



# GATEWAY

*A Publication of Phi Alpha Theta  
at Washington University in St Louis*

# GATEWAY

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*A collection of historical essays and book reviews written by  
undergraduate students at Washington University in St. Louis  
and our peer midwestern institutions.*

*A journal of the Washington University in St. Louis Chapter  
of Phi Alpha Theta*

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## Letter From The Editor

This spring, we are pleased to present the sixteenth edition of the *Gateway History Journal* on behalf of Phi Alpha Theta at Washington University in St. Louis. With support and encouragement from the Washington University faculty, we received a record number of submissions for this year's journals. For the second year, we expanded our application pool and accepted submissions from the top ten universities in the Midwest. The diversity of these submissions - in theme, time period, opinion, and methodology - represents the broad scope of student interest. The enthusiasm on the part of both the Washington University community and broader inter-collegiate community gives us great hope that *Gateway* will continue to be an exciting publication for years to come.

After serious deliberation and numerous meetings, we have selected five works to feature in this edition. The collection of pieces represents some of the highest caliber and most engaging undergraduate historical research. The pieces provide insight into different areas of interest in the twentieth century, although varying in geographical focus and topic. Our chosen pieces offer a commentary on issues as broad as the Insular Cases to the evolution of modern dining. We are pleased, therefore, to give our readers a glimpse into these captivating topics.

We are very happy to announce that *Gateway* is available online and in print. Our goal as a student journal is to promote and scholarly conversations among students and faculty and the academic ideas of history students to our peers, professors, and visitors at Washington University in St. Louis, as well as our readers at other universities.

As editor of *Gateway*, I have enjoyed this experience immensely and sincerely hope future editors will gain as much from the experience. I would like to thank our authors for their diligent work, our faculty for their support, and *Gateway's* editorial board for their tireless efforts. I am particularly grateful to Phi Alpha Theta's faculty advisor, Professor Sowande Mustakeem, for her guidance and encouragement throughout the year.

*Your Editor in Chief,  
Jacqueline Blickman*

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## To Contain and Secede: The Making of Missouri's First All-Black City

*Billie Mandelbaum*

As the morning bell sounded to call class into session at the Nuroad School on April 12, 1937, the school's students along with their mothers began to gather outside the 10-room brick schoolhouse in Kinloch Park, an inner-ring suburb five miles northwest of St. Louis. That morning, as teachers "sat idly in vacant classrooms," over 300 white students and their mothers marched "two abreast around the school grounds." Protesters beat pots and pans "in rhythmic fashion." "We want to save our schools" and "We want separate schools," read their handwritten signs.<sup>1</sup> Nuroad was one of two schools in the Kinloch School District. The district's other school, Dunbar, was in South Kinloch Park, a subdivision in the suburb's southeastern section. While Nuroad had an all-white student body, Dunbar served Kinloch Park's African American students.<sup>2</sup> The morning's demonstration, prompted by white demands to formally split the school district into two segregated ones, revealed the rising racial tensions in the suburb.

In the 1930s, to accommodate Kinloch Park's growing African American population, the suburb's black residents began to push for the construction of a black high school. Disputes repeatedly arose between the town's white and black residents over where the new school would be located and how its construction would be funded.<sup>3</sup> In 1937, white residents, claiming that their tax dollars were spent disproportionately on funding the Dunbar School and African American education, resolved to create a separate school district.<sup>4</sup> When attempts to split the district failed, a group of white residents petitioned St. Louis County Court for the incorporation of a new municipality that would exclude South Kinloch Park.<sup>5</sup> In August 1937, the northern area of Kinloch Park, with its concentrated white population, split from South Kinloch Park and formed the city of Berkeley. What remained of the gerrymandered Kinloch Park became the city of Kinloch — Missouri's first all-black municipality.

1. "Strike at Nuroad School to Set Up Separate District," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 12, 1937.
2. John A. Wright Sr., *Kinloch: Missouri's First Black City*. (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 25-26.
3. Robert T. Ernst, "Factors of Isolation and Interaction in an All-Black City: Kinloch, Missouri" (PhD diss, University of Florida, 1973), 62.
4. "Nuroad School Strike Picketing Continues," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 13, 1937.
5. Kinloch History Committee (John A. Wright, Ina Watson, J. Luther Covington, Victoria Cothran), "Kinloch: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," 1983, p. 25, Kinloch School District Records, Box 4, folder 22, Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.

