception hall of Yarborough's Hotel, in this City [Raleigh]," reported Holden's *Standard*. "They were listened to respectfully, though a vast majority of the audience disapproved their sentiments. As soon as they had finished a Constitutional Union meeting was organized in the Courthouse, amid great enthusiasm, and a speech was made… [receiving] hearty and repeated cheering"[45] Though local meetings like this one are usually absent from historical accounts of the secession debate, they were perhaps more critical to shaping public opinion than speeches in the legislature because they gave citizens a chance to speak for themselves.

Just a few weeks later, participants at another open meeting in Raleigh came up with a set of Conditional Unionist resolutions: "Resolved," they stated, "That we do not regard the mere election of a sectional candidate to the Presidency… as sufficient cause in itself for a dissolution of the Union."[46] The December reaction of Unionists both in the capital and across North Carolina led Governor Ellis to complain to infamous South Carolina fire-eater Robert Gourdin that, "there is a fierce opposition here to Southern rights."[47]

Dedicated North Carolina secessionists responded with desperation to the dramatic swing in public opinion, claiming dissension was "growing mainly out of old party divisions, but we will overcome it."[48] In the eastern North Carolina town of Wilson, secessionist mobs dealt with dissenting views in a different manner. Under the headline, "INVITED TO LEAVE," the Charlotte *Daily Bulletin* reported: "A young man passing by the name of Joseph Sheldon, being rather free in his expressions in favor of the abolition of Slavery, avowing himself an abolitionist, was advised by the citizens of Wilson, N.C., on Friday last, to leave immediately."[49]

The Wilson *Ledger*, of course, claimed the event was peaceful, and that Sheldon was "escorted to the depot by a large crowd of our citizens, with a band of music, not such as we are accustomed to hear on joyous and festive occasions."[50] This demonstration must not have quieted all

[45] North Carolina *Standard*, December 4, 1860.
[46] Ibid.
[47] John W. Ellis to Robert N. Gourdin, December 25, 1860, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 546-547.
[48] Ibid.
[49] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), December 5, 1860.
[50] Ibid.

dissension in Wilson, however, because just a few days later the *Ledger* reported that "An individual by the name of Rummell, (rather a suggestion name) a painter by occupation, was politely invited to leave town a few days since, as he did not express opinions sufficiently in accordance with those entertained by the people of this place."[51]

Other secessionists offered concessions to the growing support for Conditional Unionism without altogether abandoning the political organizing and popular insurgencies they had begun in November. Writing in mid-December, one secessionist from Robeson County admitted the possibility that the "wisdom of him who has guided our destinies and directed our counsels may yet open a way by which our present dificulties may be settled and we may have a return of prosperity *in the Union*."[52] Yet he refused to let go of the support secessionists had achieved, saying, "now the only way I can see to bring [peace] about is to organize the *Militia* procure a full supply of the best *arms* the country affords, place the state in a proper condition of *defence*… and then it may be probable that the people of the abolition states will begin to look round, and say it is time time to stop aggression on the south and their institutions, Olde Ripvanwinkle is wide awake."[53]

Despite efforts to sustain their insurgency, supporters of secession in North Carolina continued to lose ground to more conservative and even-tempered Conditional Unionists during the months of January and February 1861. These Conditional Unionists hoped for a peaceful compromise that would entice the seceded states back into the Union voluntarily. "It may be that we are to have disunion, anarchy & civil war," admitted one Piedmont North Carolinian, "but while there is a prospect that our difficulties may be honourably adjusted and our national peace and prosperity restored let us strive to that and let us not lash the already furious waves, but pour oil upon the troubled waters."[54] Another letter from a W. M. Willcox of Arkansas to his brother in North Carolina highlights

[51] Ibid.

[52] Alexander McMillan to John B. McMillan, December 13, 1860, Alexander McMillan Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[53] Alexander McMillan to John B. McMillan, December 13, 1860, McMillan Papers.

[54] H. B. Howard to Jonathan Smith, January 29, 1861, Sheek Family Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

the hope for compromise that many North Carolinians continued to hold in the early months of 1861, much to the chagrin of radical secessionists in the Deep South: "In the first place you endorse the idea of… fighting in the Union. I do not… You think we have not tried to heal the wound, we have not worked for the Union as we should. I think we have… You think all the Southern States should unite and present an ultimatum to the North and demand its acceptance."[55]

Though they voiced a diverse range of acceptable compromise measures, leaders of this more conservative movement were able to gain majority support in North Carolina with the belief that Congress would eventually reach a compromise if given enough time. "It will certainly be a rash and unjustifiable act for the seceding states to attack the handful of Federal troops in said Fort [Sumter] when the *true patriots* of the country North & South are trying to settle the difficulty and restore peace & prosperity to a divided & destracted people," declared one Piedmont citizen.[56] Secessionists were "anxious to bring on a collission of arms & civil war to prevent peaceible settlement," he complained.[57] This 'watch-and-wait' tactic of Conditional Unionists differed markedly from the demands of fire-eating secessionists, who clamored for decisive action and an immediate state convention to consider the national crisis.

With more vocal leadership, North Carolinians continued to emerge in support of the policy of reconciliation during the first two months of 1861. "I was pleased with your union sentiments," wrote H. B. Howard to fellow Piedmont citizen Jonathan Smith in February 1861: "I have no doubt but that the great majority in Davie ardently love the Union [and] will sacrifice anything short of honor to preserve it. I had rather have it said of [us] that [we] threw the breaks upon the wheels than that I was propelling the rapidly moving car of revolution."[58] In sections of Piedmont and Appalachian North Carolina, groups of Unionists continued to show their support as they had done in December. "Union flags is hoisted in every section," declared one North Carolinian from the Quaker Belt around Greensboro, "the masses seem determined to maintain the union

[55] W. M. Willcox to G. Willcox, February 26, 1861, W. M. Willcox Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[56] H. B. Howard to Jonathan Smith, February 12, 1861, Sheek Papers.

[57] Ibid.

[58] H. B. Howard to Jonathan Smith, January 29, 1861, Sheek Papers.

just as long as there is a plank to stand on."[59] Across the Piedmont, these grassroots organizers continued to defy the secessionist desire to portray a united front.

Secessionists sometimes saw their support slipping away in the areas where they least expected. Even in Wilmington, one of the foremost hotbeds of secession in North Carolina, large groups of citizens refused to give up their faith in preserving the Union. "There was a large meeting… last Saturday, and great excitement," reported one Wilmington secessionist, "Judge Ruffin spoke and offered a proposition [for secession] but it was voted down. I am glad I did not go."[60] Historians have often overlooked this sort of popular dissension in the eastern areas of North Carolina like Wilmington, portraying the region instead as a united front in favor of secession.

Believing that Lincoln and the Republican Party would never seriously consider using armed force against the seceded states, Conditional Unionists often joined in strategic alliances with secessionists to condemn unconditional Unionism and "coercion" in North Carolina. By disassociating themselves from the views that their opponents attacked most, Conditional Unionists severely undercut the most virulent strain of the secession argument. In January, Governor Ellis wrote to Governor Joseph Brown of Georgia, "We have a hard struggle in our Legislature between the immediate Secessionists and those who are disposed to give Lincoln a trial, *though disavowing the imputation of Submissionists* ."[61] By criticizing any support of federal intervention, especially military action against the seceded states, Conditional Unionists were able to further cripple the secession movement.

North Carolinians still in favor of secession dealt with their inability to galvanize popular opinion to their side in a number of different ways. To the displeasure of some in their ranks, secessionists in Charlotte attempted to unite with some Conditional Unionists, hoping they could then sway

[59] Barney Ward to unknown, February 10, 1861, Shadrach Ward Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[60] John Wall Norwood to Mrs. J. W. Norwood, January 3, 1861, Lenoir Family Papers, Documenting the American South, 2004, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, accessed January 21, 2008, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/lenoir/lenoir.html.

[61] John W. Ellis to Joseph E. Brown, January 14, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 558-559; emphasis added.

more radical citizens to their support:

> For the sake of harmony, and in order to afford an opportunity to the timid to move forward and occupy more prominent positions in the defence of State Rights and State Sovereignty, the TRUE STATES RIGHTS PARTY of Mecklenburg… surrendered to extreme conservatives in the County at a recent meeting.[62]

A meeting in Stanly County ended similarly with secessionists indicating their openness to the possibility that a compromise might be reached in an otherwise fiery ultimatum to the federal government:

> Stanly County will rise above party trammels, and will vote with an eye solely to the honor of the State… [the people] are being awakened to a sense of their utter insecurity in the present Union, *and unless some practicable guarantees are not very shortly incorporated into the Constitution*, they will act and vote with a view to throw off the accursed yoke which they will have to bear under the North-Western fanatic (old Abe).[63]

Other secessionists simply continued the same political organizing tactics they had begun in November and December. One eastern North Carolinian from Lenoir County wrote to his wife that, "[the forming of military companies] gives me a great deal of pleasure to learn that the people out there is so unanimously united."[64] In Charlotte, local militias held parades to help rejuvenate the rage that accompanied Lincoln's election and had begun to fade with the onset of winter:

> Yesterday was truly a great day in Charlotte. Business generally was suspended and stores were closed. At an early hour our friends residing in the country began to arrive, and at the appointed hour the several Military Companies were in motion, with full ranks and well officered… The proceedings were entirely harmoneous. The attendance was very large and resistance to Black Republican

[62] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 2, 1861.
[63] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 11, 1861; emphasis added.
[64] William F. Loftin to Mrs. Loftin, January 3, 1861, William F. Loftin Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

> domination, was the only sentiment expressed, apart from repeated declarations that the destiny of North Carolina is with the South.[65]

Elsewhere secessionists wrote to local newspapers, "kicking up a considerable fuss" and constantly reminding North Carolinians of the potential danger a Republican President posed to the safety of the state.[66] These Secessionists consistently ridiculed their opponents, labeling them "Submissionists," "Black Republicans," and "Abolitionists." One such Secessionist wrote to the Charlotte *Daily Bulletin*, reminding readers that, "The fact must be made known, that, there are to be found among some of our most prominent men in this State, gentlemen who still long after… the once glorious Stars and Stripes of America and make of them submissive subjects of an Abolitionized Black Republican Administration."[67] All over the state, local propaganda spread false rumors of Republican intentions to end slavery, destroy the South, and incite slave insurrections. "All the papers seem eagerly to look for the next exciting things to inculcate," one Wilmington native complained to his wife, "many of them obviously having no foundation in fact, and our people are getting into a terrible conflict of sentiment."[68] Yet with secession quickly losing its grasp on public opinion, other North Carolina secessionists adopted even more desperate strategies.

Frustrated secessionist mobs, believing that Lincoln and the Republican Party intended to end slavery and incite insurrection, intimidated slaves and free blacks in some places. As one newspaper reported, many free blacks were forced to flee North Carolina in fear for their own safety: "A New York journal of Saturday says: - 'Sixty free negroes from North Carolina, bound North, passed thro' Maryland the other day. Cause: The Southern secessionist excitement. We may expect hundreds and thousands of such visitors before long."[69]

The anger and frustration of secession mobs, however, was not directed solely at African Americans. As news reached Wilmington that President Buchanan had authorized supplies and a small contingent of

[65] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 23, 1861.
[66] W. M. Willcox to G. Willcox, February 26, 1861, Willcox Papers.
[67] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 2, 1861.
[68] John Wall Norwood to Mrs. J. W. Norwood, January 3, 1861, Lenoir Family Papers, accessed January 21, 2008.
[69] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 8, 1861.

soldiers to head to Fort Sumter aboard the civilian ship *Star of the West*, outrage galvanized a secessionist militia called the Smithville Guards. Driven also by false rumors that more federal reinforcements were headed for other strategic locations along the Southern coast, including Fort Caswell at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, Smithville Guards led by a Captain Thurston overpowered the lone guard and took control of the fort. Governor Ellis immediately ordered the fort to be returned to federal control, but wrote to President Buchanan explaining the reason for the popular outbreak and seeking assurances that "coercion" was not the intention of the administration:

> My information satisfied me that this popular outbreak was caused by a report very generally credited but which for the sake of humanity I hope is not true, that it was the purpose of the Administration to coerce the Southern States and that troops were on their way to garrison the Southern forts and to begin the work of our subjugation. This impression is not yet erased from the public mind… give public assurances that no measures of force are contemplated towards us.[70]

Fearing punishment, the mob quickly obeyed Governor Ellis' orders to abandon the fort. Soon Governor Ellis received a letter explaining that it was not the militia but instead a group of private citizens that had taken the fort: "From the information I have been able to obtain it appears that Fort Caswell was occupied by Citizens of this state in consequence of a report that Federal Troops had been ordered to that point," wrote a Wilmington native.[71] "Captain Thurston desires me to state that his Company 'The Smithville Guards,' did not as a company occupy the fort but that members of said company did as citizens accompany him."[72] Nevertheless, a secessionist militia had proved that it could be an effective

[70] John W. Ellis to President James Buchanan, January 12, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 554-555; President Buchanan did, in fact, send a civilian supply ship *Star of the West* to resupply Sumter. Upon entering the harbor, the ship was fired upon and forced to return to sea without re-supplying the fort. No return shots were ever fired by Maj. Anderson Ft. Sumter. See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford, 1988), 264-66.

[71] John L. Cantwell to John W. Ellis, January 15, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 559-560.

[72] Ibid.

and expedient means by which secessionists could channel public outrage into action.

Acutely aware of both the significance of the national crisis and the emotions that accompanied the secession debate in North Carolina, state legislators on both sides called for a convention election on February 28, 1861.[73] For many secessionists, the election was too little, too late. Many Secessionists had called for a convention in December and January, believing that only immediate action could stem growing Unionist support. "I want a Convention called to announce, as I have no doubt it will, the final determination of the people of North-Carolina to abandon a Union in which they can no longer remain without dishonor and disgrace," wrote one secessionist to *Standard* editor William Holden on January 12.[74]

All over North Carolina in the last half of February, Secessionists and Unionists began to campaign for candidates who supported their views on the national crisis. In Charlotte, a meeting of local secessionists nominated candidates for the convention and published resolutions in the local paper: "Resolved… That we are in favor of the immediate secession of North Carolina… and that our Delegates in the nominating Convention be instructed to vote for such persons only as Candidates to represent this County in the State Convention who reflect these views."[75] Having

[73] As in many other Southern states, North Carolina secessionists had pushed with varying support for an immediate state convention to consider secession since Lincoln's election. The exact date and terms of the convention election were hotly debated in the North Carolina legislature. Most secessionists pushed for an early convention date, no clause for popular ratification, and voting representation equivalent to current representation in the state legislature (which favored the Eastern – and generally more secessionist – counties). Conditional Unionists supported various sides of these issues, yet generally pushed for a later convention date. The legislature finally agreed to hold a convention election on February 28, 1861. In the election, North Carolinians would vote on whether or not to call a convention, as well as representative candidates if the convention was called. Representation was equivalent to existing voting standards and no popular ratification of the convention's decision would be required.

I have chosen not to go into great detail on the convention election not because it is unimportant to understanding the secession debate in NC, but because there are other authors who have covered this issue in far greater detail than the scope of this paper would allow. For an excellent discussion of the election in NC, VA, and TN, see, for example, Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, chapter 7.

[74] Marcus Erwin to William W. Holden, January 12, 1861, *Holden Papers*, ed. Raper and Mitchell, 117.

[75] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), February 8, 1861.

lost community support steadily since the end of November, however, secessionists in many areas were unable to mobilize as effectively as their Conditional Unionist opponents.

These Unionists called for citizens to put aside party differences and vote against secessionist candidates. Unionists in Wake County published one such appeal in the North Carolina *Standard* on February 27:

> We snatch a few minutes to appeal to every Union man who may see this, *to be certain to go the polls and work for the cause on the day of election*… Appeal to your neighbors to go to the election, and if any of them are infirm or aged, provide the means for conveying them to the polls… We have recently visited various portions of the County, and we believe seven-eighths of the people are for the Union… He who will not work to save the Union is an enemy to the Union, no matter what he may say to the contrary.[76]

Elsewhere Unionists held meetings to nominate local representatives. A meeting in Franklin County recommended a Mr. P. Williams to voters, "with the assurance that he is in favor of exhausting all honorable means of adjusting our national troubles."[77] In the Piedmont area around Greensboro, Unionists were so sure of support that they expected little need for campaigning. "The Union candidates Wilson and Patterson will not have opposition that we know of," wrote one Piedmont native to his business partner, "but if they should the Union men will beat them two to one."[78]

Other Unionists, especially in the Appalachian region of the state, were more fearful of a potential state convention. Realizing that outspoken secessionists had dominated conventions across the South, these Unionists preferred to vote against the calling of a convention at all. "The Secessionists of this state [want a] Convention" wrote one farmer from the foothills.[79] "There hole ame is to take the libery from the people,"

[76] North Carolina *Standard*, February 27, 1861.

[77] N. P. Williams to Daniel S. Hill, February 23, 1861, Daniel S. Hill Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[78] D. H. Sterluck to John F. Poindexter, February 11, 1861, Poindexter Papers.

[79] Barney Ward to unknown, February 10, 1861, Ward Papers.

he continued, "they have proved it in there acts It is the Constitution the South wants to tear up… if the convention passes any act to separate this state from the union… the people will come down on it [like a] clap of thunder."[80] Such distrust of the political system was common amongst people in the Appalachian region of the state who were accustomed to losing political battles with the wealthier and better-represented eastern areas of the state.

Yet fear of a misrepresentative convention was not confined to Appalachia. "Beware of false reports and 'sensation' dispatches on the day of election," wrote one Piedmont North Carolinian to the *Standard*. "The disunion clique in this City, who imagine they have Wake County in a swing and can sweep her in any direction, will not be very scrupulous as to the means employed to influence votes."[81] Even some secessionists feared the outcome of a potential convention. One North Carolinian informed his friend in Greensboro that, "Eastern Gentlemen of every shade of opinion are afraid to trust our western people in an open & unrestricted convention."[82]

When the final votes were tallied, North Carolinians had rejected the call for a convention by a mere 661 votes[83], but the close defeat of the convention does not adequately reflect the strength of the Unionist insurgency in North Carolina, since many Unionists supported the convention call. Historians have disagreed on the exact percentage of Unionist votes, but estimates range anywhere from 60 to 78 percent.[84] Similar results in other upper South states in February affirmed the growing support for Conditional Unionism. Unionists made up 74 percent of the ballot in Virginia and 85 percent in Tennessee.[85] Only Virginia supported calling a state convention at all.

As March approached, many North Carolina Unionists celebrated their victory in the February elections. "The results received up to the time of going to press indicate that the Unionists have triumphed by a large

[80] Ibid.

[81] North Carolina *Standard*, February 27, 1861.

[82] H. B. Howard to Jonathan Smith, January 29, 1861, Sheek Papers.

[83] Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, 45.

[84] Historian Marc Kruman has estimated that Unionist votes accounted for 60.1 percent, while Daniel Crofts gives a much larger 77.5 percent. Marc W. Kruman, *Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*.

[85] Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 165-167.

majority… they are anxious to preserve the Union on a constitutional basis, and to obtain… a permanent re-construction of the Union," reported the North Carolina *Standard*. [86] Across the state, American flags flew as secessionists turned to lick their wounds. Though often overlooked by Civil War historians and overshadowed by the dramatic events of early April, the optimism of Unionists in North Carolina and other upper South states during the first few weeks of March was remarkably strong. On March 2, the *Standard* observed that, "Unionists entertain hopes and nearly all of them strong hopes that the Union can and will be preserved."[87] Unfortunately for Unionists, the February convention elections would mark the peak of their support in North Carolina.

Throughout the state, reports of failed compromise proposals dominated the national news sections of local papers in the month of March and in early April. Despite these setbacks, many North Carolina Unionists continued to hold out hope of a successful re-union of the seceded southern states and the federal government. "I should have no fear for the State if all the Union men of it were as good and loyal as the [men of Burke County]," reported a correspondent in the Charlotte *Daily Bulletin*, "[they] still cling to the hope of a compromise satisfactory to the South."[88] Throughout March, North Carolinians gathered to debate possible compromise measures. Most of the important action that would eventually determine the fate of Upper South unionism, however, occurred in Washington, not in North Carolina.

As the state weathered the month of March and early April, North Carolina secessionists endured a rollercoaster of emotions ranging from confident hope to intense frustration. In much of eastern North Carolina, secessionist leaders continued to consolidate community support despite the election defeat of February. Failed compromises in both Houses of Congress undoubtedly aided this consolidation, but speeches in favor of the "States Rights Party" stirred up the anger and support that galvanized many of these Eastern communities to action. One such speech inspired a citizen of Goldsboro to comment in support of secession:

> It was a great speech. I wish every true-hearted North Carolinian

[86] North Carolina *Standard*, March 2, 1861.
[87] Ibid.
[88] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), March 6, 1861.

> could have heard it. I am sure that the last one of them would have come away satisfied that the old Constitution and Union are forever gone, and that our last hope for future happiness and repose lies in breaking up the only remaining link that unites us with our inveterate foes, and in uniting our fortunes with our brethren of the South.[89]

As they had done since November, secessionists continued to organize public displays of support in March and early April. Militias drilled in towns across Eastern and Piedmont North Carolina. "Last Saturday a week ago, we had a beautiful parade of the Rocky Mount Light Infantry and the Edgecombe Guards, of which the latter made a fine display," reported a Piedmont newspaper.[90] These public displays took other forms as well. "We are under the shade of two beautiful Southern Rights Flags, one of which was raised the day of our celebration," wrote another Piedmont native to the *Daily Bulletin* on April 8, 1861.[91] "It contains seven stars, which represent the seven States now out of the late Union; it also has one just half out, which represents the Old North State as half gone to live and die with her Southern brethren."[92] Many secessionists hoped to sway their unsure fellow citizens with prominent displays of support like this.

Elsewhere, secessionists reacted with more frustration to prevailing Unionist optimism. "If this old State does not secede," threatened one group of citizens shortly before the attack on Fort Sumter, "rest assured that Rocky Mount and this old stand by, Edgecombe [County], will secede from the State. – Our flags which float in the breezes of a free country, tell it abroad that we intend to live under the banner of the Confederate States, and die in the land of Dixie."[93] Such threats exemplify the increasingly radical nature of North Carolina secessionist views in March and early April.

With the benefit of hindsight, historian William Freehling has argued

[89] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), March 25, 1861.

[90] The following references come from the *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), April 16, 1861, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Though published after the attack on Fort Sumter, the letters and resolutions quoted here were authored on April 8, 1861, before rumors of the re-supply of Sumter reached North Carolina.

[91] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), April 16, 1861.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

that the failure of Unionists to immediately organize popular opinion against secession eventually proved fatal to Unionism in the Upper South. Freehling and others fail to acknowledge, though, that a large source of this popular support was based on the *conditional* Unionism of the movement. The stark contrast between the radical nature of the secession movement in March and early April and more conservative and patient Conditional Unionism was a major factor in the continued attraction of unionism in North Carolinians. Unionists had also disavowed *unconditional* Unionism since January, a strategy that had allowed them to undercut the secession argument and dominate the February convention elections.

With informal but widely published assurances from Secretary of State William Seward that Fort Sumter in Charleston would be evacuated, many North Carolinians could not foresee – or did not anticipate – that this concession disavowing unconditional unionism would prove to be the fatal lever by which secessionists would turn the slavery debate into a movement for State's Rights. Governor Ellis would later say to former Unionists, "probably not one of your number ever believed that the Federal Government would be guilty of the wickedness of drawing the sword without having first tendered the olive branch."[94] Yet in the perception of many North Carolinians, this is exactly what happened.