While 1937 marked the definitive split between the suburb's white and black populations, racial segregation began during Kinloch Park's initial development in the 1890s and early 1900s. Realtors and investors divided the community along the color line, giving way to the public incorporation process that resulted in the 1937 Berkeley-Kinloch split. Kinloch Park's white residents veiled their grievances in the quantitative rhetoric of tax dollars, yet, the establishment of Berkeley and Kinloch as separate municipalities revealed the racist views of many white residents. As one black Kinloch resident would later testify in a U.S. Department of Justice hearing, Berkeley was formed "to get rid of Negro students and schools."<sup>6</sup>

Although "suburbs" have commonly been conceived as exclusive all-white enclaves shielded from urban issues, Kinloch, as an all-black suburb, defies this understanding of the suburban landscape.<sup>7</sup> The history of early Kinloch reveals how an all-black suburb developed in the predominately white St. Louis County. However, Kinloch's racial isolation did not arise organically, but rather through a discriminatory process in which private interests and public municipal policy both engineered racial segregation within St. Louis' suburbs and established Missouri's first all-black suburb.

### **Kinloch Park: The Rapid Transit Suburb**

Kinloch was first developed in the early 1890s as a white commuter suburb. Realtors selling plats of land marketed the city as "The Rapid Transit Suburb" due to its location along rail lines for both the Wabash Railroad and the Narrow Gauge Streetcar. In 1890, Charles M. Hays, the general manager of Wabash Railroad, and Jason T. Howe, the vice president of Wabash Railroad, were part of a "syndicate of buyers"—a group of wealthy St. Louis businessmen and real estate investors—that purchased over 300 acres of land in Kinloch Park. Hays and Howe purchased the land as part of their plan to expand the railway to reach the more distant communities of Florissant and St. Charles. Hays' and Howe's investment in Kinloch Park and their plans for rail expansion indicated that there would be "enormous advances in the affected regions,"

and signaled to other land speculators that buying land in the area would be a profitable investment.

Realty companies and their agents attracted buyers from the city by suggesting that purchasing land in Kinloch Park would provide an escape from the urban built environment of St. Louis. In 1892, the St. Louis Suburban Improvement Company ran an ad in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that marketed Kinloch Park as "St. Louis' Grand Scenic Suburb," "healthfully situated" in a "picturesque" setting.<sup>8</sup> As the city of St. Louis experienced mass immigration and rapid industrialization in the late nineteenth century, middle-class native born whites began to perceive the city as dangerous to their health and morals.<sup>9</sup> This thinking pitted the urban against the suburban, as many middle-class native born whites believed that homes in the suburbs with views, unpolluted air, and access to outdoor space would promote good health and provide safety from the ills of city life.<sup>10</sup>

To demonstrate these supposed benefits and the ease of the commute due to the "excellent service" provided by the rail systems, realty companies, such as the St. Louis Suburban Improvement Company, provided special train services to transport prospective white buyers from St. Louis to Kinloch Park so that they could spend a day in the suburb. Such marketing campaigns proved successful.<sup>11</sup> By 1909, more than 2000 lots had been sold and 100 homes built in Kinloch Park since its initial development in the 1890s.<sup>12</sup>

The influx of wealthy white homeowners sparked demand for domestic servants. Though some blacks served as live-in servants, real estate developers also sold lots in a segregated tract of land to blacks who moved to the suburb to work as servants.<sup>13</sup> Servants were the earliest members of Kinloch Park's African American population. In addition to living on designated lots, Kinloch Park's African Americans attended separate schools from those of whites. Initially, blacks attended the Vernon School, a one-room schoolhouse located in the neighboring community of Ferguson.<sup>14</sup> However, only a few months after opening, the Vernon School closed due to low enrollment rates. While

6. Kinloch Ex-Teacher Tells of Deprivations," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 11, 1972.

7. Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5.

8. Display Ad 25—No Title, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 9, 1892.

9. "Causes of Disease: A Report on Public Health, 1885" in St. Louis, ed. Selwyn Troen and Glen Holt (New York: Franklin Watts, 1977), 110-113.

10. Margaret Garb, "Class Formation." Lecture, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, January 22, 2015.

11. Display Ad 25—No Title, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

12. "Realty Buyers Turning Toward North St. Louis," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

13. James Hobert Kirk, "Kinloch, Missouri: A Study of an All-Negro Community" (PhD diss, St. Louis University, 1951), 19.

14. Wright Sr: Kinloch: 9, 21; Chris Wilson and Paul Erling Groth, *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 209.

white students were educated in Kinloch Park's Scudder Avenue School, the suburb's African American students were forced to travel south by train to either Normandy or Carsonville or north to Bridgeton for formal schooling.<sup>15</sup>

Blacks did not attend school in Kinloch Park until the early 1900s when, following construction of the Nuroad School, the formerly all-white Scudder Avenue School was converted to an all-black institution.<sup>16</sup> Although across the nation segregated educational policies were the norm, in Kinloch Park, limited educational opportunities in concert with segregated servant lots, created an environment of black containment and isolation. African Americans were sold land in the otherwise all-white suburb on the condition that they would fulfill the interests and needs of white property owners. While Kinloch Park served as a commuter suburb for whites, the community more than likely functioned as a domestic service employment suburb for blacks.<sup>17</sup> African Americans were employed to maintain the privileged sections of white Kinloch Park, yet were residentially confined to a certain section of the suburb. This subjugation of African Americans to serve white private interests was a narrative that would continue to unfold during Kinloch's development.

### The Birth of "Two Kinlochs"

Realty companies exploited African Americans seeking to buy homes in Kinloch Park. During the 1910s, African Americans began to purchase lots located outside of the designated servant land tract. The expansion in the number of lots available to blacks is reported to have begun after an African American servant and her husband acquired property external to the confined servant lots. When white property owners learned that an African American couple had bought land in the neighborhood, whites began to put their own land up for sale. Due to racial prejudice, other whites were uninterested in purchasing the newly vacant land.<sup>18</sup>

Seeing the opportunity to create a profitable enterprise, realty companies began to purchase the land, which was located in a six-block area of southeast

Kinloch Park. Realtors in turn, subdivided the lots and sold them at inflated prices to African Americans.<sup>19</sup> Blacks purchased land for between \$100 and \$500, but it was reported that whites were often able to purchase similar lots in white Kinloch Park for lower prices.<sup>20</sup> This development in Kinloch Park's real estate market is suggestive of an early form of blockbusting, a process in which white realtors and land speculators would threaten that African Americans were moving or had already moved into a white neighborhood. In response to this threat, whites put their homes up for sale, giving real estate agents the opportunity to buy and later resell the property at inflated rates to black purchasers.<sup>21</sup> In Kinloch Park, while the black servant and her husband reportedly purchased their lot through a friendship with a white property owner, it is worth considering if this white "friend" had ulterior motives. Even if the transaction did stem from a mutual friendship, realtors exploited this sale, taking the first step in a larger plan to build a segregated residential realty market in Kinloch Park.

Advertisements run by realty companies in the *St. Louis Argus*, an African American newspaper, shed light onto this exploitative realty model and demonstrate the ways white realtors attempted to entice African Americans into purchasing lots in southeast Kinloch Park. The style and rhetoric of a November 1915 advertisement for the East Kinloch Sales Company's East Kinloch Lots subdivision, illustrates how the realty company marketed its subdivision as a kind of utopia, where African Americans would have the opportunity to build a self-governed community insulated from racist white society (See Appendix, Figure 1). The advertisement was constructed around an allusion to D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation*. The prominent parts of the ad—the headline, sub-headline and tagline—all reference Griffith's film. For example, the ad begins with the headline and sub-headline:

The Birth of a Nation  
is a great picture depicting a past history.  
THE BIRTH OF EAST KINLOCH  
is the picture of a future history to be written by a Negro historian.<sup>22</sup>

15. Kinloch History Committee, "Kinloch: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." 19

16. Wright Sr: *Kinloch*. 25.

17. Wiese, *Places of Their Own*. 25. Wiese describes domestic service suburbs as wealthy white suburbs that included residential areas where African American domestic service workers lived. Later, Wiese writes the African Americans "performed labor that was essential to creating the cultivated landscapes and leisurely social life that epitomized bourgeois suburbs before World War II" (55).