In the eyes of President Lincoln and his cabinet, the situation was far more complicated.[95] For many Republicans, Major Robert Anderson had become something of a folk hero. His defiance, even if inadvertent, of the South in the cradle of secession had made him a symbol of Republican resistance to the slave power. Besides adding credibility to the idea of a Confederate nation, Lincoln knew that abandoning Sumter would likely divide his party and ruin his administration. "If Fort Sumter is evacuated, the new administration is done forever," wrote one Northern citizen.[96] Having witnessed the presidency of James Buchanan and the disaster that befell a president abandoned by his own party, Lincoln was extremely hesitant to renege on campaign promises or risk his young administration.

[94] John W. Ellis to the General Assembly, May 1, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 697-704.

[95] A more thorough discussion of Lincoln's decision to re-supply Sumter may be found in a number of sources including McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

[96] Kenneth M. Stampp, "Lincoln and the Strategy of Defense in 1861," *Journal of Southern History* 11, no. 3 (August, 1945): 297-332.

Yet Lincoln also recognized the importance of continued peace to Unionists in Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. When he polled his cabinet on March 15, only the radical Republican Montgomery Blair favored forceful re-supply of Sumter. The two key voices for evacuation came from Secretary of State William Seward and General Winfield Scott, who had earlier informed Lincoln that re-supplying Sumter would be impossible without a large fleet and 25,000 troops. More than any of Lincoln's other advisors, Seward recognized the political importance of Sumter to upper South Unionists and the viability of the Confederacy, a view shared by most historians. "Even if the seven lower-South states held together," historian James McPherson has argued, "the Confederacy's future was precarious without the upper South."[97]

By the end of March, however, both Seward and Scott had compromised their positions and influence in the eyes of Lincoln and the rest of the cabinet. When Scott, a Virginian, informed the President on March 28 that "the evacuation of [Sumter] would instantly soothe and give confidence to the eight remaining slave-holding States and render their cordial adherence to this Union perpetual," Lincoln and his cabinet came to the conclusion that the General's advice had shifted from military to political.[98] Believing that Scott had fallen under the influence of Secretary of State Seward, Lincoln's cabinet reversed its earlier vote and decided to organize an attempt to peacefully re-supply the federal garrison at Sumter.[99]

As the early favorite for the Presidential nomination in 1860, it was no secret that Seward coveted the role of "premier" within Lincoln's administration. In a last ditch effort to preserve peace and his political influence, Seward organized an April 4 meeting between the President and Conditional Unionist John Baldwin of Virginia. Though the meeting was private and no record of the conversation exists, historians have long speculated that Lincoln perhaps offered to trade Sumter in return for the immediate adjournment of the Virginia convention, which was still in session. Whatever the outcome of the meeting, Lincoln returned to the White House with a disillusioned view of upper-South Unionism. He ordered the re-supply of Sumter later that day.

[97] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 273.
[98] Quoted in ibid., 269.
[99] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 271-272.

Lincoln's decision to re-supply Sumter has become one of the most debated decisions in our nation's history, yet few have discussed in detail its impact on popular opinion in North Carolina. Without a doubt, Lincoln's ability to draw the first shots of the Civil War from the South allowed him to portray the Confederacy as the aggressor and unite Northern opinion. "Lincoln's new conception of the resupply undertaking was a stroke of genius," James McPherson argues. "In effect he was telling Jefferson Davis, 'Heads I win, Tails you lose.'"[100] Yet the events of April ultimately gained Davis and the Confederacy the support of a state that, until mid-April, had bitterly opposed secession.

News of the re-supply mission and attack on Sumter exploded on the people of North Carolina. A few days later, Lincoln followed with a call for 75,000 troops to put down the rebellion, including several regiments from North Carolina. Both Unionists and Secessionists reacted with confusion, shock, and outrage. Across the state secessionists held emergency meetings that drew huge crowds. "Permission granted to attend a Southern Rights meeting in town," wrote William Calder of Wilmington. "At 12 o'clock a Confederate States flag was raised… the meeting adjourned to the Court house where it was addressed by several gentlemen. I never saw such excitement in my life. Old gray haired men were ready to fight."[101] In Charlotte a similar public meeting was held in the courthouse to form a "Southern Rights party."[102] Even in Buncombe County, the Appalachian community around Asheville, a fiery secessionist meeting was held and the following resolution adopted:

> Whereas information having reached us that Abraham Lincoln… has issued his proclamation, calling upon the States for troops for the avowed purpose of making war upon the South, and that hostilities have actually began at the City of Charleston. Therefore Resolved… [that we seek to] procure arms for such volunteer companies as may be now in this section… that we are rejoiced at the entire unanimity which pevades our community in this trying emergency, and that as one man, we are determined to defend the honor and dignity of our

[100] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 271-272.
[101] William Calder, diary entry, April 18, 1861, Calder Papers.
[102] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), April 16, 1861.

State to the last extremity.[103]

In Wilmington, secessionists reacted in the same way they had in January to rumors of coercion, seizing federal forts that guarded strategic entrances to Wilmington and the Cape Fear River. "Never was known such excitement as was caused by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation. The whole South flew to arms," wrote Catherine Ann Edmondston.[104] "On the day the Gov. refused N Carolina's quota, Forts Caswell & Macon & the Arsenal at Fayetteville were seized by volunteer troops without waiting for orders."[105] Finally the constant militia organizing that had taken place during the winter was put to use.

Telegraphs offering military service to the South poured into the Governor's mansion in Raleigh as secessionist militias finally began to reap the produce of the insurgency they had worked so hard to maintain. "THE HORNETS NEST RIFLEMEN TENDER TO YOU EIGHTY (80) MEN FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE USE BY ORDER,"[106] wired in Lewis S. Williams. Augustus W. Burton wrote to Ellis to "TENDER… ONE HUNDRED (100) MEN FROM CLEVELAND.[107] "THE MCKLINBURG DRAGOONS SEXTY (60) MEN AT YOUR DISPOSAL,"[108] William T. White informed Ellis, and Horace Mayfield wired in offering "OUR SERVICES AS CAVELRY TROOPS OF THE COUNTY OF WARRENTON."[109]

Letters offering military service came in droves as well. "Alive to the emergency of the times, forty-six gentlemen have already pledged themselves to take up arms in defence of the State and Southern Rights," wrote an Eastern North Carolinian. "We have organized ourselves into a Company to be called the 'Beauregard Rifles,' and thirty-five members

[103] Various Citizens of Asheville to John W. Ellis, April 18, 1861, *Ellis Papers* ed. Tolbert, 624-625.

[104] Edmondston, *'Journal of a Secesh Lady,'* 50.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Lewis S. Williams to John W. Ellis, April 17, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 617.

[107] Augustus W. Burton to John W. Ellis, April 17, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 617.

[108] William T. White to John W. Ellis, April 17, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 623.

[109] Horace Mayfield to John W. Ellis, April 22, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 663.

have to-day given their signatures… The citizens of New Berne are thoroughly aroused and patriotic in the Southern Cause."[110]

Secessionists in North Carolina, seasoned by the quick decline of their movement after Lincoln's election in November, left nothing to chance and moved quickly to consolidate public support in the last half of April and May. As they had done since November, local militias played a key role in this rejuvenated insurgency. "The Cabarrus Rangers paraded their forth time in our streets on Saturday last," reported the once Unionist *Carolina Flag*.[111] "Amid defending discharges of musketry and soul-stirring acclamations of the enthusiastic assembly, [a secession flag] was gallantly unfurled to the breeze."[112]

Women also assumed a more active role in the secessionist insurgency, adding to the pressure to silence any dissenting voices. "In the afternoon all the ladies from town came out to see us drill," wrote William Calder of Wilmington.[113] Kate McGeachy of Robeson County in Eastern North Carolina wrote to her husband, "We galls are going to volunt[eer] if the company will not." [114] In the Piedmont, "a large number of the citizens of Cabarrus assembled in the public square," reported the *Carolina Flag*, "for the purpose of hoisting a flag of the Confederate States, made and presented by our fair and partriotic ladies."[115]

Bewildered and overwhelmed, Unionists were unsure just how to react to the news. In the immediate aftermath of Lincoln's call for troops, one Piedmont native tentatively declared, "We will 'Wait and Watch' but can't be persuaded to 'pitch in.'"[116] Others believed Lincoln's decision to call for troops in response to the provocation in Charleston had destroyed any hope for a peaceful compromise and all of the support they had struggled to gain since the end of November – and they were furious. "Lincoln's whole course has been double-dealing and treacherous," declared a formerly Unionist newspaper in the Piedmont town of Concord.[117]

[110] John W. Primrose to John W. Ellis, April 18, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 625-626.

[111] *Carolina Flag*, May 7, 1861.

[112] *Carolina Flag*, April 30, 1861.

[113] William Calder, diary entry, April 19, 1861, Calder Papers.

[114] Kate McGeachy to John McMillan, May 28, 1861, McMillan Papers.

[115] *Carolina Flag*, April 30, 1861.

[116] *Daily Bulletin* (Charlotte), April 16, 1861.

[117] *Carolina Flag*, April 30, 1861, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Flush with a sense of outrage and betrayal, most Conditional Unionists reluctantly cast their lot with their more radical secessionist neighbors. In a letter to Governor Ellis dated April 23, Charles Phillips, a professor of math and engineering at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, expressed the feelings and frustrations of many former North Carolina Unionists:

> Hitherto I have thought that the '*Watch and Wait*' policy was the true policy for us in N.C. as it was for those South of us. And as I thought so have I spoken and so have I voted. There is to me – and nearly around me as far as I can learn – now an entirely new issue presented which I am as ready to meet promptly and firmly as I was hitherto discussed. I have always been one of those who declared that *Coercion* must not be attempted on us or on our neighbors. The attempt to prolong the condition of things at Fort Sumter is here taken as such an act of Coercion as requires to be resented. I am therefore now ready to separate from the Northern part of our General Government and set up for myself. – i.e. I am ready to help others do so.[118]

Even in the former Unionist stronghold around Greensboro unanimous resolutions passed on May 7 declared, "that Guilford county and the town of Greensboro, [are] determined to do their whole duty, in this crisis, in which are involved the interest and honor of the whole South." Citizens of the southern Piedmont passed resolutions "expressing our heartfelt sympathy for and co-operation with, our noble brothers of the Sunny South, who have rallied so gloriously… in their hour of peril."[119]

Other secessionists pledged their money, services, and slaves to Governor Ellis and the Southern cause. "Thirty five hundred dollars was raised at a meeting of the citizens here last night for the 'Warren Guards,'" reported a citizen of Warren County. Another Eastern North Carolinian wrote the Governor, "I made a tender of the services of my company in writing through W.B. Rodman Esq… We drill three times each day. We await orders." Militia companies were even formed and mobilized from

[118] Charles Phillips to John W. Ellis, April 23, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 672-673.

[119] James K. Hall to John W. Ellis, May 7, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 727-728; *Carolina Flag*, April 30, 1861.

the formerly Unionist Appalachian region of the state: "The mountain companies are coming down & I have directed that they shall wait orders at Salisbury," wrote James F. Hoke.[120]

Perhaps even more interesting is the more often than not forced participation of slaves and free blacks in the Southern cause in April and May. One North Carolinian privately wrote:

> I witnessed a scene yesterday which I never expected to see in this world, that of negroes volunteering their services in defence of the country [Unknown] called up all his negroes and stated the case and the times to them and then called for volunteers and two of his best hands steped out and declared themselves ready for trip… [Unknown] almost shed tears when his brave negroes offered to go he congratulated them highly for their bravery and his voice trembled sadly It was enough to make the stoutest heart shrink.[121]

Shockingly, another North Carolinian wrote Governor Ellis: "Col. Alexander Murcherson has at his command a large company of strong active negroes ready to do service for the State in any way that your Excellency may think most serviceable. He thinks he can command in all, free & slave at least one hundred – perhaps two."[122] It was not uncommon for large slaveholders to volunteer their slaves to the Confederacy during the first few months of the Civil War, yet it is unclear exactly how or why secessionists were able to enlist free African Americans in their movement. Whether literally forced to join or not, these free blacks most certainly were influenced by the overwhelming secession uprising in North Carolina in April and May. Their participation, whether forced or "voluntary," demonstrates the overpowering strength of the reinvigorated

[120] William A. Johnston to John W. Ellis, April 19, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 637; Thomas Sparrow to John W. Ellis, May 2, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 711-712; James F. Hoke to John W. Ellis, May 7, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 729.

[121] Rad McMillan to Alexander McMillan, April 25, 1861, Alexander McMillan Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[122] William M. McKay to John W. Ellis, April 23, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 672.

secession movement.[123]

Though the secession movement successfully swept most of North Carolina during April and May, some unconditional Unionists continued to publicly voice their dissent in Appalachian communities. An outraged group of citizens from Yadkin County complained of one such Unionist on April 22:

> Col. Caleb Bohanan… is a Lincoln man… He has called out one of the Companies… [and] declared that no man ought to support the S. Conf. but if Lincoln made a 'call for volunteers he hoped to see them come forward.' that every secessionist ought to be hung, and that if guns were fired in honor of the capture of Sumpter, he would mob those who did it, and actually tried to induce others to join him for that purpose… He has been heard to boast that he intended to apply for comd to Lincoln to hang Secessionists here, together with numerous other B. Repl. Sentiments.[124]

Though Col. Bohanan received threats to his personal safety, he apparently continued his support of the Union, for four days later, another group of angry citizens again wrote Governor Ellis: "The Col Commanding our rigement in this County, Caleb Bahanan, is an abolitionist in every since of the word, and It would meet the hearty aprobation of the community to have his commission taken from him."[125] Ironically, Col. Bohanan was a wealthy citizen of Yadkin County, owning $5,000 worth of real estate and

[123] The plight of free blacks in North Carolina had become increasingly precarious in the late antebellum period. As anti-slavery criticism increased, Southerners were forced to respond with a number of justifications for their "peculiar institution." Some argued that all blacks were meant to be held in bondage, yet this argument met the obvious contradiction of a large population of free blacks in the South. Since many white North Carolinians increasingly took advantage of laws that allowed them to re-enslave free blacks, it is arguable that some black "volunteers" may have offered their services to the C.S.A. in order to avoid this type of persecution. Though this subject is outside of the primary focus of this paper, more information may be found in John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[124] Yadkin County Citizens to John W. Ellis, April 22, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 662-663.

[125] William W. Long to John W. Ellis, April 26, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 687.

a $15,000 personal estate that included twelve slaves.[126] Besides providing evidence of dissent, these letters also exemplify secessionist attempts to mislabel their opponents as "abolitionists" and "Black Republicans" to gain community support.

Some Unionists in Appalachia showed their disgust with secession in a different and more violent manner. On May 20, the same day the North Carolina legislature officially seceded from the United States, a Henderson County secessionist and militia leader wrote a frantic letter to Governor Ellis seeking his aid against these Unionists:

> There is a region of county… out of which not one Volunteer has either joined Shipps company or mine… they are as deadly hostile to our raiseing volunteers & the whole defence of the south as any portion of Pennsylvania - & openly declare in large bodies that if they take no part in the fight but stand still that Lincolns Army will not hurt them but save them & their property. Now Sir, the most dreadful apprehensions are felt by our Female society at large & particularly throughout this neighborhood… where nearly every strong man is a member of my company that as soon as we leave that bloodshed house burning & death will commence – some of the most respectible of these traitors said in my presence they should take no part the south was wrong & corrupt & ought to be subdued. This disaffected region is some 18 or 20 miles square… authorise me to make a draft & I can quite soon gather up the leaders, & throw them into ranks & move off, & leave all right at home… I am no alarmist – but write you the sentiment, & at the request of all the *true men* of this neighborhood. Houses, & other buildings have been burned already, by them – & our neighborhood has to hire night guards – our paper in the Village is full of notoreous pieces – & poisen daily, the hearts of those rebels & tories., I speak of – I repete, & beg you adopt, & inform me the most *stringent* corrective, & I will promptly execute it.[127]

Though much less vocal than Western North Carolinians, unconditional

[126] William W. Long to John W. Ellis, April 26, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 687.

[127] Balis M. Edney to John W. Ellis, May 20, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 765-766.

Unionists in the Eastern and Piedmont areas of the state found ways to show their dissatisfaction with secession, and some paid dearly for their opposition. On April 30, the *Carolina Flag* reported an attempted railroad sabotage in Eastern North Carolina: "We are informed that a man was caught and hung at Weldon, N.C., on Thursday last, for obstructing the railroad track, before the train with South Carolina troops was to pass over it. – Served him right."[128] An incident in Charlotte provides interesting insight into the mindset of some North Carolinians who may have been convinced by public pressure to join militias even though their support of secession and a united southern Confederacy may have been only lukewarm. For some volunteers, defense of their home meant North Carolina and North Carolina only. On May 7, Alexander McMillan wrote to his daughter Kate: "A difficulty occurred yesterday in one of the Mecklenburg Volunteer Companies on the proposition to enroll the company for service in the State or *elsewhere*. Some few of the men refused to go beyond the limits of the State. Some altercation followed and one of his men shot Capt Erwin with a Pistol [and] wounded him in the thigh."[129] Such accounts demonstrate that though many conditional unionists may have joined their secessionist neighbors, the state was far from a united around the idea of secession.

Yet despite the continued occasional displays of Unionism, the North Carolina convention voted unanimously in support of secession on May 20, 1861. The vote made North Carolina the last of the Southern states to officially join the Confederacy;[130] however, its contribution to the South's war effort was far from least. Throughout the war, forty thousand North Carolinians gave their lives fighting for the Confederacy, the most of any Southern state, but North Carolina regiments also claimed the largest number of deserters, many of whom had become increasingly hostile towards the Confederacy.[131] From 1861 to the end of the war, organized bands of deserters and bushwackers harassed much of Appalachia and even parts of the Piedmont and Eastern North Carolina, forcing Confederate troops to fight against both Union troops and their own deserters. Given

[128] *Carolina Flag*, April 30, 1861.

[129] Alexander McMillan to Kate McMillan, May 10, 1861, McMillan Papers.

[130] The North Carolina legislature was the last to pass an ordinance of secession, yet Tennessee is often credited with being the last state to secede, since Tennessee voters ratified the secessionist ordinance a few days later.

[131] Harris, *North Carolina and the Coming of the Civil War*, xiii.

the difficulty with which North Carolina secessionists eventually led the state out of the Union, it is not surprising that many North Carolinians were among the first to abandon the Confederacy.

There can be no doubt that taking North Carolina out of the Union in 1861 was a monumental task at best. Through community meetings, militia parades, and public displays, secessionists organized and recruited the support that kept their movement alive despite growing Unionism during the secession winter. Without their relentless grassroots organizing, it is possible that the secession movement may have died altogether in North Carolina. The increasingly radical nature of the secession insurgency had forced North Carolina Unionists to renounce any and all forms of federal "coercion" – an interesting term considering the institution which they sought to protect coerced millions of men, women, and children to labor in bondage against their will.

Though they likely did not realize it at the time, in denouncing "coercion," most North Carolina Unionists had conceded the one card in the deck that would ultimately prove their downfall. Before "coercion" became a fundamental part of Conditional Unionism, the federal crisis concerned slavery and only slavery. As one secessionist wrote in November of 1860, "We think here *now* is the time to strike for a Southern Confederacy…believing that either the Negro or the Union has to go… [we] no longer wish a nominal Union."[132]

Yet the constant struggle between unionists and secessionists during the winter of 1860 and 1861 had redefined the secession debate in North Carolina, substituting "State's Rights" for the more divisive issue of slavery. Opposing the coercion of seceded states back into the Union had allowed Unionists to claim the middle ground and sweep February elections in North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee. When shots rang out over Charleston Harbor in the early hours of April 12, though, North Carolina secessionists found the catalyst they needed to reap the benefit of months of political and social organizing. Secessionists across the state flew to arms as their confused and betrayed former opponents reluctantly joined en masse. Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops had finally forced North Carolinians to choose sides.

With the foundation already in place from months of organizing, local

[132] S. W. Cole to John W. Ellis, November 26, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 521-523.

secessionists left no doubt as to the fate of North Carolina after Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops. Secessionist militias formed during the winter immediately took action, parading loudly in the streets and opening recruiting stations for the Confederacy. The stigma that secessionists had attached to terms like "Submissionist," "Black Republican," and "Abolitionist" during the winter was used with remarkable frequency and intensity to condemn any North Carolinian who dared to question the wisdom of immediate secession. Together with militia parades and passionate community meetings, the stigma of submission successfully discouraged any open dissention.

With both North and South preparing for war, many former North Carolina Unionists joined the Southern movement for reasons that had nothing at all to do with the original peculiar institution of slavery. In a sad letter of May 7, 1861, a poor Charlotte woman wrote Governor John W. Ellis, offering her help in a movement brought about by forces far beyond her control:

> excuse the liberty i have taken in addressen you I will state my business I am desirous of going to wait on the sick and wounded if ther should be so unfortunate as to be any i hafe a Brother in the Charlotte Grays and that makes me ancious to go because he is young I have a Cousin a middle age lady that offer her servesses to go to if you accept of us please let me know soom… I would like to know how long befor we could start as i am very uneasy about my brother, please keep this privat.[133]

Though many North Carolinians expressed similar fears and hesitation to secession after April 1861, Unionism in the state had been effectively silenced. On May 20, 1861, the state convention finally voted on an ordinance of secession. North Carolina was unanimously out of the United States.

[133] Mrs. Stevenson to John W. Ellis, May 7, 1861, *Ellis Papers*, ed. Tolbert, 731.

Mr. Black Man, Watch Your Step! Ethiopia's Queens Will Reign Again: Women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association

Keisha N. Benjamin

Reflecting on the role of women in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Black Nationalist leader Madame M.L.T. De Mena argued, "Women were given to understand that they were to remain in their places, which meant nothing more than a Black Cross Nurse or a general secretary of the division."[1] Her statement addressed the complex relationship between gender and Garveyism, which Amanda D. Kemp and Robert Trent Vinson defined as Garvey's "race-based philosophy that places great emphasis on black political, socioeconomic, and educational advancement, racial pride, and self-reliance, in the ultimate objective of establishing black-led nation-states, particularly in Africa."[2] Garvey, arguably the most influential Black Nationalist of the twentieth century, was born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica on August 17, 1887. His difficult childhood experiences shaped the ideologies on which he founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League (which later became the UNIA) in 1914.[3] Two years after founding the UNIA in Kingston, Jamaica, Garvey visited the United States, where he recognized an underlying commonality in the socioeconomic status of Blacks in Jamaica and in the United States. Determined to expand

[1] Quoted in Mark D. Matthews, "Our Women and What They Think: Amy Jacques Garvey and the *Negro World*," in *Black Women in United States History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1990) vol. 7, 875.

[2] Amanda D. Kemp and Robert Trent Vinson, "'Poking Holes in the Sky': Professor James Thaele, American Negroes, and Modernity in 1920s Segregationist South Africa," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (April 2000): 158.

[3] Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (*Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1976), 3-6.

the organization's impact, Garvey moved the UNIA to Harlem, New York in 1918, where the organization was embraced by millions of Blacks in the Diaspora until its gradual decline in the early 1930s.[4]

While the UNIA was influential, it often neglected to give a voice to Black women, who were very involved from its founding in Jamaica. Despite their substantial numbers in the organization, women held restricted roles and responsibilities, and were often placed in subordinate positions to male Garveyites. While some Garvey scholars, such as Tony Martin and Robert Hill, maintain that women held important positions in the UNIA, the evidence indicates otherwise. Certainly, one cannot overlook remarkable women within the organization such as Amy Jacques Garvey, Henrietta Vinton Davis, Amy Ashwood Garvey, and Madame M.L.T. De Mena, whose contributions were many. These were not typical UNIA women—the average female Garveyite did not receive the recognition or hold prominent positions as these women activists did.

As a result of their prominence, these four women have received considerable attention in the historiography on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA; Jacques Garvey and Ashwood Garvey have been the subjects of full-length biographies and Vinton Davis and De Mena have been mentioned in various articles. Scholars have often used these cases to support the idea that women held prominent positions in the UNIA, without acknowledging the fact that the majority of women in the UNIA were restricted from gaining such influence. By addressing the responsibilities of women in the organization, this paper will demonstrate that women's leadership positions did not mirror their numbers in the UNIA. More significantly, the paper will contribute to the literature on Garveyism by focusing on rank-and-file female Garveyites—a group that has often been neglected by Garvey scholars. Finally, it will address the ways that many of these women attempted to create a new space within the organization—even as they struggled to abandon some of their Victorian ideals—largely through the use of "Our Women and What They Think," the women's page in the Garveyite newspaper, *The Negro World*.

[4] Only one year after the UNIA relocated to Harlem, Marcus Garvey boasted of over two million members and approximately thirty branches throughout the world. For more information on UNIA membership, see Martin, *Race First*, 3-19.

The abundant literature on Marcus Garvey and the UNIA has minimized the work of women within the organization. The works of Tony Martin and Rupert Lewis demonstrate the dearth of information on the role of women in the UNIA.[5] These Garvey scholars and others overlooked the significant contributions of female Garveyites. Instead, their works addressed Garvey's success (or lack thereof) and analyzed his movement's influence in the United States and abroad. Theodore Draper diminished the Garvey movement as unrealistic, and criticized the nationalism of Garveyites, which he believed "[had] little or nothing to do with their immediate lives, with their own time and place."[6] Similarly, E. David Cronon argued that while Garvey was unique, he was insignificant.[7] As an intense debate ensued, these scholars paid little attention to the "woman question" and the significant ways in which female Garveyites impacted the movement.

More recently, in their attempts to remedy prior exclusions, some scholars have overstated women's contributions to the organization. This is best exemplified in Tony Martin's 1988 essay, which appears in Rupert Lewis's anthology, *Garvey: His Work and Impact*, published twelve years after Martin's seminal book, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.*[8] In this essay, Martin emphasized the responsibilities of a few prominent UNIA women, which were atypical of the role and responsibilities of rank-and-file female Garveyites. Although one cannot overlook the prominent women in the organization, an accurate analysis of women in the UNIA must fully recognize their involvement and influence, while accepting their limitations within the hierarchy of the organization. Thus, Martin's 1988 article on women in the Garvey movement failed to remedy his earlier exclusions in *Race First*, in which he made very few references to female Garveyites and often presented

[5] Martin, *Race First*, 27, 34; Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (London: Karia Press, 1987), 68-69, 85.

[6] Theodore Draper, *The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 48-56.

[7] E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), 221-222.

[8] Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan, eds., *Garvey: His Work and Impact* (Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1988), 67-72, 73-86.

these women in a problematic light.[9]

Since Martin's essay, however, many historians have written on the participation of women in the UNIA. Ula Taylor's *The Veiled Garvey*, the first full-length biography of Amy Jacques Garvey, and Tony Martin's *Amy Ashwood Garvey, Pan-Africanist, Feminist and Mrs. Marcus Garvey No 1*, the first full-length biography of Amy Ashwood Garvey, are significant, but they continue to focus exclusively on prominent female figures. More recently, Laura Kofey has joined the list of the most recognized females in the UNIA with a 1987 biographical profile published in Richard Newman's *Black Power and Black Religion: Essays and Reviews* and in numerous essays by Barbara Bair.[10] In sharp contrast to this emphasis on prominent female figures, this study highlights ordinary women in the Garvey movement, whose names have rarely been mentioned in any work on the UNIA.

The 1920s was an era of significant transformations in the lives of women across the United States. Women of this period were embracing new ideals and reinventing themselves as strong leaders in their homes and communities. Consequently, women in the UNIA refused to be considered "fragile," and demanded expanded roles and responsibilities irrespective of their gender. The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment at the beginning of this new era, as Deborah Gray White asserted, symbolized the "advent of the New Woman."[11] The "New Woman" of the 1920s challenged the Victorian ideals that had shaped the status quo in the United States during the nineteenth century. These women no longer aspired to be the "perfect wife," an ideal that Martha Vicinus expounded on:

> The perfect wife was an active participant in the family, fulfilling a

[9] This is best exemplified in Martin's description of Laura Kofey in *Race First*. Martin minimized Kofey as a mere imposter, without fully acknowledging her fully documented influence in the UNIA. The description is on page 59.

[10] For a more recent account of Laura Kofey's life and legacy, see Barbara Bair, "'Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth Her Hands Unto God': Laura Kofey and the Gendered Vision of Redemption in the Garvey Movement," in *A Mighty Baptism: Race, Gender and the Creation of American Protestantism*, ed. Susan Juster and Lisa Macfarlane (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[11] Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 112.

> number of vital tasks, the first of which was childbearing. She was expected in the lower classes to contribute to the family income. In the middle classes she provided indirect economic support through the care of her children, the purchasing and preparation of food and the making of clothes … her social and intellectual growth was confined to the family and close friends. Her status was totally dependent upon the economic position of her father and then her husband. *In her most perfect form, the lady combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth.*[12]

No longer were women in the United States willing to fit this Victorian model, and for the Black woman, the 1920s were an opportune time to advocate change.

The 1920s also represented a pinnacle of the feminist movement in the United States. It was at the beginning of the decade that the National Woman's Party moved to center stage, as its leader, Alice Paul, advocated equality for all women: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."[13] The NWP's endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment signified a step toward women's expanded influence, and as far as Paul was concerned, it was the necessary step towards the swift attainment of complete equality. However, Paul's call for equality had its limitations. Her appeal for equality extended to white women only; the NWP excluded Black women from its agenda.[14]

The NWP's stance reflected the position of numerous feminist organizations during the 1920s, which had excluded the concerns of Black women and were "permeated with racism."[15] Black feminists of the period shouldered the responsibility of securing social rights for women and for Blacks in general. Therefore, while they supported

[12] Martha Vicinus, ed., *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), ix; emphasis added.

[13] Quoted in Robert L. Daniel, *American Women in the 20th Century: The Festival of Life* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 52.

[14] Kathryn Kish Sklar and Jill Dias, "How Did the National Woman's Party Address the Issue of the Enfranchisement of Black Women, 1919-1924?" *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000* 1 (1997).

[15] Matthews, "Our Women and What They Think," 867.

suffrage for women, they were also concerned with the plight of Black men and women. According to Deborah Gray White, "[Black women] knew that they would not be voting in tandem with white women because few white women shared their preoccupation with civil rights, antilynching, job discrimination, and disfranchisement."[16] Furthermore, racism also hindered Black and white women from working together for suffrage. In her ground-breaking text, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, bell hooks addressed the "racial apartheid" that was evident in the feminist movement of the 1920s: "The first white women's rights advocates were never seeking social equality for all women; they were seeking social equality for white women … white women suffragists were eager to advance their own cause at the expense of black people."[17]

Despite these divisions, however, the decade of the 1920s was still a period of significant change for Black women. The Great Migration brought a massive demographic shift; by the beginning of the twenties, approximately 300,000 Black men and women had migrated to the Northeast, and another 350,000 relocated to the Midwest. Additionally, this was also a period of significant Black migration from parts of the West Indies to the United States. Between 1923 and 1924 alone, approximately 17,000 migrants entered the United States from various parts of the Caribbean.[18] While there were various factors that motivated Blacks to relocate, Black women in particular migrated for their own personal safety. According to Darlene Clark Hine, Black women left the South "out of a desire to achieve personal autonomy and to escape both the sexual exploitation inside and outside of their families and from the rape and threat of rape by whites as well as black males."[19] Although these women seemed to escape one set of troubles, new challenges awaited them in the North. Like their male counterparts, Black women encountered discrimination and limited educational and employment

[16] Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load*, 116.

[17] bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman?: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 124.

[18] Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998), 49.

[19] Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women: Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History*, (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 40.

opportunities.[20] As Robert L. Daniel noted, the Great Migration was also a period of disillusionment for Black women, whose educational opportunities were significantly thwarted. [21] On the contrary, however, this period was also marked by a flourishing of Black expression and creativity.

This creativity took shape in the Harlem Renaissance or "New Negro Movement," a period of prolific Black intellectual and literary expression through a variety of mediums including poetry, literature and music.[22] Most significantly, however, the Harlem Renaissance signified the emergence of the "New Negro," the antithesis of the submissive, passive, and accommodating "Old Negro." As Michele Ann Stephens pointed out in *Black Empire*, the "New Negro" represented a new Black identity, perspective and set of ideals, had evolved largely throughout the twentieth century.[23] Thus, the "New Negro" evoked the image of a strong, militant Black man—as espoused in J.E. McCall's poem of the same title.[24] Furthermore, this "New Negro" was the by-product of the mass migration of Blacks from the South and Caribbean to the North during the 1920s.[25]

The mass migration of this period also made the emergence of the "New Negro Woman" possible. Similar to the image of strong Black manhood represented by the "New Negro," the "New Negro Woman" represented strong Black women, who were unwilling to accommodate racism and sexism. In the UNIA, the "New Negro Woman" did not accept the organization's limitations for women, and she was determined to create more space and opportunities for her voice to be heard.

In a letter to *The Negro World* in 1924, Eunice Lewis, a female Garveyite from Chicago, shared her definition of the "New Negro Woman": "The New Negro Woman is [intent on] revolutionizing the old type of

[20] Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1919-1945," *Hine Sight*, 89.

[21] Daniel, *American Women in the 20th Century*, 61.

[22] Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 224.

[23] Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 40.

[24] Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load*, 117.

[25] Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 11.

male leadership."[26] Lewis went on to list a "few of the important places [in] which the New Negro Woman desire[d] to take in the rebirth of Africa at home and abroad":

> 1. To work on par with men in the office as well as on the platform.
> 2. To practice actual economy and thrift.
> 3. To teach practical and constructive race doctrine to the children.
> 4. To demand absolute respect from men of all races.
> 5. To teach the young the moral dangers of social diseases, and to love their race first.[27]

Lewis's statements fully articulated the vision of the "New Negro Woman," a term that signified female Garveyites' efforts to expand their positions within the UNIA and in the community as a whole. According to Lewis, the "New Negro Woman" connoted a female Garveyite who, like her male counterparts, could have significant responsibilities in the workplace and in the political arena. Furthermore, the "New Negro Woman" was committed to influencing the ideological views of Black children and members of the Black race in general.[28] This vision inspired female Garveyites to resist their subordinate positions within the UNIA, through the use of the women's page of *The Negro World*.

Published by the UNIA from 1918 to 1933, *The Negro World* was one of the most influential Black newspapers of the period, reaching peoples of African descent throughout the world. Described as the "most effective of Garvey's propaganda devices," *The Negro World*

[26] Eunice Lewis, "The Black Woman's Part in Race Leadership," *The Negro World*, April 19, 1924.

[27] Lewis, "The Black Woman's Part," 10.

[28] For a more detailed analysis of the "New Negro Woman," see Keisha N. Benjamin, "How Did Rank and File Women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Use The Woman's Page of *The Negro World* To Define the 'New Negro Woman'?" *Women and Social Movements, 1600-2000* 12, no. 3 (September 2008).

promoted racial uplift, self-reliance and Black unity.[29] Filled with Garvey's speeches, articles, and advertisements, *The Negro World* addressed practically every aspect of Black life and the UNIA's main principles—the "establishment of a powerful black nationality in Africa, selective emigration, [black capitalism, race pride and the study of African history."[30] Consequently, although it served as a means of informing and empowering Blacks in the Diaspora, *The Negro World* was also a source of contention for others. According to Martin, colonial leaders in parts of Africa and in the Caribbean saw *The Negro World* as the cause of numerous political uprisings.[31] The extensive readership of *The Negro World* reflected the UNIA's widespread membership, spanning Africa, Europe, the Americas, and every place where people of African descent resided.[32]

By and large, *The Negro World* neglected to give a voice to Black women.[33] When *The Negro World* did include statements from women prior to "Our Women" they were "often briefly paraphrased, while Garvey's [statements] were usually printed word for word."[34] The inclusion of women's views in the weekly *Negro World* mirrored their actual involvement in the UNIA; they were present but rarely recognized. Described as the "backbone" of the UNIA, women most often participated "behind the scenes," while UNIA men gained public recognition.[35] According to Beryl Satter, male Garveyites ran UNIA businesses, serving as statesmen and diplomats, while women worked in the background, providing "clerical, cultural and civic support

[29] Martin, *Race First*, 91. Portions of this analysis on *The Negro World* appear in Benjamin, "How Did rank and File Women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Use The Woman's Page of *The Negro World* To Define the 'New Negro Woman'?".

[30] Michael O. West, "Like a River: The Million Man March and the Black Nationalist Tradition in the United States," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 1 (March 1999): 86.

[31] Martin, *Race First*, 93.

[32] Tony Martin, "Marcus Garvey and Trinidad, 1912-1947," *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas*, ed. Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1986), 52.

[33] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth, 39; James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia,* 138.

[34] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 48.

[35] Ibid., 44.

services."[36] Most women, in fact, served in only limited capacities in the Universal Motor Corps and as Black Cross Nurses.

As Black Cross Nurses, UNIA women—acting in their assigned positions as nurturers—were involved in community service, offering medical aid in Black neighborhoods throughout the United States. These nurses "learnt first aid and medicare under the tutelage of a registered nurse who was a UNIA member."[37] They were "respected community midwives and herbalists," providing services to those in need.[38] Similarly, UNIA women participating in the African Universal Motor Corps and Juvenile Divisions of the organization further fulfilled their expected roles as nurturers to the Black community, under strict male leadership.[39] In the Universal African Motor Corps, in particular, adult and teenage women learned military drills and a variety of other automotive skills, including driving cars, taxis and ambulances.[40] However, whether they were Black Cross Nurses or members of the Motor Corps, women were "under the jurisdiction of the male officers of the African Legions."[41] In every female auxiliary, women held *restricted* leadership positions, and were always accountable to males within the organization.

Although they obtained more leadership opportunities than women in other Black organizations of the 1920s, only a handful of UNIA women gained prominence and public recognition.[42] Ashwood Garvey, who was Marcus Garvey's first wife, served as one

[36] Beryl Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1996): 49. For a more detailed discussion of women's responsibilities in the UNIA, see Martin, "Women," 62-72; Honor Ford Smith, "Women and the Garvey Movement in Jamaica," in *Garvey: His Work and Impact,* 73-86*;* Bair, "True Women, Real Men," in *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History,* ed. Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 154-166.

[37] Lewis, *Marcus Garvey,* 68.

[38] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 45.

[39] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 45.

[40] Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, 68.

[41] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 45; Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, 68.

[42] For a more detailed discussion of women's leadership opportunities in the UNIA and a comparison to women's participation in other Black organizations of the 1920s, see Martin, "Women," 62-72; Honor Ford Smith, "Women and the Garvey Movement in Jamaica," in *Garvey: His Work and Impact,* 73-86; Bair, "True Women, Real Men," 154-66.

of the first members and secretaries of the UNIA.[43] Jacques Garvey, who became Marcus Garvey's second wife in 1919, served in many capacities including associate editor for *The Negro World* and de facto leader of the UNIA during her husband's incarceration.[44] Vinton Davis became the UNIA's International Organizer in 1919 and served on the organization's executive council. Likewise, De Mena became a member of the executive council, serving as the UNIA's Assistant International Organizer.[45]

Unlike these prominent women, Laura Kofey gained brief recognition throughout the early 1920s as a charismatic leader, only to lose her reputation and life shortly thereafter. Described as a "dynamic personality [and] quite the organizer,"[46] Kofey emerged during what Barbara Bair described as a "time of crisis" for the UNIA, following the imprisonment of Marcus Garvey. Through Kofey's charisma and zeal, thousands joined the UNIA during the short time that she served as an organizer, despite the suspicions surrounding Garvey's alleged misuse of funds. According to Bair, "By the spring of 1927, her influence as a highly charismatic apostle of Garveyism had gained her widespread recognition. She was now a stellar phenomenon on the UNIA scene." In Tampa alone, more than three hundred men and women joined the UNIA under Kofey's direction during the summer of 1927.[47] It is therefore no surprise that Garvey became very familiar with Kofey and her work for the UNIA. In fact, in August 1927, she visited Garvey in his Atlanta prison cell.[48]

However, within months of that visit, Kofey's reputation became severely tarnished, as other Garveyites—mostly male—became suspicious of her immediate success. In a telegram to Garvey in September 1927, J.A. Craigen, who served as the executive secretary of the Detroit division, denounced Kofey as a fraud from Georgia

[43] Martin, *Amy Ashwood Garvey*, 22-23.

[44] Ula Yvette Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 27, 65-66.

[45] Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 30, 45, 103.

[46] Amy Jacques Garvey to Richard Newman, January 31, 1972, Laura Adorkor Kofey Research Collection, 1926-1981, New York Public Library at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[47] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 54, 56.

[48] US Department of Justice Penitentiary Records, August 1, 1927, Garvey Club Collection, 1927-1948, Schomburg Center.

posing as an African princess.[49] Craigen warned, "If she is not advised to discontinue her activities in the association serious trouble will ensue which will entail serious complications."[50] By February 1928, Garvey openly denounced Kofey in *The Negro World*. "This woman is a fake" he wrote, "and has no authority from me to speak to the Universal Negro Improvement Association."[51] Following her public condemnation, Kofey left the UNIA to form the African Universal Church and Commercial League, teaching "a blend of Garveyism and religion."[52] During an evening service on March 8, 1928 and in the presence of her most avid followers, Kofey was brutally murdered.[53] Although no one has ever been convicted of Kofey's murder, male Garveyites were present at the 1928 service, and had threatened (and harassed) Kofey prior to the shooting. Immediately following her murder, Kofey's followers murdered Maxwell Cook, a male Garveyite, in retaliation.[54]

Kofey's life and legacy unveiled the complex nature of the UNIA's leadership structure and revealed that while a handful of women were granted certain leadership positions in the organization, women were still expected to remain under male control. Kofey openly challenged male leadership while in the UNIA and posed a threat to Garvey's influence—and certainly to other male Garveyites—even *before* she formed her own organization. Kofey's rapid rise to fame and great influence in the UNIA intimidated Garvey and other male Garveyites, who were unprepared to allow a woman to surpass them. Her decision to form a rival organization, however, only further ignited male resistance. Kofey deviated from the UNIA's expectations for women and in the process lost her life.

While her experience represented an extreme case, and her murder

[49] Martin describes Kofey in the same manner and diminished her role and significance in the Garvey movement; *Race First*, 59.

[50] J.A. Craigen Western Union Telegram to Marcus Garvey, September 20, 1927, Garvey Club Collection, 1927-1948, Schomburg Center.

[51] Quoted in Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 56.

[52] Richard Newman, "'Warrior Mother of Africa's Warriors of the Most High God': Laura Adorkor Kofey and the African Universal Church," in *This Far By Faith: Readings in African- American Women's Religious Biography*, ed. Richard Newman and Judith Weisenfeld (New York: Routledge, 1996), 113.

[53] Bair also notes that prior to Kofey's assassination, male Garveyites had attended her meetings on numerous occasions to harass her; Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 57.

[54] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 57-58.

may have been the result of a variety of circumstances—her gender, her decision to form a rival organization, her widespread influence, or a combination of all three—other women in the UNIA faced resistance when their influence appeared to exceed that of males within the organization. Jacques Garvey encountered male resistance as she took on more leadership responsibilities during her husband's imprisonment.[55] Ultimately, regardless of the apparent prominence that Vinton Davis, De Mena, Jacques Garvey and Kofey exercised, these women, as the majority of women in the UNIA, remained in positions subordinate to males within the organization.

The UNIA's founding documents and Marcus Garvey's views on women shaped the hierarchal structure of the organization and reinforced women's exclusion from positions of leadership. From the outset, women's inclusion in the Garvey movement was very limited in scope. In the "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World," published in 1920 at a gathering of 25,000 UNIA delegates in Harlem, there were only four references to women:

> II. In certain parts of the United States of America our race is denied the right of public trial accorded to other races when accused of crime, but are lynched and burned by mobs, and such brutal and inhuman treatment is *even practiced upon our women*. …
>
> 1. Be it known to all men that whereas all men are created equal and entitled to the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and because of this we, the duly elected representatives of the Negro peoples of the world, invoking the aid of the just and almighty God, do declare *all men, women and children of our blood throughout the world free citizens*, and do claim them as free citizens of Africa, the Motherland of all Negroes. …
>
> 18. We protest against the atrocious practice of shaving the heads of Africans, *especially of African women* or individuals of Negro blood, when placed in prison as a punishment for crime by an alien race. …
>
> 29. With the help of almighty God we declare ourselves the *sworn protectors of the honor and virtue of our women* and children, and

[55] Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 66-67.

> pledge our lives for their protection and defense everywhere, and under all circumstances from wrongs and outrages.[56]

The articles of the "Declaration of the Rights" upheld the responsibility of Black men as protectors of their fragile female counterparts and as "sworn protectors of the honor and virtue of our women." Furthermore, while the articles acknowledged the freedom of men and women alike, they failed to address Black women's equal status to Black men.

Likewise, in a letter to *The Negro World* in 1924, a male Garveyite asserted, "If you find any woman—especially a Black woman—who does not want to be a mother, you may rest assured she is not a true woman."[57] The unequal status of Black men and women as espoused by Garvey and the UNIA reinforced traditional gender constructions—the tradition of Black women as "community mothers," rather than active participants in community activism.[58] Garvey's poetry, articles, and speeches reinforced women's responsibility as nurturers who "needed to be uplifted" and protected by their male counterparts.[59]

As a result, women were "relieved of certain onerous tasks in the public sphere," and instead were glorified for their physical beauty and maternal characteristics.[60] In his poem entitled "The Black Woman," Garvey emphasized the Black woman's beauty and grace: "Black queen of beauty, thou hast given color to the world! / Among other women thou art royal and the fairest!" He then indirectly affirmed their position in society: "Like the brightest of jewels in the regal diadem/ Shin'st thou, Goddess of Africa, Nature's purest emblem!" As "nature's purest emblem," Garvey highlighted the fragility of Black women, at whose "virginal shrine" Black men should worship.[61] Furthermore, Garvey upheld the Black woman's responsibility as nurturer in his poem, "The Black Mother": "If on life's way I happen to flounder/ My true thoughts

[56] *Marcus Garvey Life and Lessons: A Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill and Barbara Bair (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 43, 45, 47, 48; emphasis added.

[57] Quoted in Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine," 48.

[58] Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine," 49.

[59] Ford-Smith, "Women and the Garvey Movement," 75.

[60] Ibid.