18. Kirk, "Kinloch, Missouri."19.

19. Ingo Walter and John E. Kramer, "Political Autonomy and Economic Dependence in an all-Negro Municipality," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Inc. 28 (Jul., 1969) 226

20. Kirk, "Kinloch, Missouri." 21.

21. Wiese, *Places of Their Own*: 222.

22. *St. Louis Argus*, November 12, 1915.

The East Kinloch Sales Company's allusion to Griffith's film is significant given the cultural space the film consumed at the time. Released in February 1915, *The Birth of a Nation*, with its celebration of slavery, glorification of the Ku Klux Klan, and racist depiction of blacks, sparked protest among African Americans.<sup>23</sup> Aware of the protest against the film, the East Kinloch Sales Company attempted to turn the controversy on its head. The ad's language and allusion to *The Birth of a Nation* are used to suggest that in East Kinloch, African Americans could forge an alternative narrative of triumph and resilience in opposition to Griffith's racist film. Moreover, the ad's evocation of resilience and racial uplift plays on the ideologies of self-reliance that Booker T. Washington advocated in the 1890s. Washington, a former slave, believed that attaining an industrial education, accumulating capital, and establishing self-sufficient black communities was African Americans' best defense against entrenched racism.<sup>24</sup> Similar to Washington's philosophy, the ad suggests that there were two visions of America—one to be realized by whites, the other to be realized by blacks. While the ad does not assert which narrative is superior, these divided visions mirror the segregated spheres of white and black Kinloch Park.

Another advertisement run by the East Kinloch Sales Company is reminiscent of the ads run in 1892 and 1893 by realty companies who marketed lots in Kinloch Park to white commuters (See Appendix, Figure 2). The East Kinloch Sales Company's June 1915 ad describes East Kinloch as a "paradise for rich and poor" where residents can "throw off the cares of city life" and "hear the birds singing in the leaf-laden trees."<sup>25</sup> This ad markets the subdivision as a "paradise" where African Americans—regardless of class—could have a better quality of life than that available to urban blacks. Rather than attract blacks of a certain class, realtors specifically targeted African Americans living in the city of St. Louis with their marketing efforts. In addition to print advertisements, realtors made door-to-door solicitations in the city, telling African Americans that homes were available in Kinloch Park at prices comparable to city rents.<sup>26</sup> During these solicitations, realtors compared the suburban setting of Kinloch

Park to life in the rural South. This sales model was apparently successful, as records from the 1920 Federal Census show that much of Kinloch Park's black population was made up of southern-born blacks who migrated north to St. Louis before moving to the suburb. Many members of Kinloch Park's black population were born in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Even as Kinloch Park's black population increased, it seems that the town continued to function as a service employment suburb for African Americans. Black homebuyers filled service jobs in white Kinloch Park and Ferguson, a white suburb to the east of Kinloch, and worked primarily as laborers, cooks, and maids.<sup>27</sup>

Both ads for the East Kinloch Lots make mention of the Dunbar School. The all-black school at the center of the 1937 school district separation debate, was located in the East Kinloch subdivision. A January 1914 letter from The Trust Company of St. Louis County to the Kinloch School District Board outlined the board's purchase of property in East Kinloch, which was to be used "for school purposes."<sup>28</sup> By constructing the school within the all-black subdivision, the school board isolated Kinloch Park's black residents from the white population. Effectively, the "Birth of East Kinloch" marked the birth of two Kinlochs, divided along the color line.

### Financing Black Property Ownership

Following the lead of the East Kinloch Sales Company, the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company, began to purchase tracts of land in the southeast section of Kinloch Park. A St. Louis-based realty company, the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company bought up so many tracts of land in southeast Kinloch, including what had once constituted the East Kinloch Lots, that the company opened a new subdivision called South Kinloch Park.<sup>29</sup>

Initially, the realty company established a policy in which whites were prohibited from buying property in South Kinloch Park, leaving lots available only to African Americans for purchase. However, banks refused to give loans to some black buyers, leaving the realty company without viable lot purchasers.

23. Richard Brody, "The Worst Thing About 'Birth of a Nation' Is How Good It Is," *The New Yorker*, February 1, 2013, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-worst-thing-about-birth-of-a-nation-is-how-good-it-is>.