[61] *The Poetical Works of Marcus Garvey*, ed. Tony Martin (Dover: Majority Press, 1983), 44.

should be of Mother dear/ She is the rock that ne'er rifts asunder/ The cry of her child, be it far or near."[62] Garvey personified the Black mother as a rock, on which her children could depend—a source of comfort and stability. In so doing, he sent the explicit message that Black women—and not Black men—were responsible for nurturing Black children. Thus, he again stressed the message that Black women were responsible for "produc[ing] a 'better and stronger race' through the quality of their childcare."[63]

Articles published by other male leaders in *The Negro World* also reaffirmed the role of women in the UNIA and society as a whole. On June 9, 1923, Percival Burrows, a male Garveyite, reminisced on the days of old, stating: "Let us go back to the days of true manhood when women truly reverenced us and without any condescension on our part, for all true women will admire and respect a real man: therefore, let us again place our women upon the pedestal from whence they have been forced into the vortex of the seething world of business."[64] Calling for Black men to reclaim their rightful positions and save their women from the "seething world of business," the article reflected the same sentiments that had appeared in the UNIA's "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World" in 1920—Black men needed to be "sworn protectors" of their fragile women.[65]

Although the UNIA was founded on the notion that Black men were responsible for protecting their fragile Black women, female Garveyites were determined to resist their subordinate positions within the organization. They did so first in a very public way, boldly addressing an exclusively male and unreceptive audience during the afternoon session of the 1922 UNIA convention.[66] According to Bair, women could be delegates to the international conventions, but they had difficulty being recognized from the floor by men, who presided over the sessions.[67] However, this did not deter women at the 1922 UNIA Convention. Feeling that they had not received "proper recognition

[62] Ibid., 59.
[63] Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine," 49.
[64] Quoted in ibid., 48.
[65] *Garvey* L*ife and Lessons*, ed. Hill and Bair, 48.
[66] James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 138.
[67] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 45.

during all the former sessions," a group of women addressed the convention with a list of grievances. "We, the women of the U.N.I.A. and A.C.L.," they stated, "know that no race can rise higher than its women." They went on to cite the value of women being placed in "important places of the organization to help refine and mold public sentiment."

Speaking on behalf of the disgruntled women, Victoria Turner presented the following list of resolutions designed to improve the status of women in the organization:

> 1. That a woman be the head of the Black Cross Nurses and Motor Corps and have absolute control over those women, and this shall not conflict with the Legions.
> 2. That women be given more recognition by being placed on every committee, so that she may learn more of the salient workings of the various committees.
> 3. That more women be placed in the important offices and field work of the association.
> 4. That women be given initiative positions, so that they may formulate constructive plans to elevate our women.
> 5. That Lady Henrietta Vinton Davis be empowered to formulate plans with the sanction of the President-General so that the Negro women all over the world can function without restriction from the men.[68]

The resolutions conveyed the sense of dissatisfaction that this group of women felt. Most significantly, however, they unveiled the core of the hierarchical structure of the organization, which failed to provide an equal place for women. Although Garvey claimed that the UNIA "was one organization that recognized women," he did not acknowledge that women held unequal positions to their male counterparts.[69] While the organization provided an opportunity for a few women to hold positions of prominence, the resolutions demonstrated that women did not have full autonomy.

[68] *Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989) vol. 4, 1037.
[69] Ibid., 1038.

Women at the 1922 convention were also displeased that female Garveyites were not represented on every committee within the organization. These women were concerned that if female Garveyites remained excluded from certain committees, they would not have the opportunity to develop various skills and learn more about running the organization. Similarly, they argued, women in the UNIA needed to be placed in "the important offices and field work of the association."[70] This demand revealed female Garveyites' attempt to expand their spheres of influence within the organization and develop the skills necessary to serve in a multiplicity of ways.

The request for women to serve on every committee did not mean that female Garveyites *never* served in these capacities. Mrs. Robinson, a female Garveyite from New Orleans who attended the 1922 convention, served as a field commissioner for the UNIA and Mrs. Willis from New York worked as a field representative for the organization.[71] Likewise, women such as Vinton Davis and De Mena held "important offices" and "initiative positions."[72] These women, however, represented the exception rather than the norm. Consequently, female delegates at the 1922 convention argued for the expansion of women's positions within the organization as a general standard and expectation for all. They were no longer willing "to sit silently by and let the men take all the glory while they gave the advice." Not surprisingly, however, the resolutions were passed only after Garvey's excessive modifications and attempts to dismiss the women's claims, citing that "women already had the power they were asking for under the [UNIA] constitution."[73]

Indeed, the UNIA Constitution, formulated in July 1918, granted women many of the rights they were requesting in 1922. It did not indicate gender as a factor in the election or appointment of officers.[74] Furthermore, it reserved a position for females within the organization to serve as "Lady President": "The Lady President shall be given control of all those departments of the organization over which she may be able to exercise better control than the male president, and she shall have the right to preside over any meeting called by her on the approval of

[70] Ibid., 1037.
[71] Ibid., 1037-38.
[72] Ibid., 1038.
[73] Ibid.
[74] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol 1, 264.

the general membership." Yet, the constitution specifically maintained male Garveyites' ultimate leadership and control: "But all her reports shall be submitted to the Male President for presentation to the general membership."[75] Moreover, despite Garvey's argument that women already had the "power they were asking for under the constitution," it was evident that *in practice,* women lacked equal positions within the UNIA.[76] As a result, therefore, UNIA women formulated the 1922 list of grievances to advocate change in the organizational and leadership structure.

When Amy Jacques Garvey introduced "Our Women and What They Think" in *The Negro World* in February 1924, she made a bold step toward expanding women's spheres of influence within the UNIA. "Our Women" did more for women in the UNIA than the yearly Women's Day at UNIA conferences, which celebrated women's achievements and accomplishments in and out of the organization.[77] Unlike the yearly Women's Day, the women's page, in particular, provided female Garveyites with an opportunity to express their views without direct male censorship. According to Taylor, Jacques Garvey took on a more influential editorial role during a period in which Marcus Garvey "was unable to wield direct power over the organization from his Atlanta prison cell."[78] Introduced during the most difficult period in the life of the UNIA, "Our Women" represented an open outlet for Black women to debate a range of topics, often denouncing "antiquated beliefs" and empowering each other as the organization's leader awaited the result of his appealed conviction.[79]

The women's list of grievances at the 1922 convention foreshadowed the concerns and personal struggles they would later discuss in "Our Women and What They Think." When the women's page first appeared in *The Negro World*, it immediately challenged many of Garvey's views and the core principles of the UNIA. Filled with advertisements for dinner sets, women's clothing and hair treatment, "Our Women" must

[75] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 1, 269.
[76] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 4, 1038.
[77] Martin, *Race First*, 27; Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 47.
[78] Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 65.
[79] Amy Jacques Garvey, "No Sex in Brains and Ability," *The Negro World*, December 27, 1924.

have initially stunned the Garveyite community with its feature article, "Women's Party Wants Not Only Equal Rights, *But Equal Responsibilities With Men*."[80] The article detailed the National Woman's Party's efforts to introduce eighteen bills to the New York State Legislature, calling for women's labor rights. Ironically, the NWP had already excluded Black women from its agenda by 1924.[81] According to Paula Giddings, Alice Paul represented the "most militant faction of White suffragists," whose main concern was securing the ballot for white women, rather than assisting Black women.[82] Still, the appearance of the NWP article in "Our Women" must have served as an inspiration to female Garveyites, indicating that Black women, like their white counterparts, could equally mobilize for their own rights in and out of the UNIA.

If the NWP article failed to send the intended message, then the article next to it clarified any possible misconceptions: "The Negro Girl of Today Has Become a Follower—Future Success Rests With Her Parents and Home Environment."[83] Written by Carrie Mero Leadett, "The Negro Girl of Today" challenged young Black women to build better futures for themselves through innovation rather than imitation. Leadett, Garvey's first secretary, was an active member of the UNIA and a frequent writer for the women's page.[84] A resident of New York, Leadett worked as a clerk at the UNIA headquarters in Harlem and for the organization's shipping company during the 1920s.[85] In "The Negro Girl of Today," she argued that although Black women should aim for the same successes as women of other races, they needed to become leaders and not followers. Leadett further contended that "today if Mary Jones, a white girl, comes to school with her hair bobbed—tomorrow as many of our Negro girls [will] follow suit, whether it is becoming to their features or not." Instead, Leadett encouraged young Black women to embrace their dark, natural hair as a sign of their Black

[80] "Women's Party Wants Not Only Equal Rights, But Equal Responsibilities with Men," *The Negro World*, February 2, 1924; emphasis added.

[81] Sklar and Dias, "Enfranchisement of Black Women."

[82] Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Murrow & Co., 1985), 160.

[83] Carrie Mero Leadett, "The Negro Girl of Today Has Become a Follower—Future Success Rests With Her Parents and Home Environment," *The Negro World*, February 2, 1924.

[84] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 5, 351.

[85] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 6, 418.

identity and beauty. Ironically, *The Negro World* advertised "light brown" dolls with straight or long curled hair, as opposed to natural hair.[86] Nonetheless, Leadett's editorial certainly reflected female Garveyites' desire to pave their own paths and "surpass those of all other races, socially, industrially and morally."[87]

Another article, "The New Woman" by Saydee [Sadie] E. Parham, challenged women's positions in the UNIA and in the community as a whole. Parham, a frequent writer for "Our Women," was a law student who served as Garvey's secretary in 1926.[88] In her article, she discussed the process of evolution through which all species experience growth and maturation. Along these lines, she argued that women needed to grow in society: "From the brow-beaten, dominated cave woman, cowering in fear at the mercy of her brutal mate … from the safely cloistered woman reared like a clinging vine, destitute of all initiative and independence … we find her at last *rising to the pinnacle of power and glory*."[89] Certainly, Parham's representation of women differed greatly from the imagery of women in Garvey's poems, "The Black Woman" and "The Black Mother." By contrast, Parham challenged the sexism within the organizational structure of the UNIA, which—as the experiences of Laura Kofey and other women revealed—reserved power and glory for male Garveyites.

Another writer, Blanche Hall, expressed similar views in a 1924 article, "Woman's Greatest Influence is Socially." Hall addressed the important responsibilities that women held in society as a whole, citing men's dependence on women in every aspect of life. "Show me a good, honest, noble man of character" she wrote, "and I will show you a good mother or wife behind him." Consequently, Hall reminded readers that the UNIA could not advance without the assistance of female Garveyites: "There is much that the woman can do to make this organization a success."[90] Florence Bruce reinforced this position

[86] Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 191-192.

[87] Leadett, "The Negro Girl of Today," 10.

[88] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 6, 406.

[89] Saydee Parham, "The New Woman," *The Negro World*, February 2, 1924; emphasis added.

[90] Blanche Hall, "Woman's Greatest Influence is Socially," *The Negro World*, October 4, 1924.

in her 1924 article, "The Great Work of the Negro Woman Today."[91] Bruce, an active member of the UNIA, was the wife of John E. Bruce, who served as a contributing editor of *The Negro World* from 1921 until his death in 1924.[92] Citing women's impact in society since antiquity, Mrs. Bruce contended that women's influence would help the advancement of the UNIA and the Black community. "No race has succeeded without a good and strong womanhood," she wrote, "and none ever will."[93]

While Bruce's statement affirmed the importance of Black women's expanded influence and involvement in the UNIA, Jacques Garvey's 1926 editorial clarified any possible misconceptions. The editorial confirmed that women in the UNIA were determined to have equal opportunities in and out of the organization, and they were unwilling to allow male Garveyites to hinder their progress:

> If the United States Congress can open their doors to white women, we serve notice on our men that Negro women will demand equal opportunity to fill any position in the Universal Negro Improvement Association or anywhere else without discrimination because of sex. We are very sorry if it hurts your old-fashioned tyrannical feelings, and we not only make the demand, but we intend to enforce it.[94]

Jacques Garvey's statements underscored the frustration of women in the UNIA who felt that male Garveyites often thwarted their efforts for equality within the organization. They also revealed her absolute dissatisfaction with the limited roles of women within the organization. Jacques Garvey could be more forceful in her requests for gender equality with her husband miles away in an Atlanta prison cell. Still, her statements reflected the growing sentiments of rank-and-file female Garveyites and their determination to bring about change within the UNIA and the Black community as a whole.

[91] Florence Bruce, "The Great Work of the Negro Woman Today," *The Negro World,* December 27, 1924.

[92] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 7, 979.

[93] Bruce, "The Great Work," 8.

[94] Amy Jacques Garvey, "Black Women's Resolve for 1926," *The Negro World*, January 9, 1926.

While Jacques Garvey, Parham, Hall and others demanded change within the UNIA, they also envisioned change—albeit a conservative one—in Black women's responsibilities within the home. Although women in the UNIA did not completely reject traditional Victorian ideals in the home, they advocated the importance of respecting Black women who worked to support their families. Therefore, many UNIA women rejected Garvey's earlier criticism of Black homes that deviated from patriarchal standards. According to Ford-Smith, "Garvey unapologetically saw the man as head of the patriarchal family and spoke out against illegitimacy and female-headed households."[95] Moreover, Garvey argued that it was solely the man's responsibility to work and provide for the family.

Female Garveyites, on the other hand, recognized the problem facing many Black women, both those whose husbands could not fully provide for their families and those who were single mothers. As a result, many of these women entered the workforce in their attempt to assist their husbands or provide for their children. Madame B. Rhoda, an active UNIA member and singer from Nashville, TN articulated these views in her editorial, "Our Women Think We Should Make Employment"[96]:

> We Negro Women have a very hard time getting work and are constantly told by our white employers that all we do with the money we earn is to support preachers who build big churches where we go once a week…. We Negro women are tired of this kind of thing and feel that our men are exploiting us to abuse and ill-treatment. *We are compelled to work, for our men can't support us and our children.* Our only hope is in the teaching of the U.N.I.A.[97]

Rhoda criticized Black men, whose failures forced Black women to assume many responsibilities in the home that they would not normally fill, including that of breadwinner. Likewise, in her editorial, "Half Million Dollar Churches and No Jobs," Amelia Sayers, a female Garveyite from New York, justified Black women's decisions to enter

[95] Ford-Smith, "Women and the Garvey Movement," 76.

[96] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 4, 1031.

[97] Madame Rhoda, "Our Women Think We Should Make Employment," *The Negro World*, March 7, 1925; emphasis added.

the workforce, reiterating, "We are compelled to work."[98] Sayers was an active member of the UNIA and served as a delegate to the Fourth Annual International UNIA Convention in August 1924, where she was honored at the court reception.[99] According to Robert Hill, Sayers travelled with Jacques Garvey and worked as her personal assistant during Marcus Garvey's incarceration.[100] Sayers' statements provide a glimpse into the general views of rank-and-file female Garveyites who resisted the male insistence that working Black mothers indicated a lack of racial progress.[101]

Rhoda and Sayers' statements, while revealing Black women's frustration with men's criticism of working women, failed to address the socioeconomic conditions of the 1920s. Racism in the labor market restricted Black men and women from obtaining white-collar jobs, and for the few jobs that they could obtain, Blacks received meager salaries.[102] For this reason, a typical working-class Black male could not effectively provide for his family without the assistance of his wife. According to Sharon Harley, "The racial barriers that Black males faced in the employment market forced a significant number of married Black women to join the labor force."[103] Therefore, Black women were necessarily committed both to the duties of labor and the duties of the home.[104] Many of these women viewed labor force participation as part of the traditional Black culture.[105]

While there is no doubt that many women in the UNIA entered the workforce to assist their husbands financially, it is important to note that others chose to work as a means of personal fulfillment, or as a means of uplifting the Black race in general. In her article, "The Woman's Part in Race Developments," Vida Horsford detailed

[98] "Half Million Dollar Churches and No Jobs," *The Negro World*, November 29, 1924.

[99] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 5 833, vol. 7, 44.

[100] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 7, 44.

[101] Sharon Harley, "For the Good of Family and Race: Gender, Work and Domestic Roles in the Black Community, 1880-1930, *Signs* 15, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 341.

[102] Ibid., 340.

[103] Ibid., 342.

[104] Karen Dugger, "Social Location and Gender Roles Attitudes: A Comparison of Black and White Women," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 4 (December 1988): 428.

[105] Ibid.

the important influence that the "Negro Woman" would have in the workforce. "By her carefulness, her calmness, her truthfulness, her honesty, her sweetness of disposition [and] her punctuality," she wrote, "she may create a lasting impression on the minds of her fellow workers." Horsford went on to argue that Black women in the workforce would help "promulgat[e] racial doctrines" and destroy the misconception that Blacks were inferior to whites.[106]

Female Garveyites also expressed new ideas about the women's responsibilities within the home. While they accepted the importance of raising and caring for children, they advocated expanded responsibilities, including women's ability to budget and secure the financial futures of their families. This was fully articulated in Rosa Lee Smith's letter to the women's page in September 1924. Smith, a female Garveyite from Pittsburgh, argued that a woman must not only know how to care for her children, but she must also have financial knowledge and budgeting skills. "Since the woman spends most of the money in the home" she wrote, "it is necessary that she know how to spend it wisely."[107]

Female Garveyites also supported women's ability to make their own choices in the home—even in mundane matters such as wearing a wedding ring. On September 6, 1924, Jacques Garvey posed the question: "Should married men, like women, wear wedding rings?" The varied responses revealed much about female Garveyites, many of whom supported a woman's right to decide whether or not she would wear a ring. In her response to the question, Leadette, herself married, passionately asserted: "The wedding ring is a survival of primitive times, when a married woman wore a heavy band of iron, a symbol of bondage—a sign that she was her husband's property, his slave to do with as he pleased." While she further asserted that in modern times, the wedding ring represented a different symbol—one of "faithfulness and of purity of love," Leadett upheld her argument that the ring should be optional, since one's faithfulness and love should be an inward attribute.[108] Olivia Whiteman, a vocal critic of the

[106] Vida Horsford, "The Woman's Part in Race Developments," *The Negro World*, September 19, 1925.

[107] Rosa Lee Smith, "Managing a Household," *The Negro World,* September 27, 1924.

[108] Carrie Leadette, "Married Lady Thinks Its Optional," *The Negro World*, September 6, 1924.

UNIA's leadership structure, who spoke on behalf of women's rights at the 1924 UNIA convention, also contended that the wedding ring should be optional for men and for women.[109] As far as Whiteman was concerned, a wedding ring meant very little: "The best way for a wife to show the world her husband is a married man is to be so active and play such a part in his affairs and life that the world will know of him as a husband."[110]

Rank-and-file female Garveyites also sought to expand their opportunity for involvement in politics. Not surprisingly, in response to Jacques Garvey's question, "Will the Entrance of Women in Politics Affect Home Life?" a variety of comments appeared, confirming the importance of Black women in politics. One response from Parham argued that a woman's involvement in politics actually strengthened her home life and served as an excellent example to her children: "The interest displayed by women in politics is responsible for playgrounds where children may physically develop into healthy men and women… Woman, by the accomplishment of bringing about these conditions, is responsible for happy, healthy home conditions."[111] Theo E. A. McCurdy also emphasized the importance of women in politics, stating: "It will tend to promote discussions of public questions around the family table enlarging the interest of the home and adding to its intelligence." McCurdy continued to argue that women's involvement in politics would protect the home, since women would ensure the passing of laws and regulations for better schools, hospitals and other institutions.

Similarly, E. Elliot Rawlins argued that women's entrance into politics would help "purify" it: "School conditions, rent laws, property and personal taxes, soldiers, bonus, health laws, city and state politics affecting liquor, morality and crime …. Women in politics could exert a great influence for good in many of these political questions affecting the home."[112] These women were the "New Negro Women" who could not be restricted to domestic duties and, as Turner articulated in the 1922 convention, were no longer willing to sit idly by as men took all

[109] *Garvey Papers*, ed. Hill, vol. 5, 559, 754.
[110] Olivia Whiteman, *The Negro World*, September 6, 1924.
[111] "Will the Entrance of Women in Politics Affect Home Life?" *The Negro World*, June 14, 1924.
[112] Ibid.

the credit for advice given by women.[113]

While Jacques Garvey's editorial revealed female Garveyites' attempt to expand their influence in the political arena, it also underscored some of the similarities between female Garveyites and white feminists of the 1920s. The so-called maternalist ideology of white feminists, in particular, upheld the notion that it was necessary for women to function in motherly roles: "By maternalism historians have meant the female version of paternalism, the assumptions women reformers made about women's nature, and the policy strategies they devised to provide social protection for women's maternal responsibilities."[114] The references to women's participation in politics as a necessity for children's physical and intellectual development further demonstrated female Garveyites' support of maternalism. For example, in her response to Jacques Garvey's question, "Will the Entrance of Women in Politics Affect Home Life?" Parham noted the ways in which women's participation in politics strengthened the home and aided in the development of their children.[115] Likewise, in her letter, "The Black Woman's Part in Race Leadership," Lewis stressed the Black woman's responsibility to raise and teach values to her children.[116] Thus, it is significant to note that female Garveyites—as white feminists of the 1920s—still emphasized the significance of motherhood even as they articulated the need to be recognized in the political arena and in the public sphere in general.[117]

While many rank-and-file women in the UNIA openly resisted male supremacy in the organization, this does not imply that *all* rank-and-file female Garveyites held this conviction, or that female Garveyites did not at times accommodate the same male supremacy

[113] James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 139.

[114] Kathryn Kish Sklar, "The Historical Foundations of Women's Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1830-1930," *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge, 1993), 45.

[115] "Will the Entrance of Women in Politics Affect Home Life?" *The Negro World*, June 14, 1924.

[116] Lewis, "The Black Woman's Part," 10.

[117] For a more thorough analysis of the twentieth century maternalist ideology and race, see Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (September 1991): 559-590.

that they fought so passionately against. In her work, *The Veiled Garvey*, Ula Taylor emphasized the conflicting nature of Jacques Garvey and many other female Garveyites, which comes to light through the pages of "Our Women." Taylor's term, "community feminism" more accurately describes the politics of these female Garveyites:

> Amy Jacques Garvey, along with other "race women" at the dawn of the twentieth century, mastered what I call "community feminism," a term that names the territory that Jacques Garvey was carving out—a territory that allowed her to join feminism and nationalism in a single coherent, consistent framework. At times, community feminism resembled a tug-of-war between feminist and nationalist paradigms, but it also provided a means of critiquing chauvinist ideas of women as intellectually inferior.[118]

Women in the UNIA—like other clubwomen of the twentieth century—struggled to advance the Black feminist and Black Nationalist causes. This dual purpose created at times a "tug-of-war" that is evident in the articles of the women's page, which, despite its critique of the UNIA's hierarchical structure, also revealed at times an acceptance of male supremacy in and out of the organization.

While many of the articles in "Our Women" challenged Garvey and the core principles of the UNIA, some also reinforced these principles. In describing the distinctiveness of "Our Women," Jacques Garvey had asserted, "Usually a Women's Page is any journal devoted solely to dress, home hints and love topics but our page is unique in that it seeks to give out the thoughts of our women on all subjects affecting them in particular and others in general."[119] However, while the women's page of *The Negro World* did not "devote *solely* to dress, home hits and love topics," it did not ignore them either.[120] Each issue also included "suggestions to the housewives," recipes, and articles reinforcing sexism.