24. Booker T. Washington, "Self-Reliance," *The Atlantic*, September 1896, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1896/09/the-awakening-of-the-negro/305449/>.

25. *St. Louis Argus*, June 4, 1915.

26. Kirk, "Kinloch, Missouri." 22.

27. U.S. Manuscript Census, 1920. South Kinloch Park Subdivision, St. Ferdinand Township, St. Louis, MO. 2724.

28. Letter from The Trust Company of St. Louis County to the Kinloch District School Board, January 30, 1914, Kinloch School District Records, Box 1, folder 3. Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.

29. "Realty Buyers Turning Toward North St. Louis," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 21, 1909; Kinloch History Committee, "Kinloch: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." 7.

To overcome this obstacle, the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company created an unregulated mortgage system that combined elements of the formal real estate market with the informal practice of contract property sales (See Appendix, Figure 3). Rather than sell lots directly to blacks, the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company sold lots to white land speculators who, unlike blacks, could put up collateral for a loan. Then, for a ten percent commission rate, the realty company resold the lots to African American buyers. After the sale, white investors continued to make monthly loan payments—at a rate discounted by the realty company—to banks. Meanwhile, African American buyers made monthly payments to the white investors, paying an interest rate that was often double that of the market rate that the white investors paid to banks.<sup>30</sup>

Evidence of this exploitative sales model is seen in promotional letters sent from Wheaton C. Ferris, the president of the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company, to potential investors. In one letter, Ferris wrote of Miss Lura Gochenour, a woman who “felt like she wanted a larger income.” After purchasing land in South Kinloch Park for “\$50.00 cash,” Miss Lura “made a profit of \$550.00.”<sup>31</sup> One investor, in a testimonial letter wrote, “I am receiving my payments regularly from the negroes who bought the property from me and I am highly pleased with my investment.”<sup>32</sup> These letters demonstrate how the private economic interests of white investors and realty companies were a driving force behind creating a segregated Kinloch Park.

The predatory business practices of the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company came to light after the St. Louis Post-Dispatch published an exposé of the South Kinloch Park real estate market in January 1917. The article began, “While segregation of negroes in St. Louis is restrained by a temporary injunction in the United States District Court...it is being exploited in St. Louis County by a real estate company which is selling lots to negroes in South Kinloch Park at double the price quoted to white investors.”<sup>33</sup> With this, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch suggested that the realty company was taking advantage of the city of St. Louis’ 1916 “Residential Segregation Referendum,” which resulted in limited housing options for blacks. The ordinance, later overturned,

prohibited blacks from living on a block that had a population that was more than 75 percent white, and prohibited whites from moving to blocks that were more than 75 percent black.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, while no such ordinance was officially on the books in Kinloch Park, by establishing the all-black subdivision of South Kinloch Park, the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company created separate housing markets for the suburb’s white and black populations. In effect, the realty company’s sales model made it unnecessary to have segregation ordinances in the suburb.

To defend their business model, the realty company ran an advertorial column in the February 16, 1917 edition of the St. Louis Argus. The company wrote that the role of white investors was “to make South Kinloch Park a bigger and better place for the self-respecting Negro to live and make his home.”<sup>35</sup> Such rhetoric frames speculators and real estate agents as white savior figures, providing “self-respecting” African Americans with the opportunity for home ownership. Many African Americans aspired to be homeowners, and this aspiration was a factor in the black migration into Kinloch Park.<sup>36</sup> Since the end of the Civil War, African Americans had equated home ownership with economic advancement and “racial progress.”<sup>37</sup> Realty companies, such as the Olive Street Terrace Realty Company, exploited black aspirations for home ownership by creating a predatory and segregated real estate market in Kinloch Park.

### Trouble in Suburbia

Due to the influx of African Americans that stemmed from realty company tactics, the demographics of Kinloch Park had significantly shifted. By 1924, more than 2,000 African Americans, many of whom had migrated north during the Great Migration, lived in Kinloch Park.<sup>38</sup> While the suburb had once had a majority white population, by the 1920s this was no longer the case. A 1918 school report filed by the Kinloch School District to the St. Louis County Superintendent gave an enumeration of 163 white students and 138 African American students. The meeting notes from a May 1927 Kinloch School Board meeting report an enumeration of 318 white students and 644

30. “Lots White Men Buy Doubled in Price to Negroes,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 24, 1917.