Sayers, who wrote numerous articles demanding women's expanded responsibilities in the organization, also upheld male supremacy in a

[118] Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 2.
[119] Quoted in Matthews, "Our Women and What They Think," 869.
[120] Ibid.; emphasis added.

few of her articles and letters to the women's page. In her 1924 article, "Man is the Brain, Woman the Heart of Humanity" she affirmed traditional gender roles:

> The man is the brain, but the woman is the heart of humanity; he its judgment, she its feelings; he its strength, she its grace, adornment and comfort. Even the understanding of the best woman seems to work chiefly through her affections. And thus, though the man may direct the intellect, the woman cultivates the feelings, which chiefly determine the character. While he fills the memory, she occupies the heart. She makes us love what he can make us only believe, and it is chiefly through her that we are enabled to arrive at virtue.[121]

Sayers' statements reinforced sexism and belittled women as emotional individuals, while arguing that intelligence and wisdom were exclusive male attributes. Sayers also referred to women as the "heart of humanity," reinforcing Garvey's metaphor of women as "nature's purest emblem," in contrast to men, who were "sworn protectors" of their women.[122]

Similarly, other articles in "Our Women" affirmed women's responsibility as self-sacrificing wives and mothers and reinforced sexism. One example is "The Ideal Wife" by Vera,[123] which succinctly summarized the perfect woman: "The woman who winds herself into the rugged recesses of her husband's nature, and supports and comforts him in adversity." Describing women as the "softer sex" and "ornament[s] of man" Vera went on to explain that women were responsible for meeting the needs of their men, and thereby allowing these men to succeed in the community.[124] Another article, "Thoughts on Matrimony," upheld the patriarchal standards of the home and the importance of wives submitting to their husbands. [125] Echoing the 1920 "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World,"

[121] Amelia Sayers, "Man is the Brain, Woman the Heart of Humanity," *The Negro World*, November 8, 1924.
[122] *Poetical Works of Garvey*, ed. Martin, 59.
[123] The author's last name is not provided.
[124]."The Ideal Wife," *The Negro World*, April 5, 1924.
[125] "Thoughts on Matrimony," *The Negro World*, May 10, 1924.

another article entitled "White Man Humorously Tells of Worship Of His Men For Their Women" upheld Black men's responsibilities as "sworn protectors" of the feeble Black woman. The anonymous writer contended, "I am for women voting, or doing anything they want to do…. But I cannot get the Titanic disaster out of my minds, nor keep from feeling that it was somewhat nobler for those men to step back and put the women in the boats; in a word, to treat them [women] as superiors, as *beings to protect and serve and die for, and not as 'equals.*""[126] Reflecting on the Titanic disaster, the author expressed her struggle to embrace women's equality with men, which failed to consider women's fragility and men's responsibility as protectors.

Other women in the UNIA also dealt with the same struggles as they aimed to expand their roles and responsibilities while equally supporting their male counterparts. In her 1924 article, "Marriage Today and the Woman," active Garveyite Carrie Mero Leadett offered advice to young women preparing for marriage. She outlined three basic points to help each marriage succeed: wives must be realistic in their expectations, wives must keep their husbands interested, and wives must please their husbands. According to Leadett, marriages suffered when women did not spend the time to find out their husband's needs, likes and dislikes. She also excused men's infidelity and loss of interest in the marriage, citing the woman's failure to remain current in her husband's interests: "Today a pretty face allures him, tomorrow it may be a fine conversationalist or a musical person, and if a wife is to keep her husband in the right path she must fit herself for many and varied duties."[127]

Similarly, in a letter to the women's page in June 1924, Laura Thomas expressed Black women's responsibilities to please their men: "Every woman has different qualities, whether these qualities are good or bad, but above all women, we should make them good. We should live so that our husbands and the men of our race will be proud of us and respect us at home and abroad." Thomas then suggested a list of ways in which Black women could gain respect from Black men, including Black women's choice of friends and the "study [of] the

[126] "White Man Humorously Tells of Worship Of His Men For Their Women," *The Negro World*, April 19, 1924.

[127] Carrie Mero Leadett, "Marriage Today and the Woman," *The Negro World*, June 21, 1924.

higher ideals of life and not the low, degrading things." Furthermore, Thomas reinforced Garvey's own sentiments as espoused in his poetry: "[Black women] should live for others."[128]

While these contradictions exhibited Taylor's notion of "community feminism," they also demonstrated the conflicts that female Garveyites faced as they attempted to embrace Black Nationalist ideology while upholding their Christian values.[129] Most of the women (and men) of the UNIA were Christians, and the hierarchical structure of the organization closely mirrored the Black church.[130] Furthermore, members of the UNIA often compared Garvey to Jesus Christ. In a letter to President Calvin Coolidge in 1927, Garveyites from Panama argued, "We the Negroes of the World look upon Garvey as a superman; a demigod; as the reincarnated Angel of Peace come from Heaven to dispense Political Salvation…we love Garvey next to our God."[131] These descriptions of Garvey revealed the hero-worship that was evident in the UNIA, and only confirmed the challenges that UNIA women, in particular, faced in their efforts to expand their roles and responsibilities. For many of these women, their attempt to balance Christian ideals—which recognized men in a dominant position of authority—and "community feminist" aspirations was a challenging one. Therefore, the "tug-of-war" that appeared in the women's page also unveiled the personal and religious struggles of many female Garveyites as they envisioned the "New Negro Woman."

The articles and writers considered in this paper provide a glimpse into the ways in which rank-and-file female Garveyites often wavered between advocating feminist ideals and embracing male supremacy within the UNIA. Although we may accept Taylor's assertion that these women were "community feminists," they were "undeniably feminists," and this fact cannot be overlooked.[132] According to Linda Gordon,

[128] Laura Thomas, "Living for Others," *The Negro World,* June 14, 1924.

[129] It is significant to note that Garvey's interpretation of Christianity differed greatly from mainstream Christianity. Garvey and members of the UNIA rejected "white Christianity" and instead embraced a "Black Christianity," which depicted God as Black. For a detailed analysis of the UNIA's religious beliefs, see Martin, *Race First*, 67-80.

[130] Bair, "Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth," 39-40.

[131] Quoted in Martin, *Race First*, 69.

[132] Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 65.

"Feminism is a critique of male supremacy, formed and offered in the light of a will to change it, which in turn assumes a conviction that it is changeable."[133] The list of resolutions presented by women at the 1922 UNIA convention, the vision of the "New Negro Woman," and the articles and letters to the women's page revealed, among other things, a critique of male supremacy within the UNIA and women's attempts to change it.

Thus, "Our Women and What They Think" remains a significant chronicle of women in the UNIA, unveiling their views, conflicts, and efforts to foster change during the most tumultuous period of the Garvey movement. It is a revelation of these women's struggle to balance their own feminist ideals with the Victorian patriarchal standards espoused by Garvey and other male Garveyites. Like Jacques Garvey, many of these rank-and-file women desired expanded opportunities in the UNIA and the community at large, while others battled to expand their limited spheres of influence, often fearing that to do so would detract from the successes of the "New Negro" men.

Yet, even as many of these women tried to balance their support of men's ambitions and their own personal goals, they became more and more frustrated as their efforts seemed to go unnoticed. Amelia Sayers Alexander expressed her frustration and impatience in her editorial, "A Brave Man Betrayed": "It is so peculiar how some of our Negro men lack character…. Therefore, women of my race, get busy. You have seen the results that some of our men have produced. It is high time for us to get together and work."[134] No female Garveyite, however, expressed as much anger as Jacques Garvey herself:

> We are tired of hearing Negro men say, "There is a better day coming," while they do nothing to usher in that day. We are becoming so impatient that we are getting in the front ranks and serve notice to the world that we will brush aside the halting, cowardly Negro leaders…. Mr. Black Man watch your step! Ethiopia's queens will reign again, and her Amazon's protect her shores and people.

[133] Linda Gordon, "What's New in Women's History," *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies*, ed. Theresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 29.

[134] Amelia Sayers Alexander, "A Brave Man Betrayed," *The Negro World*, March 14, 1925.

> Strengthen your shaking knees and move forward, or we will displace you and lead on to victory and glory.[135]

Jacques Garvey challenged Black women to "push forward" despite the lack of assistance and appreciation from Black men. Then, in another bold step, Jacques Garvey extended a warning to Black men to support their women's leadership aspirations and recognize their equality, otherwise, these same women would eventually surpass their male counterparts.

On April 30, 1927, the publication of "Our Women and What They Think" abruptly ended. Jacques Garvey offered no explanation for her decision to discontinue the page; some scholars have contended that she grew tired of pleading with women to contribute articles.[136] While we may never know why the women's page ended only three years after its debut, it provides a meaningful contribution to our understanding of women in the Garvey movement. More importantly, it gives us the opportunity to understand how rank-and-file women in the UNIA defined and strived to become the "New Negro Woman." We are able to hear the voices of rank-and-file female Garveyites who, until now, had remained largely silent in the literature on Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

[135] Amy Jacques Garvey, "Women as Leaders Nationally and Racially," *The Negro World*, October 24, 1925.

[136] Karen S. Adler, "'Always Leading Our Men in Service and Sacrifice': Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist," *Gender and Society* 6, no. 3 (September 1992): 346-75.

Theirs to Reason Why: Convergence of Opinion on the ABCA during World War II

Jason Zuckerbrod

Established in 1941 to combat low morale among Britain's soldiers, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA) was a compulsory, one-hour-per-week education scheme that taught soldiers why they were fighting and about the world around them. The ABCA marked a radical shift in the army's attitude towards the men and women under its charge. Although soldiers had limited access to army-sponsored lectures prior to the establishment of the ABCA, the British army had not had mandatory education since Oliver Cromwell's programs in the seventeenth century. Initially, the idea of soldiers discussing politically sensitive issues sat poorly with many government officials. Still, by the end of World War II, most Britons agreed on the general importance of compulsory army education. Despite this agreement, few contemporaries who commented on the ABCA agreed on its ultimate purpose; a multitude of ideas circulated regarding the worthiness of the program. The rhetoric these contemporary commentators used in opinion articles, letters to periodical editors, and surveys helps explain some of these divergences. Ultimately, these divergent justifications reveal the way in which different conceptions of democracy in wartime coalesced to form a consensus on policy.

The historiography of the 1940s centers on the extent to which the Second World War produced a political consensus in Britain. In *The Road to 1945,* Paul Addison argues that Britons' common wartime experience led to overwhelming support for the Labour Party's socialist platform in 1945.[1] Surprisingly, when the Conservatives regained

[1] Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London: Cape, 1975).

power in 1951, they retained most of the socialist programs Labour enacted during its tenure; proponents of Addison's view see this as an indication of consensus among Britain's political parties. Under this interpretation, Conservative and Labour ideologies converged during the war so that the series of governments after the war differed little from one another in both their achievements and philosophies. Furthermore, because Britain had a democratically elected parliament, this political consensus reflected, according to Addison, a consensus within public opinion. More recently, historians such as Rodney Lowe and Steven Fielding have questioned the validity of this view. They argue that British opinion during this period was not homogenous, but instead that Labour's landslide victory reflected a vague desire among a small majority to elect a new government.[2]

Whether or not a "consensus" is a valid lens through which to view 1945, Paul Addison correctly identifies a connection between the experience of World War II and the politics that emerged at its conclusion. Regardless of political background, almost everyone in Britain agreed that winning the war would be good. Therefore as long as most Britons believed that the ABCA would contribute to victory, they could agree that it was a worthy scheme. Only after establishing this foundation could observers build upon it with their own political ideologies. Surprisingly, these observers from diverse political persuasions provided compatible justifications for the ABCA's merit. Beyond merely helping the war effort, observers agreed that the ABCA would, for instance, help create a more enlightened version of democracy in Britain. For the ABCA, agreement over a small issue like the program's impact on the war effort proved strong enough to bridge ideological divides over larger issues.

This analysis of the ABCA can help us better understand political consensus formation in Britain. The convergence of public opinion on many issues during World War II which Paul Addison and others have identified did not magically appear. Nor, for the ABCA at least, did it arise out of profound agreements on the fundamental structure of society. Observers agreed that the ABCA was satisfactory on one

[2] Rodney Lowe, "The Second World War, Consensus, and the Foundation of the Welfare State," *Twentieth Century British History* 1, no. 2 (1990): 152-182; Steven Fielding, "The Second World War and Popular Radicalism: The Significance of the 'Movement Away from Party,'" *History* 80, no. 258 (1995): 38-58.

level and subsequently projected their own interpretations of its merits on other levels. This analysis suggests that observers made up their minds about the ABCA's value before they reasoned through its merits and shortcomings. This causality—of justifying the existence of the scheme only after acknowledging that it was beneficial—is the opposite of how rational thought is typically conceived. The model here assumes that contemporaries either agreed that the ABCA aided the war effort or did not agree, but does not explain how they reached that point in the first place. This paper offers evidence of consensus formation but does not attempt to explain the cause of consensus formation.

Instead, this paper shows how agreement on one aspect of a policy—the ABCA—evolved into different yet compatible justifications for that policy's more abstract implications. Retracing the ideological footprints of public opinion on the ABCA shows that when people agree on the value of a policy, their root justifications of it tend towards something general and ideologically inclusive. Ultimately, this analysis questions the definition of consensus and prior approaches to understanding it. Consensus does not imply a convergence of ideologies, as Addison suggests, but rather an increase in their compatibility with one another on specific concrete issues. Ideological divisions did not change during World War II; the way in which they fit together concerning specific policies did.

At the beginning of World War II, most soldiers had little exposure to army education. The only sources of non-military lectures until 1941 were the Army Educational Corps (AEC), which sent civilian experts on regular army tours to lecture, and various Regional Committees, which outsourced education to local institutions in England but could only provide lectures to troops stationed nearby. No lectures from the AEC or Regional Committees were compulsory, and soldiers could often only obtain their services upon request from a commanding officer. Demand for a new program ballooned in 1941 as news spread of low morale among the troops. The war with the Germans was dragging on without hope of a boost from American involvement. At the same time, the army was having trouble meeting the educational demands of its more inquisitive soldiers. To solve the problem, the War Office enlisted the help of W. E. Williams, an

educationist and director at Penguin Books, to develop a new program. After surveying several barracks, Williams reported to General Willans, the Director-General of Welfare and Education, with ideas for a mass army education scheme that would reach as many soldiers as possible. In May, Willans drafted a proposal for compulsory, officer-guided discussion groups which would meet during soldiers' normal training hours. On June 17, the Army Council approved Williams and Willans's scheme, thus creating the Army Bureau of Current Affairs.[3] The ABCA distributed a weekly pamphlet to every junior regimental officer in the army as material for the basis of discussion with his troops. Williams was responsible for the content of two alternating pamphlets, *War* and *Current Affairs*. Sessions lasted for one hour and typically began with an officer's overview, in lecture form, of that week's pamphlet and were followed by a discussion.

The ABCA had several advantages over the AEC and Regional Committees. Its discussions centered on current events, which tended to arouse more interest in the soldiers than "arithmetic" and "book-keeping," as C. E. M. Joad characterized AEC lectures.[4] ABCA sessions were also compulsory. Ostensibly, every soldier would spend at least one hour a week learning and discussing current affairs. And because the sessions replaced ordinary training time instead of soldiers' leisure time, the ABCA overcame some natural antagonism towards education among the troops.[5] Finally, soldiers could now spend an hour a week discussing politics with their platoon or company commanders as equals. Many thus saw the ABCA as a unique opportunity for privates to bond with their commanders.[6]

The ABCA was not universally embraced. The prospect of soldiers discussing controversial political issues in the middle of a war frightened many traditionalists, and after the war, Conservatives blamed the ABCA for introducing a left-wing bias into the troops that led to Labour's 1945

[3] S. P. Mackenzie, *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizenship Education in the British Army, 1914-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 89-92.

[4] C. E. M. Joad, "Army Education—The Case for Compulsion," *The New Statesman and Nation* 22, no. 544 (July 1941): 78-79.

[5] E. Moore Darling, "Adult Education," *National Review* 126, no. 757 (March 1946): 232; Mass Observation, File Report 948, "ABCA," 1.

[6] Major Bonamy Dobree, "ABCA Gets Going," *The Spectator*, January 16, 1942.

election victory.[7] Contemporaries also lamented the ABCA's practical deficiencies. Because the ABCA depended so heavily on the army's junior officers, soldiers' experiences varied depending on the leadership of their superiors. For example, some commanders never implemented ABCA discussions in their platoons, and others were unqualified for moderating intellectual conversations.[8] Steven Fielding estimates that in England, only about sixty percent of units actually conducted their sessions, while that figure is far smaller for troops stationed abroad.[9]

Perhaps the greatest ABCA controversy during the war occurred at the end of 1942 when Secretary of State for War P. J. Grigg pulled a *Current Affairs* pamphlet on the Beveridge Report. Published earlier in the year, the Beveridge Report proposed a welfare state for Britain, advocating socialized medicine, a large increase in state pensions, and national insurance policies. The dense government report was immensely popular and eventually became a national best-seller. By the end of 1942, public debate over the plan had polarized the nation. When Grigg, a Conservative MP whose party historically opposed socialist policies like Beveridge's, cancelled ABCA lectures on the Report, many observers cried foul. Grigg officially recalled the pamphlet because he felt soldiers should not discuss topics of "possible political controversy," arguing that a government department should not implicitly support anything which Parliament had yet to discuss.[10] Suspicions remained, however, that Grigg pulled the pamphlet because he personally disagreed with Beveridge's ideas.[11]

Despite the controversy ABCA generated, most periodicals held it in high regard during the war. Even the right-leaning *Spectator* remained favorable to the ABCA. Critics of the program tended to be Conservative members of the government and older career officers

[7] See Mackenzie, *Politics and Military Morale,* chapters 5-8.

[8] Mass Observation, File Report 948, "ABCA" and File Report 963, "ABCA Scheme."

[9] Steven Fielding, et. al, *'England Arise!': The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 28.

[10] "War-Office and Beveridge Plan," *The Spectator*, January 8 1943; Harold Nicolson, "Marginal Comment," *The Spectator*, January 22, 1943.

[11] Ibid.

entrenched in the military's hierarchy.[12] After the 1945 general election, however, the Conservative party at large derided the ABCA as a catalyst for soldiers voting overwhelmingly for Labour.[13] Because much of the historiography of the ABCA focuses on the scheme's role in Labour's landslide, one might easily assume that the scheme had always sparked debates in the press about its virtues.[14] In reality, the debate over the ABCA during the war did not question the essential value of the program but instead centered on how to improve it.

In a July 1941 editorial note, *The New Statesman and Nation*, a left-wing magazine, praised General Willans for realizing "the force of Cromwell's comment that the citizen-soldier is one who 'knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows.'"[15] Rhetoric comparing the ABCA to Cromwell's New Model Army filled press reports during World War II. This marked a significant departure from Churchill's policy of dealing only with winning the war until the war was won. Instead of looking at the army merely as a tool for ending the war, observers began to see the army as a large segment of the British population that would have to return to normal life once peace arrived. Members of the army were no longer just soldiers. They were now "citizen-soldiers." This also marked a departure from the ostensible goal of army education to alleviate boredom and boost morale. As citizen-soldiers, Her Majesty's Forces deserved "to awaken…to the magnitude and complexity of what is going on, so that the men can better understand the value of the seemingly insignificant part each

[12] See Mackenzie, *Politics and Military Morale*, chapters 5-8. Most of the resistance to the ABCA during the war came not from the press, but rather from figures like Churchill, Grigg, and Under-Secretary of State for War, Lord Croft.

[13] B. S. Townroe, "Some Lessons of the Election," *National Review* 125, no. 751 (September 1945): 210; also see Mackenzie, *Politics and Military Morale*, chapter 8, especially 175-6.

[14] Most of the prominent papers on the ABCA focus on this discussion; e.g., Penny Summerfield, "Education and Politics in the British Armed Forces in the Second World War," *International Review of Social History* 26 (1981): 133-158; J. A. Crang, "Politics on Parade: Army Education and the 1945 General Election," *History* 81, no. 262 (2007): 215-227; T. Mason and P. Thompson, "'Reflections on a Revolution?' The political mood in wartime Britain," in *The Attlee Years*, ed. N. Tiratsoo (London: Continuum International Publishing, 1991), 54-70.

[15] "Army Education—The Case for Compulsion," *The New Statesman and Nation* 22, no. 544 (1941): 78.

one is playing."[16] From this perspective, soldiers had the privilege to be informed and the "right to discuss."[17] In short, the ABCA's purpose was to enlighten; higher morale was a nice corollary.

Although New Model Army allusions dominated the press, authors rarely agreed on precisely how the ABCA treated soldiers as citizens. Rather, their different conceptions of citizenship and soldiery colored their praise for the ABCA. Writing for the ultra-conservative *National Review*, E. Moore Darling described as significant that "in the Army [soldiers] dealt with a community."[18] For Darling, community was a prerequisite for a citizen's enlightenment. Thus, the important paradigm shift in the ABCA was its emphasis on education through communal discussion rather than passive lecture. In an article in the right-wing *Spectator*, however, Bonamy Dobree argued that the ABCA was "creating a machine which is to be more effective than the machines the Germans have created…a mental P.T. [physical training] to run parallel with the new P.T. now being practiced in the army."[19] From this perspective, the ABCA created a new New Model Army by offering parallel improvements to soldiers through mental and physical exercises. *The Times*, in this period a center-left paper, urged its readers to admire that the ABCA asked soldiers to think about the kind of world to which they would return after the war.[20] Finally, *The New Statesman and Nation* argued that if the state could force young men to fight for it, the least it could do in return was make them better men. As its author C. E. M. Joad wrote, "in the course of training them compulsorily…to achieve efficiency in the art of killing, it should accept the responsibility of training them compulsorily to achieve efficiency in the art of living."[21]

These four articles from different periodicals all supported the ABCA as a scheme that fostered a new understanding of the relationship between the soldier and the citizen. Though in isolation the authors' ultimate justifications of the ABCA seem hardly related, taken together, they reveal a consistent ideological framework upon which the authors drew to form conclusions about their world. This

[16] Bonamy Dobree, "ABCA Gets Going," *The Spectator,* January 16, 1942.
[17] J. Mackay-Mure, "The Soldier as Citizen," *The Spectator,* January 8, 1943.
[18] E. Moore Darling, "Adult Education," 233.
[19] Dobree, "ABCA Gets Going."
[20] "Preparation for Civvy Street," *The Times*, October 9, 1944.
[21] "Army Education—The Case for Compulsion."

framework becomes more apparent when one considers each article as a distinct rhetorical strand of a larger ideology. The Darling article established community as the foundation for citizenship. Because army life created a close-knit community, the army should have trained soldiers as citizens, not just fighting machines. Doing so, according to Dobree's article, also enhanced the military machine because, using Darling's framework, soldiers who shared a sense of community with one another would fight better than those who did not. Joad also made an analogy between the army's traditional training methods and his suggestions for educational training, but he explained the converse of Dobree's phenomenon relating soldiers and community. While Dobree suggested that citizenship education led to improved fighting efficiency, Joad recognized that improved fighting efficiency also necessitated more citizenship education. The *Times* article, then, established the content of the citizenship education: lectures prepared soldiers for civilian life by teaching them the skills they needed to become effective members of their communities once they returned home.

Despite the consistent thread that unites these four articles, the authors expressed four distinct ideas about citizenship, which yielded four different rationales for the ABCA. Similarly, different conceptions of democracy colored observers' justifications for the scheme. In "The Soldier as Citizen," J. Mackay-Mure argued that the public should recognize that soldiers have political allegiances to institutions like the Church and trade unions. For Mackay-Mure, these allegiances formed the cornerstone of British democracy. He argued that these organizations fostered representative democracy by investing power in their leaders, who in turn responded to "the minds of their members as a *whole*." As part of these organizations, soldiers needed to express their own views on any given issue to preserve the representational power of these organizations. Citizens uneducated in current affairs would elect unrepresentative leaders, thereby making Britain less democratic.[22]

Other *Spectator* articles held different views of how the ABCA made Britain a more democratic society. Stephen Spender wrote that "no amount of planning and reconstruction could have done much good to the sluggish pre-war mentality" because "the essential preliminary to any reconstruction in a democracy is that the people themselves should

[22] *The Spectator*, January 8, 1943.

be capable of…letting a new conception of democracy be realized in their lives."[23] For Spender, only citizens' willingness to let democracy evolve to meet new challenges allowed the political system to reach its full potential, and the ABCA's greatest virtue was its role in opening soldiers' minds to new ideas. Another *Spectator* article linked the pre-war mentality that Spender discussed to the post-World War I mentality that many Britons feared would return after World War II. The author of the article argued that the ABCA's 1944 pamphlet, "Brush up for Civvy-Street" was an attempt to anticipate the problems that plagued Britain after its last war as it prepared soldiers for demobilization from the current conflict.[24] For a British reader in 1944, however, the reference to World War I held far more significance than a failure of demobilization. Britons remembered 1918 as a time when soldiers returned to unemployment and poverty instead of the homes fit for heroes they expected. This article thus implied that the ABCA was a step towards ensuring that, this time, soldiers would return to a better home than the one they had left.

Authors in *The New Statesman and Nation* understood the ABCA's role in preparing soldiers for the postwar world slightly differently than their counterparts from *The Spectator*. Also recalling 1918, articles in *The New Statesman and Nation* viewed army education as a means to prepare soldiers for a tough life after the war even as it instilled in them the ambition to lobby for a better existence.[25] Finally, articles in *Army Quarterly*, a military publication, dealt explicitly with the relationship between army education and reconstruction. Although the publication had warned against planning for reconstruction before winning the war in 1943, its authors later found value in teaching "men to approach post-war problems coolly, to weigh evidence and objections, and to try to arrive at a logical conclusion."[26] This, according to *Army Quarterly* editors, was precisely the mission of the ABCA. The ABCA instilled in the troops "a probing after facts and a desire to play a part in the making of the new world after they have finished their present job." Additionally, soldiers "may well play an important part in the post-

[23] "Citizenship and C.D."

[24] "Education in the Army," *The Spectator*, October 13, 1944.

[25] "Army Education—The Case for Compulsion," 79.

[26] Col. A. White, "Reconstruction in the Army. II. Education's Part," *Army Quarterly* 45 (February 1943): 225.

war period," contrary to the national experience after World War I.[27] *Army Quarterly* went even further when it suggested that the ABCA was "playing a bigger part in moulding post-war British opinion than, perhaps, even its most ardent supporters imagine."[28]

As with discussions over the ABCA's merits as a citizenship education scheme, observers' thoughts on the future of British democracy provided separate tenets of a larger conceptual framework. Mackay-Mure's article offered a definition of British democracy based on representation through private political organizations. He argued that this political system only works when the members of organizations are able to form their own opinions. This construction explains Spender's argument about the necessity of an open mind in a democratic society: if the constituents of political organizations such as trade unions were consistently averse to change, their leaders would be unwilling to press for new policies that might benefit the nation. The last *Spectator* articles claimed that this aversion to change is precisely what existed at the end of World War I. The ABCA, however, was making strides in opening men's minds. According to *The New Statesman and Nation,* it prepared them to cope with potential post-war problems, while simultaneously preparing them to tackle those problems. *Army Quarterly* complicated this view when it acclaimed the ABCA for not only giving soldiers the skills to opine on difficult social issues, but the interest to do so as well.

This ideological quilt grew out of the discussion of citizenship. The *Times's* article on the ABCA's demobilization projects claimed that the idea of the soldier as part of a larger community of citizens, placed temporarily under the charge of the state, meant that soldiers needed to play an active role in reshaping the state after the war in order to accommodate their needs. Without education, however, citizens would not have the tools they needed to play that active role effectively. In order to ensure its own survival, then, the state needed to teach those under its charge how to be effective citizens once the state relinquished its responsibility over them. As Joad's article suggested, the state considered children younger than fifteen to be under its charge and educated them

[27] "Editorial," *Army Quarterly* 48 (April 1944): 2.

[28] "Current Affairs: ABCA in Retrospect," *Army Quarterly* 48 (April 1944): 57.

accordingly. It was thus only natural that the same principle be applied to the army, whose members certainly fell under the state's charge and were not much older than citizens subject to compulsory education.[29] The ABCA, according to contemporary observers, helped soldiers increase their awareness of current events, transforming them into model citizens and paving the road to reinvigorating British democracy after the war.

Practical justifications of the ABCA abounded with discussions of morale. One such justification, in Darling's article in the ultra right-wing *National Review,* helps explain the convergence of agreement over the ABCA. In "Adult Education," Darling praised the ABCA primarily because it prevented troops from becoming "browned off," or bored.[30] Relieving boredom and boosting morale, after all, were the initial objectives of the ABCA, and they presented little controversy for observers on the right and on the left. A letter to *The Spectator* even proposed that the ABCA could be a long-run money-saving scheme that operated by "the reduction of boredom and frustration, those chief causes of crime and anti-social behavior."[31]

Moreover, the troops' own complaints of boredom made some observers more inclined to focus on the uncontroversial morale-boosting aspect of the ABCA. Letters to *The Spectator* from soldiers and reports from the anthropological survey group, Mass Observation, show that many soldiers wanted some form of enlightened entertainment to help them cope with the boredom.[32] In 1942 a debate erupted in *The Spectator* over the quality of the army's entertainment schemes after "Private Soldier" wrote a letter deriding the lack of "lectures to make men understand that there are higher and better ideals in life than jazz and legs."[33] By shifting the debate over army education to questions of morale and culture, complaints such as "Private Soldier's" created the most accessible platform upon which consensus over the ABCA emerged.

[29] "Army Education—The Case for Compulsion," 79.

[30] Darling, "Adult Education," 232.

[31] R. Aris, "Army Education," *The Spectator*, November 8, 1946.

[32] Corporal, "War Office, ABCA and Beveridge"; Mass Observation, File Report 963, "ABCA Scheme," November 1941, 4; Mass Observation, File Report 948, "ABCA," November 1941, 1.

[33] 'Private Soldier,' "Entertaining the Army," *The Spectator,* March 6, 1942.

A brief examination of the way this consensus unraveled after 1945 helps clarify how it formed during the war. With the war over, the military benefits upon which all could agree were no longer as urgent, and the ABCA quickly became a scapegoat for politicians on both ends of the political spectrum who felt threatened by Labour's ascendancy. Gilbert Hall, an Education Officer who lost a 1943 by-election under the socialist Common Wealth Party's banner, complained that the ABCA was just a tool for the government to disseminate propaganda to the troops under the guise of pseudo-democratic discussions.[34] Similarly, many Conservatives argued after 1945 that socialists ran the army education schemes.[35] Observers with different politics will interpret the same set of events differently. Once they lost their basis for agreement, political rivals reverted to taking opposite sides of the ABCA debate. The only reason their interpretations tended towards compatibility before 1945 was that the war gave the ABCA a purpose whose value few could doubt.

In reframing the historiographical debate about the convergence of Britain's two main political ideologies, this analysis engaged with periodicals that spanned the dominant political spectrum of the period. Of course, British public opinion extended beyond the musings of mainstream pundits and opinionated soldiers. Opinions from British periodicals like *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman and Nation*, which were firmly established in the Conservative-Labour political framework, provide a tool to show how distinct ideologies became compatible during World War II on a circumscribed policy issue like the ABCA. In the press, especially within the same periodical, different authors often parroted each others' arguments, so it may seem obvious that writers' opinions on the ABCA converged. Perhaps surprisingly, most of the opinions in this paper expressed different justifications for the ABCA, yet those distinct justifications fit into a consistent ideological framework. This suggests that the observed convergence of opinion was more than just a by-product of the publishing process.

In public discussions of the ABCA during World War II, most agreed that the education program was necessary to reverse the tide

[34] Gilbert Hall, *The Cairo Forces Parliament* (London: Smith, 1945), 12.
[35] For example, B. S. Townroe, "Some Lessons of the Election," 210-12.

of the war by boosting British morale. As a longer-term scheme, the program was understood as an attempt to create an army of citizen-soldiers who would one day reshape the face of British democracy and make the world a better place. Underneath these broad declarations, few agreed on what this meant or on how the ABCA would achieve it. This untraditional vision of consensus that emerged over a crucial policy decision demonstrates that a tiny acorn of accord can yield a wide-reaching consensus based purely on perceptions.

Mapping the City One Rap at a Time: Place and Hip Hop in Minneapolis, Minnesota

Emma O'Brien

It is a summer Sunday night, but First Avenue's main room is crowded. Muja Messiah, a Minneapolis rapper who has been called the "proudest to be from Minneapolis," is releasing his first full-length album.[1] MCs I Self Devine and Brother Ali, two of the Twin Cities' most successful rappers, have been hyping the audience between acts, including local rap stars like M.Anifest and Maria Isa. Brother Ali speaks of the support, both financial and emotional, that is essential to maintain a local scene. Though he does not mention them here, his words bring to mind the lyrics of his song "Pay Back": "You love this human expression and they gave you that, and so the least y'all can do is try to pay 'em back." Muja Messiah has the support of the entire building tonight—the big name rappers who have toured the world and come home to Minneapolis, the members of his group Raw Villa who continue to have his back, and the men and women of all colors who have come to have a good time with one of the Twin Cities' most dynamic entertainers. As Muja Messiah takes the stage, the crowd is ready for him. Clad in a shirt that spells his own name across his chest, Muja's stage presence suggests that he takes his role as a "Messiah" seriously and is prepared to take Twin Cities hip hop to a higher level while keeping it uniquely Minnesota with songs like "U Betcha". Muja and his crew rap the acronym they have coined for Minneapolis, "MPLS—Money, Paper, Loot, Scrilla" (which Muja has proudly tattooed across his neck) and something I have never before witnessed in Minneapolis occurs. Someone in the front row begins to toss up fistfuls of cash. As the bills rain down on the audience like a

[1] I Self Devine, interview by author, Minneapolis, MN, April 18, 2008.

Lil Wayne video, I pocket forty dollars, thinking that, in a truly healthy rap scene, the payback goes both ways—rappers and city in a symbiotic relationship.

In any good narrative, authors and rap musicians alike agree, details are essential. Rap music is the ultimate urban narrative, speaking for the streets and for the oppressed, marginalized voices seldom heard. Rap music demands to be turned up, to be pumped loud until it is felt deep in the heart, vibrating through the very streets themselves until all can hear its story. Rap lyrics can, of course, paint an exaggerated or over-negative picture of the city, like the blinged-out ghetto fabulous or descriptions of glorified gang culture in the hood. But hip hop has become inseparable from the inner city experience and even changed the very urban fabric it arose from, creating identities for places dismissed by outsiders. Words can transform a song into a map, a geographical mythology, holding the archival memory of a place at a certain time.

This is the story of one such place. It is a story that has been spat and rhymed, painted and etched, spun and scratched, beat and danced across and into the streets of a city. Local hip hop has been writing and telling the story of neighborhoods in Minneapolis, Minnesota for the past two and a half decades. By analyzing rap lyrics and the words of local hip hop participants, this paper will examine the geographical history of the Minneapolis hip hop culture, paying close attention to the ways in which place and hip hop intersect.

Hip Hop Is Where It's At

Hip hop has from its inception been heavily place-based. "Hip hop," a name taken from the scat-like lyrics of one of the first recorded rap songs, "Rapper's Delight," has been applied to a culture defined by four distinct elements.[2] These four elements include graffiti art, break-dancing, DJing, and rapping, though hip hop has since grown to include additional cultural dimensions such as fashion and language, encompassing an entire way of life. The culture that became hip hop was born in a seven-mile ghetto in the South Bronx, New York in the middle of the 1970s. Twin Cities rapper I Self Devine has an interesting explanation for why New York was the perfect birthplace. "Hip hop had

[2] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005).

to start where there was water," he says, citing the necessity of the port in bringing in new ideas and cultures.[3] Hip hop's founding generation was influenced equally by the lively styles and rhythms transplanted by Jamaican and Puerto Rican immigrants and the devastating conditions of the South Bronx, which many blamed on the destructive urban planning of Robert Moses, specifically the Cross Bronx Expressway, which tore apart the neighborhood.[4] Hip hop's first participants sought to assert their importance in a city that persistently ignored and oppressed their voices. These marginalized, disenfranchised youth took their new modes of expression and went All-City, covering buildings and trains with painted declarations of their self-worth, turning streets and parks into dance halls, and firing up sound systems loud enough to make the air tremble with excitement. The message on the streets was clear: hip hop is where it's at. And where it was at was the Bronx, where very little had ever been "at" before. Hip hop was giving the residents of this community a sense of place and pride in their neighborhood for the first time.

Arising out of an era when gangs were asserting their territorial influence over New York's neighborhoods, and residents were segregated around the city by class and race, hip hop was born into a community where place meant everything. Grandmaster Flash, a pioneer from the early New York scene, describes the ways in which the founding fathers of hip hop, like DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and himself, held influence over the streets as being very similar to the gangs. "We had territories," he says, explaining, "Kool Herc had the West Side. Bam had Bronx River… Myself, my area was like 138 Street, Cypress Avenue, up to Gun Hill, so that we all had our territories and we all had to respect each other."[5] Hip hop, however, unlike gang culture, didn't limit itself to such narrow spatial boundaries. Scenes began to unite as these neighborhoods realized their commonalities and the ultimate goal became partying and getting down together.

Hip hop could not be confined to the South Bronx for long. The "journey from the seven-mile world to Planet Rock", as hip hop historian Jeff Chang describes it, was inevitable, and hip hop began to

[3] I Self Devine, interview with author, Minneapolis, MN, March 11, 2008.

[4] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop.*

[5] Murray Forman, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 69.

broaden its geographical influence in 1979 when the first rap album was released.[6] The Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" was "universal and new, not local and insular… tailor made to travel, to be perfectly accessible to folks who had never heard of rap or hip hop or the South Bronx."[7] Indeed, *Sugarhill Gang* was a popular sell in Twin Cities record stores. The transfer of the musical genre from park jams to record stores, and eventually to MTV, propelled hip hop first across the Unite States to the West Coast, and then across national and continental boundaries until hip hop was a global phenomenon. These waves of expansion came together over the Midwest, with both West Coast and East Coast styles shaping hip hop in Minnesota.

"This life is all I got"[8]

As hip hop went global and influences blended to create new styles, the culture retained its closeness to the street. Murray Forman argues that this "extreme local" is unique to hip hop. According to Forman:

> Rap's lyrical constructions commonly display a pronounced emphasis on place and locality. Whereas blues, rock, and R&B have traditionally cited regions or cities… contemporary rap is even more specific, with explicit references to particular streets, boulevards and neighborhoods, telephone area codes, postal service zip codes, or other sociospatial information.[9]

There are three main reasons for the higher volume of references to specific places in hip hop than in other forms of music. As Kanser MC Big Zach explains, "Hip hop is way more personal," allowing the author to be autobiographical and speak about the places that are important to his or her life.[10] "Other styles of music also have fewer words," Big Zach of Minneapolis continues, explaining that because

[6] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, 127.
[7] Ibid., 132.
[8] Mike Mictlan & Lazerbeak, "L.A. Raiders Hat," *Hand Over Fist* (Doomtree Records, 2008).
[9] Murray Forman, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002), xvii.
[10] Big Zach, interview by author, Minneapolis, MN, April 2, 2008.

the format of rock or pop songs requires them to have a recognizable chorus and verses, there is less freedom to speak about just anything.[11] Hip hop allows the artistic creativity to fill a space with words, as many as one can spit onto a single track. Rapper therefore have more liberty to describe their locality in a verbose manner. A third reason for this is that in the era before hip hop recordings, and even in the arena of battle rapping today, freestyling required rappers to quickly fire rhymes at their opponent or audience. References to home and familiar areas around one's city are easy to come up with off the top of one's head and include in a freestyle. In a culture whose mantra is "keep it real" and street credibility is everything, claiming allegiance to a certain place is a crucial component of ghetto credibility.

I Self Devine recalls the first time he traveled to New York City and recognized familiar places from references in the rap music he listened to. "Dana Dane had a song that was called Delancy Street. Or Ultra Magnetic MCs would talk about Canal Street, or you would hear Jeru (The Damaja) talking about Grand Army Plaza…" I Self says, noting that these lyrics made him feel like he knew New York though he had never been there before.[12] Likewise, rap on the West Coast is heavily laced with place-based lyrics. "Everybody knows the streets of Compton," (from songs by NWA and associated West Coast groups) I Self adds.[13] "Hip hop is a map... It is a narrative of those places and people who've never been there can hear it and understand something about that place."[14]

There is a certain shared identity that can come from the mention of a specific place in a song. Shout-outs to geographical locations, such as "West Coast represent!" or "North Side put your hands in the air!" are a way to bring rapper and audience together over a shared sense of place and a mutual identity as brothers and sisters from the same locales. Commonality might also come from having survived the urban strife together, or being a minority, as was initially the case in the neighborhoods where hip hop was most important. I Self Devine sees songs about place as giving the underrepresented "a sense of pride and

[11] Ibid.
[12] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.
[13] I Self Devine, interview, March 11, 2008.
[14] Ibid.

allegiance to where they are coming from and where they live."[15] That pride, exhibited by rappers and recognized by their listeners, is a way of taking ownership over the city, of calling it one's own.

Once upon a time in Minneapolis

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, while hip hop was taking over the streets of New York City and beginning to spread across the U.S. to the West Coast, Minneapolis was for the most part unaware of the trend. While national radio played "Rapper's Delight" and theaters ran Charlie Ahearn's *Wildstyle*, the first full-length feature which combined all the elements of hip hop into one film, Prince and other pop-funk acts defined the Minnesota sound. Murray Forman, in a discussion of regional musical styles, uses the specific term "Minneapolis funk" to describe Prince, The Time, and Jimmy Jam's flavor.[16] Because funk was so popular and hip hop remained relatively unheard of in Minneapolis, many local rappers claim that "Prince wasn't really doing anything for the hip-hop scene."[17] Muja Messiah argues differently. Prince's music and the film *Purple Rain* drew people up to Minnesota who wanted to take part in the Twin Cities' well-respected music scene, he maintains. "People don't give Prince and them the credit for having started the scene in Minnesota. But he played a huge role in taking it from eighty-five… and having break-dancing crews and having DJs and having MCs… Prince ain't hip hop but he is hip hop, you know?"[18] The strong funk scene in Minneapolis proved to be a major influence on the formation of a local rap following, as funk would provide the soundtrack for the first break-dancers and the DJs who spun for them.

"Minneapple transplant"[19]

In 1981, Travis Lee, a Brooklyn, New York native, came to Minneapolis at the age of 17 to attend the University of Minnesota and follow

[15] I Self Devine, interview by author, March 11, 2008.

[16] Murray Forman, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 175.

[17] Peter S. Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible: The Untold Story of Local Hip Hop, 1981-1996," Minneapolis *City Pages*, August 18, 2004.

[18] Muja Messiah, interview by telephone by author, April 15, 2008.

[19] P.O.S., "Crispin Glover," *P.O.S. Is Ruining My Life 12" Single* (Doomtree Records, 2005).

his dream of making music. The aspiring rapper was none too pleased with the lack of hip hop going on in Minneapolis. "I thought I was in a time warp when I first arrived," Lee told Peter Scholtes of *City Pages*. "New York was maybe 10 years ahead."[20] Lee soon realized that if he wanted to have hip hop in Minnesota, he would have to bring it here himself. Under the stage name DJ Travitron, Lee began traveling around campus with his equipment and playing at parties. Minneapolitans were not prepared for his style. "I'd start scratching and people would be like, 'what the hell are you doing?!' Cause that was exactly what you *weren't* supposed to do to a record!"[21] The Socialites, Lee's student group, hosted the first All High School Throwdown in 1981 at Coffman Union's Great Hall, an event where those present got their first taste of hip hop ever. "A lot of people saw their first rap or scratch routine at Coffman Union in 1981," Lee boasts.[22] This event was monumental for the future of the Twin Cities hip hop scene; it exposed many people to the new lifestyle and established a sense of excitement surrounding hip hop. Lee remarks on the importance of the University of Minnesota as a central location, uniting people from St. Paul, Minneapolis, and the suburbs into one big party. Travitron's party scope was not limited to the University of Minnesota, however. He began to branch out into North Minneapolis, hosting house parties, park jams, and opening for larger acts.

Lee introduced new forms of music performance to Minneapolis. Jamaican DJ Kool Herc had revolutionized the outdoor park jam in New York City by taking the beat-heavy instrumental breaks on funk records and turning them into the focus of the party. Jeff Chang writes, "Herc began to work two copies of the same record, back-cueing a record to the beginning of the break as the other record reached the end, extending a five-second breakdown into a five-minute loop of fury."[23] The break was the part of the song when everyone would get down and dance, the part of the song where the absence of lyrics and the overpowering rhythm of the drums let you lose yourself. With the break extended, one could dance like that all night. Kids started referring to themselves as b-boys and b-girls, creating new styles of

[20] Scholtes, "One Nation: Invisible."
[21] Travis Lee, interview by telephone by author, February 26, 2008.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, 79.

dance to fill the break-beat. Lee had witnessed these so-called break-dancers firsthand, and kept that vision in his mind as he continued spinning records around Minneapolis. Local dancing styles began to change, and soon Lee was leading the International Breakers, a Twin Cities break-dance crew who battled the famous New York City Breakers at the downtown Minneapolis venue First Avenue in 1984.[24]

Local musicians quickly embraced the new style. Truth Maze, born William Harris on the North Side of Minneapolis, first witnessed break-dancing in the form of popping and locking at Minneapolis's North Commons Park in the summer of 1980. "He was popping to a group called the S.O.S. Band," Truth recalls of the dancer. "I mean, I lost my mind and I ran back home. I couldn't find the words to tell my mom what I had saw, but I knew I wanted to be around that vibe. I wanted to be in that feeling. I wanted to know what *that* was."[25] As a rapper, spoken word artist, and vocal percussionist, as well as original member of local rap group the I.R.M. Crew, Truth Maze is regarded by many as another early pioneer of Minnesota's hip hop scene. Along with Travis Lee, Truth, who was known as B-Fresh in his younger years, can take credit for elevating hip hop and encouraging its growth around the city.

The pioneers holding together Minneapolis's young hip hop community lived, for the most part, in North Minneapolis. Along with Travis Lee and Truth Maze, those who planted the early seeds of hip hop on the North Side include Kel C, who kicked off his rapping career at age 15 in a North Commons Park talent show, and Kyle Ray the Super DJ, a founder of KMOJ radio and one of many contenders to the claim of first Minnesota rap album.[26] "More people in concentration did it on the North Side… Anyone that Minneapolis or Minnesota was influenced by happened to live on the North Side," explains rapper I Self Devine about these formative years.[27] This connection between the North Side and the budding hip hop scene was directly related to the geography of race around Minneapolis.

[24] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[25] Truth Maze, interview by author, Minneapolis, MN, May 8, 2008.
[26] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[27] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.