31. Promotional Letter Written by W.C. Ferris, Undated, Segregation Scrapbook, Page 140. Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.

32. Testimonial Letter from Marion E. Blagg, July 27, 1916, Page 141, Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center

33. “Lots White Men Buy Doubled in Price to Negroes,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

34. Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 2008), 70.

35. *St. Louis Argus*, February 16, 1917.

36. Kirk, “Kinloch, Missouri.” 22.

37. Wiese, *Places of Their Own*. 84.

38. Kinloch History Committee, “Kinloch: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.” 9.

39. “Report to District Clerk to County Superintendent, 1918” and School Board Minutes, May 27, 1927 in Kinloch School District Records, Box 1, folder 2, Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.

black students. The suburb's overall population was growing, yet as these enumeration statistics demonstrate, the black population was growing at a much greater rate.<sup>39</sup>

As the African American population rose, the organizing power of blacks in Kinloch grew, thus, exacerbating racial tensions. Although advertisements for the East Kinloch Lots suggested that the subdivision would hold the site of a new city hall building “to be governed by elected Negro alderman with a Negro Mayor the chief magistrate,” the all-black South Kinloch Park remained under the government of white Kinloch Park. In 1924, however, Kinloch's black population was large enough to elect Reverend Walter Johnson, an African American, to Kinloch's three-member school board. Johnson advocated for better educational opportunities for African American students and criticized the “hand-me-down” materials provided to black students. Moreover, Johnson was the leading voice in the fight to build a black high school in Kinloch. In January 1937, Johnson had an altercation with George Pftzinger. Pftzinger, then the president of the Kinloch School Board, ordered Johnson arrested and charged with grand larceny after Pftzinger alleged that Johnson “had taken from him a petition signed by Negro residents asking the School Board to designate another site for the new high school for Negroes.” Although Judge J. Wesley Ward Jr. placed the charge under advisement and had not yet issued a verdict by the time of the April 1937 protest at the Nuroad School, this incident demonstrated the threat that Johnson posed to Pftzinger and the white leadership of Kinloch.<sup>40</sup> Johnson was representative of the increasing political power among African Americans that accompanied the black population growth in Kinloch. However, such political mobilization threatened to disrupt the established white power structures of Kinloch Park. As signs emerged that Kinloch's black population could no longer be contained within the confines of their segregated subdivision, the whites of Kinloch organized to secede.

40. “Strike at Nuroad School,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

## Conclusion

The history of Kinloch's early development illustrates how private interests and municipal law created a racially isolated community. When the 1937 divorce of Berkeley and Kinloch occurred, the boundaries of the two communities closely aligned with the de facto boundaries established by Kinloch Park's segregated housing market (See Appendix, Figure 4). Following the municipal split, Kinloch evolved from a segregated subdivision into a segregated city, surrounded by, yet isolated from, the neighboring white communities of Berkeley and Ferguson. However, Kinloch's segregation continued well beyond the 1937 division. In a February 1969 Associated Press article, Julia Boyd, a Kinloch resident, said, “In Kinloch, you don't see prejudice against the individual, you see it against the whole community. We are locked in by the white communities.”<sup>41</sup> This pervasive discrimination was rooted in the town's early history from the establishment of segregated black servant property to the creation of the South Kinloch Park subdivision.

Kinloch defies common assumptions about both suburbanization and segregation. As an all-black suburb Kinloch contradicts the idyllic “suburb” as a middle-class white utopia. And while segregated communities are often thought of as being products of “white flight”—a term suggestive of the sudden fleeing of whites from racially diverse areas to homogenous communities—the story of Kinloch isn't one of flight. Rather, the development of Kinloch is a narrative of recurring discrimination and exploitation. Over the span of fifty years, whites, from real estate investors to school board members, confined an African American population, and eventually created, by the way of white secession, an all-black city.

Jerry Buck, “America's ‘Soul Towns,’” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 6, 1969.

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St. Louis Argus, June 4, 1915.