"Divided by Mississippi at the center of the west"[28]

The city of Minneapolis sits in the southeastern corner of Minnesota, a city divided by the snaking Mississippi River and a mess of highways. Minneapolis is broken into three main residential districts: Northeast, South Side, and North Side. Northeast was the original site of the city, located on the East Bank of the Mississippi River just north of what would become downtown Minneapolis. Northeast Minneapolis, now separated from the city center, has maintained more of a small town feel. The massive South Side emanates south from downtown, stretching as far east as the river and as far west as the city limits. Though this district becomes increasingly suburban as it reaches further south, the South Side has benefited from a close physical connection to downtown and has maintained a more metropolitan feel in terms of density and diversity. Located northwest of downtown, the North Side is separated from the rest of the city by the river and the old industrial Warehouse District. This geographic isolation has contributed to the North Side's reputation as the "wrong side of town."

So often in urban history, neighborhoods with the so-called worst reputations tend to be those with the highest proportion of ethnic minorities and those lowest on the socioeconomic scale. Such is the case with North Minneapolis. In the 1950s and 1960s, freeway construction further divided the city, displacing a large African American community in St. Paul. As white residents moved to the growing suburbs, the population of North Minneapolis began to shift from predominantly Jewish to predominantly black. Minneapolis was a heavily segregated city, with ethnic enclaves sticking to their designated neighborhoods for decades, and as the housing stock deteriorated and businesses and services left the inner city, the North Side and its African-American residents became trapped in a downward spiral of neglect. But, as the saying goes, one man's trash is another man's treasure and while it may be true that "the ghetto is not fabulous," it did prove a fabulous setting for the introduction and development of hip hop in Minneapolis.[29]

[28] Allergik feat. M.anifest, "Self Worthy," *6th Annual Twin Cities Celebration of Hip Hop Compilation CD* (YO! The Movement, 2007).

[29] Mike Mictlan, "L.A. Raiders Hat," *Hand Over Fist* (Doomtree Records, 2008).

For Us, By Us

I Self Devine believes North Minneapolis was the breeding grounds for hip hop for a very clear reason. "At that time, hip hop was still owned and run by the African American community; it wasn't controlled by outside interests," I Self explains.[30] Hip hop, following the so-called FUBU model ("for us, by us"), was at its inception a black musical form like blues, jazz, rock n' roll, soul, and funk had been when they began. North Minneapolis by the 1980s was a predominantly black neighborhood, and still has a higher concentration of African Americans than other parts of the city.[31] Minneapolis has long been a place where "families replant themselves, looking for a better life, trying to get somewhere," and the North Side attracted many black families from across the nation.[32] It made sense that hip hop, the new voice of black urban youth, would come out of such a neighborhood.

The rappers who have been around since the early 1980s are quick to include two North Side institutions, the Riverview Supper Club and the headquarters of KMOJ radio, on their cognitive maps of Twin Cities hip hop during that period. "We cannot leave out the Riverview Supper Club. It no longer exits," Truth Maze emphasizes the restaurant and club that used to stand on the northwest bank of the Mississippi with a view of the river and the entire city skyline.[33] The story of the supper club is fraught with tragedy. Peter S. Scholtes writes in a *City Pages* article that "the club maintained and nurtured a sense of itself as a community foundation—the best face… of black Minneapolis."[34] The Riverview Supper Club, which was at the time of its closing the oldest club in Minnesota owned by African Americans and the only black club in Minneapolis, was a place for members of the black community to gather for conversation, dining, and, notably, music. It was said that Prince could occasionally be seen in the crowd, along with other local black celebrities like Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis.[35]

In the late 1990s, however, the club began to suffer from growing

[30] I Self Devine, interview, March 11, 2008.
[31] City of Minneapolis Census 2000 Information.
[32] Truth Maze, interview.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Peter S. Scholtes, "The Last Supper Club," Minneapolis *City Pages*, January 10, 2001.
[35] Ibid.

violent incidents in the restaurant and parking lot, leading to increased security concerns for owners and patrons. Some blamed the club's hip hop nights and the crowds they attracted, but hip hop had become just as central to the black community as the jazz and soul artists who also played at the club. "The hip hop crowd was huge—and necessary to keep the View financially afloat," Scholtes writes.[36] But the venue acquired an increasingly negative reputation, especially after a murder in the parking lot in 1998. The city also had other plans for the land the club inhabited, with urban development yet again pushing aside the black middle class. Despite the sad end for the Riverview Supper Club, it was nonetheless crucial for hip hop. The View was "very key to our localized North Side Minneapolis hip hop artists," Truth Maze stresses.[37]

Another bastion of black Minneapolis was KMOJ radio (89.9 FM), a station begun in a North Minneapolis public housing project in the midst of the post-Civil Rights Movement for "black self-determination."[38] The low-frequency station, which catered mostly to African American musical tastes, was the first local station to start paying attention to hip hop. Travis Lee, host of the Hip Hop Shop radio show on KMOJ in the middle of the 1980s, says the station was the first in the Twin Cities to play such national rap artists as Public Enemy and NWA.[39] The station also was the first to introduce hometown heroes I.R.M. Crew (Immortal Rap Masters), of which Truth Maze was a member, and Prince associate T.C. Ellis of "Twin Cities Rapp" authorship, who both claim to have put out the first rap record in the Twin Cities.[40] "If it wasn't for KMOJ, a lot of early artists wouldn't have gotten any exposure, they wouldn't have been able to perform out at festivals that were taking place in North Minneapolis," Truth Maze insists. "It really opened things up… it was an abundance of what we needed."[41]

KMOJ also took on the role of party promotion, and with Travis Lee at the helm, his parties were soon the most hopping in town. "Travitron was the godfather. If you had a party on the night Travitron

[36] Ibid.
[37] Truth Maze, interview.
[38] Keith Harris, "Station Break," Minneapolis *City Pages*, April 19, 2000.
[39] Travis Lee, interview.
[40] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[41] Truth Maze, interview.

had a party, then your party wasn't getting packed," DJ Disco T said in a *City Pages* interview.[42] "There's not a person in this city doing hip hop who wasn't influenced by that," Travis Lee states today about the Hip Hop Shop.[43] Though the show only lasted a few years, KMOJ DJs like Q Bear have, according to Truth Maze, still continued to support hip hop-related causes like spoken word.[44] KMOJ, as much a feature of the North Side as North Commons Park and the Riverview Supper Club have been, remains the only local radio station to have focused such heavy attention on hip hop that originates in the Twin Cities.

KMOJ radio could be heard across Minneapolis, of course, and the park jams going on in North Commons Park attracted more than simply North Side residents. South Side residents were also taking note, and throwing copycat park jams and b-boy battles on their side of town in places like McRae Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Powderhorn Park, and Phelps Field. "The parks were very key," insists Truth Maze. "You'd be kickin' it, you'd have your boombox, you'd be out in the park, you'd be trying your new dances."[45] South Side rappers I Self Devine[46] and Musab[47] remember another crucial venue in South Minneapolis: Bernadette's, a youth club at what is now the Uptown YWCA, operated by Prince's foster mother Bernadette Anderson.[48] South Side neighborhoods, which had benefited from greater investment than their North Side counterparts, had a wide variety of possible venues available, including libraries, clubs and bars, parks, and community centers.

During hip hop's early years in the Twin Cities, no one was out to make money off of the culture, it was simply about partying and getting down. "It was a fun time. The music was fun, the music was innocent," Travis Lee reminisces.[49] It was not about competition between the North and South Sides of the city, or St. Paul and Minneapolis, but more about coming together as one community over a shared love

[42] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[43] Travis Lee, interview.
[44] Truth Maze, interview.
[45] Ibid.
[46] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.
[47] Musab, interview, April 16, 2008.
[48] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[49] Travis Lee, interview.

for the music. Truth Maze has been called "the Afrika Bambaataa of Minneapolis," likening him to the Zulu Nation originator who worked against the gangs to bring hip hop heads together in peace across New York.[50] Minneapolis graffiti writer Peyton explains Truth Maze's role as "trying to get the whole hip-hop culture of Minneapolis united under one umbrella," to work in positive ways through hip hop.[51] By the middle of the 1980s, hip hop had found its place in the Twin Cities, through the work of pioneers like Truth Maze and Travitron and the support of local institutions like KMOJ, city parks, and a few major venues in both South and North Minneapolis. But this friendly cooperation would not last long.

"Gangstas don't dance"[52]

In 1989, Chaka Mkali moved up to Minnesota from South Central Los Angeles at the age of 16. Already having been deeply involved in hip hop for half his young life, Mkali was no stranger to the culture. He was also no stranger to gangs. Moving from Compton to Watts, he was "raised in the brutal streets during the gang and government-funded crack epidemic" of the Reagan era.[53] By the time Mkali, who would later perform under the name I Self Devine, came to Minneapolis, gangs and drugs were already here. Travis Lee recalls a massive increase in the number of gangs arriving in the Twin Cities around 1988, and the subsequent changes to the face of hip hop and neighborhood dynamics in the Twin Cities. Lee and I Self Devine both fault the film *Colors* for the introduction of gangs to Minnesota. "*Colors* brought gangs to where gangs never should have been, like the heart of the Midwest," I Self maintains.[54] Poor urban planning was equally to blame. "A lot of people don't know that when they were destroying a lot of those government homes and projects that they were giving out a lot of HUD vouchers to Minneapolis if they couldn't fit them in the suburbs of Chicago," I Self explains, adding that these transplanted Chicagoans brought gang culture with them, notably the Gangster Disciples, adding to the West

[50] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."

[51] Ibid.

[52] Muja Messiah, "Gangster Shit," *MPLS Massacre* (Black Corners, 2008).

[53] I Self Devine, website, http://www.iselfdevine.com/, accessed on March 10, 2008.

[54] I Self Devine, interview, March 11, 2008.

Coast gangs like the Crips and Bloods who had already established a presence in Minneapolis.[55]

The arrival of gangs and drugs changed the hip hop community. "I swear, it was like this," Truth Maze recalls in Peter Scholtes' "One Nation, Invisible," "One day you seen people break-dancing and kicking it and trying to be DJs and trying to MC. The next day, they had huge pockets of money. Then everybody's attitude started changing."[56] Travis Lee says over the course of a few years he watched outdoor park jams over on the North Side go from fun, peaceful party events to violent, riotous fights over territory and drugs. "Everything started to get more volatile," recalls Roger Cummings, a b-boy and graffiti artist who had been participating in and attending house and park parties on the North Side for several years before the gangs exerted their influence.[57] Rivalries between North Siders and South Siders began to pop up in relation to gang affiliation. Truth Maze says, "There wasn't a lot of Bloods over North. So if you was messin' around over North and you were a Blood, you might get hurt."[58]

This change deeply disappointed many rap artists, who understood hip hop as an alternative to gang culture . "It was supposed to prevent people from doing that!" Travis Lee insists.[59] Lee, however, as the host of the events, often was held responsible when shows got out of hand. The increase in gang-related violence was a death sentence for park jams and outdoor break-dancing competitions. "The introduction of crack allowed for the money, gangsta-driven nature of rap," Lee explains, which led to new distinctions within hip hop.[60] Gangsta rap became a subgenre of its own, and drug money took its grip upon the ghetto. Some local rappers were no longer friends working together to make music, but opposing forces battling for the hardest image. Many talented artists who would have likely gone on to great things wound up in prison or even dead. "There's a whole generation of people whose

[55] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.
[56] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."
[57] Roger Cummings, Graffiti workshop for Anthropology 3980, Intermedia Arts, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, April 26, 2008.
[58] Truth Maze, interview.
[59] Travis Lee, interview.
[60] Ibid.

dreams got shot," laments DJ and graffiti writer Stage One.[61]

"I live my life in the Murderapolis"

The term "Murderapolis" was first published in a *New York Times* article in 1995 covering the increase in violent crime in Minneapolis. "Minneapolis's murder rate peaked in 1995… gangs had taken over the city's poorest neighborhoods and gang crime had become highly visible," a 2005 article in *The Daily Standard* summarizes.[62] The term quickly caught on among rappers with more autobiographical lyrics, favoring the symbology of the Minneapolis/Murderapolis comparison to describe their lives in song. Indeed, Minneapolis rap group Northside Hustlaz Clic was professing, "Yo I live my life in the Murderapolis, nigga!" as early as 1996.[63]

Using the word "Murderapolis" and the ideas that went along with it added an additional layer of credibility, allowing local rappers to assert their toughness on a similar level with gangsta rappers from the East and West Coasts. Drug deals, crime, and police brutality became ever-present themes in local hip hop. DMG (DetriMental Ganxta) was one of the first Twin Cities MCs to become known for a hardcore gangsta rap style and even after signing with Houston's Rap-A-Lot Records continued to claim the status of "St. Paul Assassin" [64] on his 1993 album *Rigormortiz*.[65] 12 years later, I Self Devine's Twin Cities anthem "Ice Cold" still referred to violent behavior that always seems to escalate during the summer months, saying "You got the North Side poppin' and the South Side poppin', when the summer start guns start poppin'."[66] Many local artists, from Muja Messiah to Musab to Truth Maze, have suffered the loss of a loved one to murder in Minneapolis.[67]

[61] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."

[62] Scott Johnson, "Return to Murderapolis," *Weekly Standard*, Online Edition, July 18, 2005, http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/005/826rvcvn.asp, accessed on April 20, 2008.

[63] Northside Hustlaz Clic, "Stuck N Da Game," *NSHC 4ife, Vol. II* (1996).

[64] DMG, "Psycho," *Rigormortiz* (Rap-A-Lot, 1993).

[65] Justin Schell, "'From St. Paul to Minneapolis, All Hands Clap for This': Hip-Hop in the Twin Cities," in *Represent Where I'm From: The Greenwood Guide to American Regional Hip-Hop*, ed. Mickey Hess (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Forthcoming 2009).

[66] I Self Devine, "Ice Cold," *Self Destruction* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2005).

[67] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."

As Minneapolis became plagued by the same problems that face larger urban areas , it began to earn a name for itself in the rap world as a real city. The name "Twin Cities" could equally refer to the fact that each city has two faces, one of the friendly Midwest mid-sized urban center with some of the top Fortune 500 companies and the other of boarded homes, unsolved murders, and blocks ruled by drug dealers. Facing threats from police, criticism from venues, and internal struggles within the rap community, Minneapolis rap music was driven underground.

"What's left on the wall"[68]

Twin Cities hip hop had not entirely died out, though: rapping is only one element of hip hop. Development in the graffiti scene on the South Side in the middle of the 1980s would enable a rebirth of Twin Cities hip hop. Graffiti artists all shared a rebellious spirit, eager to use their artistic talents to protest the parts of society that held them back and stake their claim on a city they had little material ownership of. Minneapolis South High School, located one block south of East Lake Street at nineteenth Avenue S and thirty-first Street E, served as a central hub for graffiti artists and, later, MCs. Aerosol artists CHEN (also YEAH and AKB) and Roger Cummings attended South High together in 1983 and 1984. They cite the film *Stylewars* as their first introduction to the culture of hip hop, motivating them to become b-boys. CHEN recalls growing up in the 1970s and 1980s at Cedar Square West, now Riverside Plaza, and competing in b-boy battles on the plaza. Through the influence of friends' older brothers and a local graffiti sensation called SMAK, the first writer to go all-Twin Cities, CHEN and Roger, along with many kids at South High, got involved with graffiti.[69] Atmosphere MC Slug, who has also done graffiti, remembers the reaction to a specific SMAK piece: "He did this huge piece right on the side of South High School. Everybody's afraid to hit schools, because you're going to get caught, because kids are going to talk. But he did this fucking bold, amazing, in-your-face piece on the side of South… that's what really made a lot of kids want to be part of graffiti."[70]

[68] Semi.Official, "Nocturnal Terrorist Squad…", *The Anti-Album* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).

[69] CHEN and Roger Cummings, Graffiti workshop for Anthropology 3980.

[70] Scholtes, "One Nation: Invisible."

Soon crews were forming, like CHEN's Minneapolis Skate Posse, a group of over 150 kids from ages five to fourteen, who tagged the letters MSP across Minneapolis. CHEN remembers hanging around Uptown with the MSP crew in the middle of the 1980s. "We'd get on the bus like 60 kids at a time, markers in hand, and just crush it," he recalls of his early writing days.[71] Many South High writers were mentored by their art teacher, an ex-cop. "We'd skip all our other classes to go hang out in art class and just practice our lettering," says CHEN.[72]

When I Self Devine entered into the Minneapolis graffiti scene, it was like a sudden Renaissance. CHEN claims most of his friends had joined gangs, leaving him unaffiliated with either a graffiti crew or a gang. Such was the case with other graffiti artists, who sought refuge from gang culture through their artistic talents. I Self Devine became a mentor for these artists, teaching them West Coast graffiti styles and forming a new crew called AKB, All Kings Baby. Many who were involved in the South Side graffiti movement would later be influential in the Twin Cities rap scene and even become rappers themselves. These young people brought hip hop back to the South Side in full force.

"It began at Bon App, a few years back"[73]

Zachariah Combs was one of them. A long-time member of South Minneapolis rap group Kanser known on the stage as New MC and on the street as Big Zach, he attended South High in the midle of the 1990s. Zach was involved in the graffiti scene from elementary school, though he was not interested in other elements of hip hop until he saw the graffiti lettering on a Micranots show flyer. He attended the advertised concert, quickly developing a passion for hip hop. To Zach, it only seemed natural to become an MC.

Just as I Self Devine was responsible for the graffiti revival, Big Zach can take the credit for coalescing hip hoppers from across the Twin Cities into one scene at the Bon Appétit café in Dinkytown. "Fresh out of high school," he organized an all-ages hip hop night called Headspin in the back room of the Bon Appétit, known as the

[71] CHEN, Graffiti workshop for Anthropology 3980.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Uptown Prophets, "Get Alond," *Now You Know* (2002).

Bon App, during the summer of 1998. [74] "We had a nice little high school fan base," Zach recalls. Groups from St. Paul, North Side, South Side, and so on all performed under the same roof, bringing with them their audiences from their own parts of town. Big Zach calls Dinkytown the "Mecca in the Middle," emphasizing its role in uniting smaller pockets of hip hop into a Twin Cities scene and exposing it to a wider variety of people.[75]

Truth Maze puts the Bon Appétit high on the list of important places for hip hop in Twin Cities history. "Bon Appétit, whoa, classic place… I would walk out of there feeling like I could levitate sometimes, it was so intense in there man!" Truth Maze remembers.[76] Other local rappers, from P.O.S. to Mike Mictlan to Unknown Prophets have recorded their memories of Headspin in song lyrics.[77] Countless rappers who have graced the Twin Cities in the past decade either got their start at Big Zach's hip hop nights or solidified their local fan base which would eventually propel them to greater things.

Unlike rappers such as Slug of Atmosphere and Brother Ali, who gained notoriety at the Bon Appétit, the venue itself could not sustain its initial success. The event was shut down due to the possibly racially-motivated complaints by neighboring businesses that Headspin led to loud, violent, and criminal activity. Local clubs were not supporting rap, and anywhere that agreed to do hip hop events could not survive for long. In Dinkytown and Cedar Riverside, cafes and venues that tried to support local hip hop were shut down after they attracted large crowds of urban youth and neighbors became intimidated. People within the hip hop community blamed racism. Despite the "Minnesota nice" reputation that the Twin Cities tries to present to the world, racism is alive and well, ready to subdue any culture that doesn't mesh with the "Lake Wobegon" image of Minnesota.

Even before Headspin, the racial make-up of Minneapolis hip hop audiences had begun to shift. In 1994, I Self Devine moved down to Atlanta in search of better avenues on which to pursue his rap career. When he returned two years later, he noticed something drastically different about Minneapolis. "You could go to a show at the Varsity

[74] Big Zach, interview.
[75] Big Zach, interview.
[76] Truth Maze, interview.
[77] P.O.S., "Sarah Silverman," *Ipecac Neat* (Doomtree Records, 2004).

Theater in the early nineties and it would be ninety-five percent African American," he recalls.[78] But by 1996, crowds had become mostly white. "No one could really explain why," he says, but he took note of who was weathering these changes and aligned himself with them, knowing that was the way to stay involved in Twin Cities hip hop.[79] As the composition of the underground changed, the group that emerged from the storm was the collection of artists who would become Rhymesayers, a collaborative of white, black, and Latino rappers and DJs dedicated to putting Minnesota on the map.

"If the people laugh and giggle when you tell them where you live say, 'Shhhh….'"[80]

The idea that Minnesota and hip hop could go hand in hand was preposterous for a long time. In fact, Twin Cities pride was rarely professed prior to the Rhymesayers era. "When we were young in rap, people would try to pretend they weren't from here," Big Zach recalls of the middle of the 1990s.[81] "Everybody was always claiming that they were from Chicago or they were from somewhere else," echoes Musab, continuing, "That was always an issue I had with the Twin Cities, that there was no identity."[82] Muja Messiah explains these sentiments by saying that the Twin Cities hip hop scene did not have the respect that it has earned today.[83] I Self Devine argues:

> For a city to be known for its music, it must have a scene and an industry to support it. Minneapolis didn't have it for years and years. There were scenes, many of them in many genres, but there was no industry to support it. Artists had to go elsewhere to record their albums and make it big. A lot of people left because of that, or the scenes just never went anywhere.[84]

[78] I Self Devine, interview, March 11, 2008.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Atmosphere, "Say Shhhh….," *Seven's Travels* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).
[81] Big Zach, interview.
[82] Musab, interview.
[83] Muja Messiah, interview.
[84] I Self Devine, interview. March 11, 2008.

Rhymesayers filled that void when they produced Musab's first solo album (when he was still going by the name Beyond) *Comparison* in 1996, the first locally recorded and produced rap CD. "What *Comparison* did was show everybody how to make their own album," Musab explains, claiming his first album was a blueprint for future rap acts to follow.[85]

As Rhymesayers ushered in a new era of hometown success, local rappers started to show pride in their city, jumping on the bandwagon to make Minneapolis known. They filled their songs with lyrical references to the places where they grew up, from record stores to notable corners. They referenced specific street names and neighborhoods, and more recently have begun to include shout-outs to the entire city and state.

"This is for Y'all who reside on South Side"[86]

Beyond/Musab's 1996 song "South Side" was one of the earliest songs to claim the status of a local anthem. Though he has lived outside of Minneapolis since 2003, Musab still sings praises of the South Side. "I'm really a Lake Street-bred kid. I grew up on Lake & Nicollet," Musab admits, explaining that his territory was "the 30s," the ten blocks south of Lake Street and north of 40th Street.[87] For him, the South Side embodies many things that make him proud to come from the neighborhood. "What makes South Side so special," he explains, is that, "Everybody's on South Side… white people, black people, native people, Spanish people. It always had everybody kind of mixed up in one."[88] Lake Street, with its mix of cultures and businesses, epitomizes much of the spirit of the South Side, a racially and economically diverse neighborhood in constant flux and yet able to maintain its character. Musab insists that his South Side pride is not necessarily implying that the South Side is superior to the North Side. "I had homies on the North Side, but I just didn't feel comfortable. It felt like I was out of town when I was on the North Side."[89] Some of that had to do with gang affiliations, but it was also about finding the place where one could feel at home and establishing a loyalty to that place.

[85] Scholtes, "One Nation, Invisible."

[86] Beyond/Musab, "South Side," *BE-Sides* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 1996).

[87] Musab, interview.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

It was a journey that was an everyday experience for Musab which initially inspired the idea for "South Side." "Shucks, I rode the 21 bus four or five times a day. I mean it was a central part of my lifestyle, just up and down Lake Street," Musab remembers. "I wanted it to be an ode to where I'm from… an ode to Lake Street," he continues. So it was that "South Side" was born, a song which new school rap group Big Quarters now call a "map of South Minneapolis."[90] The song does indeed follow a map-like pattern, taking the listener on a ride down Lake Street, following the bus route and stopping along the way to mention spots that were important in Musab's life. "I'ma start from Mississippi where things be getting tricky/Tell you bout the most-loved street within my city," the song begins, and continues west from there.[91] Parts of the song are still relevant to South Minneapolis today, such as, "Lyndale brings you into Uptown, ain't the spot you have to duck down/Just a bunch of hippies acting silly."[92] Other lines represent a darker side of Lake Street's history. "Now Lake and Chicago is the strip where it's on, yo./Fools stuffing crack deals up in they fuckin nostril./Always hostile, if you want it sure they got you./Even the cops who trying to push up and clock you," show a different, though no less historically accurate, side of the Chicago-Lake intersection that now anchors the new Midtown Global Market condominium and international marketplace development.[93] "I was shopping at Sears when that *was* Sears," Musab now says of the building.[94]

In many ways, "South Side" is a historical record of Lake Street, not only for Musab but for all South Siders who have walked and bused down Lake Street daily, witnessing drug deals, murders, gang violence, and everyday life, watching their backs on certain blocks and feeling at home on others. Though he says it was not his intention when he wrote it, Musab now believes that songs like "South Side" document the history of a neighborhood. Lake Street has changed since "South Side" was written 12 years ago, but some spots still remain. Musab points to Robert's Shoes and Sunny's Bar at Lake and Chicago as being "old staples of our community" from when Lake Street was primarily a

[90] Big Quarters, interview by author, Minneapolis, MN, March 24, 2008.
[91] Beyond/Musab, "South Side," *BE-Sides* (1996).
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Musab, interview.

black neighborhood.[95] Now parts of Lake have become predominantly Latino, but Musab feels the neighborhood has maintained much of the same character as it did a decade ago, and that "South Side" is still applicable.

"Tales From The North Side"[96]

Around the same time Musab released his prideful ode to his favorite street , a group of North Minneapolitans gained exposure by representing their side of town. Northside Hustlaz Clic, made up of members Trey Eighty, Stray Ray, and En Do, were "mobbin' through the TC" spreading their own life stories.[97] "Just another day on the North Side, where we live and die and witness fatal drive-bys," the MC raps in "Proud Ta Be Black."[98] Proud of their race or not, Northside Hustlaz Clic still admitted in their song about crooked cops, "Every day they fuck me over cuz I'm black in Minnesota."[99] Marshall Larada and P.O.S. of the modern Minneapolis rap collective Doomtree recall their first rap show ever: an opening gig for Northside Hustlaz Clic around 1995 at the VFW in Savage. Though they were just sixteen at the time, their punk band had made it on the line-up of an all day music festival. To impress the rap crew who would follow them, decided to switch up their program a bit. "We decided to do the first part of the show all rap… so we made some beats and started rapping and the Northside Hustlaz Clic were fucking into it!" Marshall Larada remembers. "Halfway in we just tore into some punk song and the horrified looks on all these guys' faces was priceless."[100] Perhaps that first meeting with Northside Hustlaz Clic inspired the native North Sider P.O.S. to pursue a rap career, eventually leading to his current fame.

Though differences exist between Musab and Northside Hustlaz Clic—the wailing sirens and hails of gunfire sampled by the Hustlaz Clic, for example—both were documenting their neighborhoods during

[95] Musab, interview.

[96] Northside Hustlaz Clic, *Tales From The Northside* (1995).

[97] Northside Hustlaz Clic feat. Murder City Mob, "Mobbin," *NSHC 4ife, Vol. III* (1997).

[98] Northside Hustlaz Clic, "Proud Ta Be Black," *NSHC 4ife, Vol. I*, (1995).

[99] Northside Hustlaz Clic, "You Don't Want No Funk," *NSHC 4ife, Vol. III* (1997).

[100] Brady Kiernan and Bo Hakala, *Doomtree Blowout*, DVD (Doomtree Records, 2008).

a time when gangs and drugs plagued North and South Minneapolis equally. Artists writing in the beginning of the twenty-first century would capture a different image of the city, one that reflected the stagnation of the North Side while the South Side profited from a stronger community structure which was improving the character of the neighborhood. This change is evident in the music, with North Side hip hop generally keeping a "hard, gritty sound" while South Side hip hop tends to have a more "melodic, softer sound."[101] The nature of South Side pride in rap lyrics also has changed from an attempt to boast about its roughest parts to honest admissions of affection for what the South Side has become. Meanwhile, hip hop on the North Side has maintained its hardcore nature, documenting a failing neighborhood and thriving on the image of its ghetto environment.

"I've had my Lake Street pride for three decades"

The recent prevalence of praise for Lake Street in rap lyrics by South Side artists shows how that neighborhood's pride and identity has changed since Musab's "South Side" was released. Atmosphere, a duo made up of MC Sean "Slug" Daley and his DJ Anthony "Ant" Davis, who both hail from Minneapolis' South Side, make frequent references to locations around the Twin Cities in their songs, including Lake Street. "I've had my Lake Street pride for three decades/These alleyways and these streetlights have seen my best days/Before I was a germ learning how to misbehave/All the way to the grave, South Side is my resting place," Slug raps on his Minneapolis anthem "Always Coming Back Home to You."[102] Just prior to his ode to Lake Street, Slug takes the role of a historical guide, saying, "right here, this used to be a record shop./I've gotten love, I've gotten drunk, I've gotten beat up in that parking lot."[103] Slug's lyrics are specific enough for Minneapolitans to recall their own memories and experiences of Lake Street and the surrounding South Side, and vague enough for non-locals to identify with and feel that Lake Street, though not a part of their lives, is familiar in some way.

[101] Yakub the Mad Scientist, correspondence with author, December 20, 2008.

[102] Atmosphere, "Always Coming Back Home to You," *Seven's Travels* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).

[103] Ibid.

Other rappers also find inspiration in Lake Street and its place in the South Side. In a recent song, Big Zach, rapping under the name New MC, begins, "Still live on East Lake where they hate police, some got guns others make believe."[104] The picture he paints of Lake Street in "Lake Street La La Bye" has been softened by time since Musab's "South Side" was written. In his lyric, "Different people, inner city full spectrum," Zach alludes to one of his favorite aspects of South Side life.[105] "I haven't seen the whole world, but I've been to a lot of America and I feel like the South Side's pretty diverse," he says, adding, "There's people of all religions and all nationalities living on my block. It's just real over here."[106] Much of his view of Lake Street is reflected in his song. "Lake Street is like real life, people working at auto shops and liquor stores," he says. Lyrics like "a single mom grocery bags on the bus" echo that sentiment.[107]

Lake Street is not the only important place for South Side hip hop. The list of venues in Cedar Riverside and West Bank area that have supported hip hop is long, including most notably the Red Sea Bar and the Triple Rock Social Club, and even now-defunct venues like the Riverside Café. "West Bank was really poppin'… until the police shut it down," Muja Messiah recalls.[108] "I have memories of being here with people who are gone now," Big Zach reflects on the West Bank.[109] In Kanser's song "Poukisa," Zach acknowledges that he was "all South Side by 16, easy."[110] The song chronicles Zach's younger days as a graffiti artist roaming South Minneapolis with the "fame concept to have my name on objects."[111] The South Side scenery woven into the lyrical fabric of the song includes places that no longer exist, like the train tracks that became the Hiawatha Light Rail line and the bridges along the Midtown Greenway, now a bike trail.

Muja Messiah, who was raised Robert Hedges in the northern Minneapolis suburb Brooklyn Park, has called South Minneapolis home

[104] New MC, "East Lake La La Bye," (2008).
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.; Big Zach, interview.
[107] New MC, "East Lake La La Bye," (2008).
[108] Muja Messiah, interview.
[109] Big Zach, interview.
[110] Kanser, "Poukisa," *Self Titled* (Interlock, 2005).
[111] Ibid.

for more than a decade. In his lyrics, Muja is candid about his street hustling abilities, professing himself the Twin Cities' best "rapper/drug dealer".[112] Muja points to Franklin Avenue as being an inspiration for his musical career. "We used to walk 25 deep to parties all the way down Franklin, from Uptown all the way down to the Franklin Theater," Muja Messiah reminisces.[113] The Franklin Theater, which has been sitting empty for years, put on hip hop dance nights for South Side youth during the 1990s. It was that mix of hip hop and b-boying culture that drew Muja to the South Side and the house parties off of Franklin Avenue.

Brandon and Zach Bagaason, more commonly known as Brandon Allday and Medium Zach, were born in Illinois but moved to Northern Minnesota shortly after discovering rap music. The brothers, who now perform together as Big Quarters, have been in Minneapolis since 2000 and were involved in various other hip hop projects before forming Big Quarters on Cinco de Mayo of 2004. Brandon is quick to admit that, though he is not from the South Side, he considers it home because of the roots he has there. "A lot of our stories revolve around East Lake Street," he says of his musical narratives.[114] Medium Zach adds, "We identify with people living on the South Side."[115] This means he has family there, but it also means he feels a sense of belonging when he spends time around East Lake. "It's about having things in common," Brandon explains.[116] For Big Quarters, lyrics like "thirty-first and Cedar, only five blocks but it's all I got" tell their story, and mentioning places that have been important to them can connect their listeners to that place.[117] "Good story telling is using detail. People that know it are gonna connect with it right away, especially in Minneapolis where the number of times you can hear someone say "Cedar" in a song is limited," Zach admits.[118] "Hip hop is a way for people to find pride in their culture when other areas of society were telling us not to

[112] Muja Messiah feat. Zed Zilla, "Southside," *MPLS Massacre* (Black Corners, 2008).
[113] Muja Messiah, interview.
[114] Big Quarters, interview.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Big Quarters, "Everyday," *Cost of Living LP* (2007).
[118] Big Quarters, interview.

be proud of who we were," says Brandon, adding, "In hip hop you can be proud of being from the South Side."[119]

"Two different worlds apart, but the world is just a small town"[120]

I Self Devine says that for Slug "it was important...to talk about Minneapolis… that's what he knows, he ain't lived no other place other than the South Side."[121] The same goes for many who rep the South Side; the neighborhood has nurtured them as people and as artists, and for that they pay it recognition in their music. North Side rappers and residents, on the other hand, often find themselves in direct conflict with their neighborhood, struggling to survive it rather than being nurtured by it. This geographical difference breeds an entirely different sort of relationship between hip hop and place in North Minneapolis.

Big Zach describes the differences in Minneapolis hip hop this way: "I feel like the South Side is more street, and the North Side is more hood."[122] Muja Messiah takes it a step further by saying, "South Side is a city, North Side is a neighborhood."[123] University of Minnesota Anthropology of Hip Hop professor Melisa Rivière expands on these ideas, explaining that the North Side is more economically underprivileged and racially black, with limited access and underdeveloped infrastructure, all of the typical components of a hood.[124] These elements manifest themselves in the hip hop that originates on the North Side. Rivière points to the interesting paradox that North Side rappers, who come from backgrounds where they had very little, tend to rap about the "bling bling"—the cars, money, and accessories that are associated with the success of modern day rap superstars. On the other hand, South Side rappers, who may also be of a lower socioeconomic class yet have many more opportunities open to them in their living environment, tend to rap about how they are

[119] Big Quarters, interview.
[120] Atmosphere, "Don't Ever Fucking Question That," *Lucy Ford* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2000).
[121] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.
[122] Big Zach, interview.
[123] Muja Messiah, interview.
[124] Melisa Rivière, Anthropology 3980 lecture.

"broke rappers."[125]

"Comin' so mean"[126]

Rapper Tank Dog, little-known outside of the North Side, stands tough in the music video for his song "Let's Go Twin Cities" with a diamond-studded Minnesota outline dangling from a silver chain around his neck. The song rattles off a list of important elements of North Side life in a manner similar to Atmosphere's "Always Coming Back Home to You." But Tank Dog is not talking about the "parks and zoos and things to do with my son."[127] "Street race, fast cars, old timers, low riders, chromed out," he raps, after declaring, "There's some killas in this city that'll lay your ass out."[128] These lyrics are meant to give street credibility to North Minneapolis, as Tank Dog addresses outsiders, "maybe you ain't thinkin' that we crunk up here, but we jump up here."[129] Tank Dog has another mission with his rhymes as well. "People wanna hear about a lifestyle that's better than the one that they're living. It gives them hope. A lot of niggaz is hopeless out here and need a hero. So I was aiming to be that local icon, that hero," explains Tank Dog, who is originally from Chicago but is now proud to rep Minneapolis' North Side.[130]

Gangster posturing still runs deep on the North Side, and much of that has to do with the clear distinctions between that neighborhood and its southern counterpart. "'We treat it like it's its own city,' said rapper Unknown of the North Side, speaking through a mouth full of diamonds," writes journalist Peter Scholtes.[131] Another important North Side rapper is Contac, who uses the bounce and crunk flavors and the vocal sounds of Southern hip hop in his music. He has opened for mainstream rap acts like Young Jeezy when they roll through the

[125] Ibid.

[126] Maria Isa, "MN Nice," *M.I. Split Personalities* (Emetrece Productions, 2007).

[127] Atmosphere, "Always Coming Back Home To You," *Seven's Travels* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).

[128] Tank Dog, "Let's Go Twin Cities," video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qmh15i9Ajw, accessed on April 15, 2008.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Tank Dog, correspondence with author, May 12, 2008.

[131] Peter S. Scholtes, "Contact High," Minneapolis *City Pages*, December 21, 2005.

Twin Cities, but is not well known outside North Minneapolis.[132] Tank Dog explains that nowadays rappers have to be hard to appeal to the masses, and many North Side rappers are filling that role.[133] Older school North Side rappers like Truth Maze see this as a negative thing. "Right now what I'm afraid of is that, if you're trying to do something conscious, it's just seen as soft…. Positivity… is looked at as not as popular," Truth Maze laments.[134] Times are getting increasingly hard as the economy continues to recede, which leads to "more people on the streets trying to hustle."[135] Truth Maze speaks of the "disparities in terms of what people are choosing to live for", echoing Notorious B.I.G.'s "mo' money, mo' problems" catchphrase.[136] The North Side, it seems, has a harder struggle between these two sides of hip hop, the creative expression of a community's experience and the quest for something more tangible, like money or material objects.

"This is a North Side blues song"[137]

While many aspiring rappers on the North Side are trying rise out of the ghetto and make a name for themselves, others continue to rap about the failings of the so-called American dream and the people who fall through the cracks. Rhymesayers artist Brother Ali, in his song "Room with a View," takes up a metaphorical paintbrush and becomes the so-called "modern urban Norman Rockwell"[138] as he looks out of the window of the apartment at North Freemont Avenue and Lowry where he lived for years.[139] "One side of the street is Malone's funeral home and the other side's the library…" Brother Ali raps about his street. Today, however, no funeral home is visible across the street from the North Regional Library, and vacant lots sit on either side of the old brick apartment block where Brother Ali once resided. "Room With A View" is not a prideful song; there is no boasting

[132] Scholtes, "Contact High."
[133] Tank Dog, correspondence.
[134] Truth Maze, interview.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Truth Maze, "North Side Blues Song," *Expansions and Contradictions* (Tru Ruts/Speakeasy Productions, 2006).
[138] Brother Ali, "Room With a View," *Shadows on the Sun* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).
[139] Brother Ali, correspondence with author, April 13, 2008.

that North Minneapolis gives power to those who have survived the place. To Ali, who talks about lunchtime with his son Faheem being interrupted by the sound of gunshots from a drive-by down the street, North Minneapolis is a place "where parents are embarrassed to tell you they raised they kids at."[140] Ali captures the environment of North Minneapolis, openly challenging the outward image of the "Twin Cities American Heartland."[141]

North Minneapolis, though quiet on a weekday morning, is full of hints of the problems that Ali discusses in "Room With a View," with signs prohibiting loitering and prostitution, neighborhood crime watch logos in many fenced-in yards, and empty alcohol bottles lying next to boarded-up houses or burned-out shells, victims of the foreclosure crisis and frequent arson attacks which plague this part of town. Brother Ali's line, "in a location where slangin' crack rock is not seen as a fucking recreation but a vocation," epitomizes the lack of opportunities available to North Side youth, which leaves them with drug dealing and hustling as attractive escapes from poverty.[142]

North Side rapper Toki Wright, cofounder of Yo! The Movement and its highly influential annual Twin Cities Celebration of Hip Hop, similarly focuses on the bleakness of this environment in his song "N/S Up and Down." The song, much like Musab's "South Side" over a decade ago, goes through North Minneapolis block by block on the North-South alphabetical streets of Aldrich to Newton. Toki discusses his own experience in North Minneapolis in the song, rapping, "I grew up on Bryant Ave next to a crack house, dope fiends would come out in the front yard and black out."[143] Toki's lyrics reference what many North Side youth face—feelings of being trapped, bored, constantly under suspicion by police, and trying to look tough by taking up guns, gangs, and drugs.

Despite the challenges that face North Siders, rappers from the neighborhood remain true to their roots. Since 1983, Truth Maze has never stopped representing his neighborhood through his music. "North

[140] Brother Ali, "Room With a View."
[141] Ibid.
[142] Brother Ali, "Room With a View."
[143] Toki Wright, "N/S Up and Down," *A Different Mirror* (Forthcoming 2008).

Minneapolis gave me my pride and my start as an artist," he insists.[144] His memories of hanging out on Plymouth Avenue and socializing with friends at the McDonalds or outside of the liquor stores they were too young to enter are bitter sweet, mostly because the North Side has not improved much in terms of constructive activities for its youth. Truth Maze has grown up alongside hip hop, watched the culture change, watched the city change, and become wise in the process. He has seen both tragedy and good come from his neighborhood. A recent song from his *Expansions and Contractions* album mixes blues with spoken word to form a musical poem chronicling North Minneapolis. "Featuring a screaming guitar solo played by sirens that haunt the atmosphere," Truth Maze speaks, continuing, "And in the background of this blues song, you hear revenge and pain mixed with blunt smoke and stress."[145] Truth Maze also alludes to the feeling of being unable to escape the hardships of the neighborhood, saying, "Trapped in between this song that goes on and on and on and on."[146]

"Who got next? The Midwest"[147]

On his latest album Mike Mictlan poses a question: "Rap started back east then it went out west, now they love it down south, but tell me, who got next?"[148] The buzz that the Midwest may be the up-and-coming geographic location for the next wave of popular rap music has been growing louder as Kanye West and Lupe Fiasco put on for their city of Chicago and Rhymesayers artists do national and international tour circuits. But nowhere is the buzz louder than in local rap songs, where declarations of Minnesota pride and attempts to solidify Minneapolis's place on the map of hip places grow more common by the day. "This the Midwest everybody gotta come through here to get to the East or the West," Moochy C raps in his song "Minnesota", continuing, "Murderap, grab your atlas take a look we on top of the map."[149] Atmosphere, deemed by many as the embodiment

[144] Truth Maze, interview.
[145] Truth Maze, "North Side Blues Song."
[146] Ibid.
[147] Mike Mictlan & Lazerbeak, "Northstarrr," *Hand Over Fist* (Doomtree Records, 2008).
[148] Ibid.
[149] Moochy C, "Minnesota," *I Know What I'm Worth*.

of the modern Minnesota sound, insist in the song "Say Shhhh…" that "Minnesota is dope, if only simply for not what we have but what we don't."[150]

Going beyond dedicating a song to the South or North Side, rappers like Muja Messiah are now shamelessly professing, "This is for Minnesota, where we from, Minnesota."[151] Musab, who now lives in Las Vegas, has been able to watch Minneapolis's notoriety grow from an outsider's perspective as the 612 area code becomes a nationally-known reference to a place with a credible hip hop scene.[152] It has taken years of hard work and dedication by local rappers as well as the support of the community to both produce a consistently high quality product and market it successfully to the rest of the United States, but Minnesota has finally made a name for itself in the rap industry.

Some, however, believe that Minnesota's entry onto the hip hop radar may have come too late. "The era of having regional sounds is close to done," Medium Zach claims, due to the blending of styles caused by increasingly national and even international nature of hip hop.[153] Still, since Prince released *Purple Rain*, Minneapolis has always struggled to define anything new as "the sound of Minneapolis." Perhaps this can be taken as a sign that Twin Cities hip hop can weather the changing musical climate by accepting its own diversity.

Brandon Allday and Medium Zach are not giving up on hip hop, nor are they distancing themselves from Minneapolis. The brothers help hip hop's next generation get a leg up by assisting Twin Cities youth in writing and recording their own rap music at Hope Community, under the direction of I Self Devine, who acts as Youth/Adult Organizer for the non-profit. "It's really a great outlet," says participant and rapper Yakub the Mad Scientist. "They help us develop as artists and businessmen."[154] I Self Devine feels that his involvement with Hope Community has given more to the community than his music alone ever could. Programs such as the one at Hope provide an opportunity for youth from North and South Minneapolis to come together over

[150] Atmosphere, "Say Shhhh…," *Seven's Travels* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).

[151] Muja Messiah, "Amy Winehouse," *MPLS Massacre* (Black Corners, 2008).

[152] Musab, interview.

[153] Big Quarters, interview.

[154] Yakub the Mad Scientist, correspondence with author, October 7, 2008.

their shared goals and dreams for themselves and their neighborhoods. For rappers like Big Quarters and I Self Devine, mentoring young people in their craft is the only way to make certain that the strength and energy of Twin Cities hip hop will continue into the future.

"Always Coming Back Home to You"[155]

Though national artists like Nas have claimed that "Hip Hop is Dead," local participation in the culture tells a different story.[156] Hip hop is changing, but it is premature to start writing its epitaph. Minneapolis hip hop and its relation to place continue to evolve, with no predictable conclusion. I Self Devine says of hip hop, "To me, the overall goal is that you can make something out of nothing."[157] Muja Messiah does not hesitate to tell it like he sees it. "This city ain't shit," he declares, "But we love it and it's our home. And we have to make people believe that we are really about it."[158] Hip hop has taken this place and made it something unique, despite the many barriers rap music and its fans have faced. It has given people a place to be proud of, made something out of nothing. Lyrics about Minneapolis, both positive and negative, have recorded the city's history in rhyme and made it available to an audience that spans the globe in this hyperlinked era.

For locals, it makes songs like "Always Coming Back Home to You" and "Ice Cold" all the more meaningful. For outsiders, it paints a portrait and landscape of Minneapolis and gives legitimacy to the city and its inhabitants, reaffirming both its street credibility and its softer elements. Musab has declared that hip hop is "the essence, the depth of America, the change of America, the mixture of America."[159] One could substitute "Minneapolis" for "America" and the definition would be as appropriate. Local hip hop tells the story of neighborhoods like North and South Minneapolis from many angles, and gives credit to the foundations that both the musicians and their music rest upon. In the end, it comes down to making something out of nothing, taking

[155] Atmosphere, "Always Coming Back Home to You," *Seven's Travels* (Rhymesayers Entertainment, 2003).

[156] Nas, *Hip Hop is Dead* (Def Jam Records, 2006).

[157] I Self Devine, interview, April 18, 2008.

[158] Muja Messiah, interview.

[159] Musab, interview.

ownership of where you live, and shouting out to the world that your city is where it's at.