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## Asian-American Student Activism and Intersectionality from 1968 to 1969

*Angela Zhao*

The Third World Liberation Front student strikes at San Francisco State University from 1968 to 1969 launched race and ethnic studies to the forefront of academia and its communities of influence. In those two years, San Francisco State University was a microcosm of the national civil rights movement, which inspired students of color to combat inequality on their campus. Intersectionality among campus and community Asian-Americans and other minority groups led to the success of the campaign for race and ethnic studies. A small coalition of exasperated SFSU minority students snow-balled into an influential force once allied with minority student organizations and outside community members. Student organizing was not only successful in reforming San Francisco's academia to better serve students of color, but also in aiding more minority communities. What initially was a singular movement proliferated into a nationwide effort for students of color to engage with themselves and their ethnic communities through studies and interaction.

Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Latino and Native American student activists at San Francisco State University coalesced on a 15-point platform that was “a struggle against racism and for self-determination,”<sup>1</sup> demanding equality and unhindered autonomy for students of color academically and politically on campus. The unified organization called itself the Third World Liberation Front, or TWLF, and held the longest student strike in American history<sup>2</sup> from November of 1968 to March of 1969. TWLF declared their grievances and demands for a race and ethnic studies department in another document titled “Developing Ethnic Area Studies,” stating their intent “to be involved in exposing the racism, poverty and misrepresentation imposed on minority peoples”<sup>3</sup> by domestic institutions and organizations. The TWLF described their 15 demands as “absolutely non-negotiable,” further writing, “we will fight until these demands are met.”<sup>4</sup> Their certainty solidified their legitimacy as a

1. Third World Liberation Front, “No Deals - Fight Against Racism for Self-Determination - Grant the 15 Demands for TWLF Now!”

2. Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*, 29.

3. Third World Liberation Front, “Developing Ethnic Area Studies.”

4. Third World Liberation Front, “No Deals - Fight Against Racism for Self-Determination - Grant the 15 Demands for TWLF Now!”

movement, and their endurance allowed them to undergo America's longest student strike.

Specifically for Asian-Americans, the unprecedented frustration and vocalization of the student population during the protests marked a turning point in Asian-American history for the inception of the Asian American Movement, or AAM. Young people were defying the cultural norms of their parents that called for passivity<sup>5</sup>, and with the social and political context of the 1960s and the politicization of college campuses, Asian-American young people latched onto the ideals of self-determination and racial equality. In addition to these growing sentiments, the movement strove to bridge the divides between communities and races.

### **The v Role in Intersectionality**

At SFSU, the administration had sole control over the structure of race and ethnic studies, disregarding student input and real world applicability. For example, as part of Chinese-American studies, the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action, ICSA, published a flyer noting that the University's Chinese language department only offered the study of Mandarin, whereas the vast majority of San Francisco Chinatown residents spoke Cantonese.<sup>6</sup> The flyer also focused on how research and resolutions for the tuberculosis endemic in San Francisco's overcrowded Chinatown were being overlooked. The authors of the ICSA paper brought attention to the gaping hole in SFSU's Chinese studies, stating that "There are no adequate courses in any department or school at SF State that even begin to deal specifically with the problems of the Chinese people in this exclusionary and racist environment." The weak Chinese-American studies program galvanized students to reform the curriculum to include studies with a real-world context they could apply to their daily lives.

In addition to ICSA, the voices of other groups emerged, like the AAPA, or Asian-American Political Alliance, and the Concerned Chinese for Action and Change, a community-focused coalition that championed Chinese studies to

5. Ogbar, "Yellow Power: The Formation of Asian-American Nationalism in the Age of Black Power, 1966-1975," 31.

6. Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action, "Position Paper."

address their issues of outreach. ICSA offered tutoring programs, English classes for ESL people and college counseling for youth in San Francisco Chinatown<sup>7</sup>. They also established the Free University for Chinatown Kids, Unincorporated, or intentionally F.U.C.K, U. for short. The "University" fostered relationships between college students and Chinatown's youth through programming similar to its main initiatives.<sup>8</sup>

Together, the TWLF and the Asian-American student groups spearheaded the self-determination of the civil rights movement and continued activist momentum within San Francisco's diverse communities. In 1969, young, Chinese-American, communist revolutionaries in the San Francisco area formed a coalition called the Red Guard. They did philanthropic community outreach, including preserving a tuberculosis testing center in Chinatown and assisting Asian Legal Services and the Asian-American Draft Help Center, and evangelized their ideology by providing breakfast for Black children in housing projects and Chinatown's elderly. Later, in 1973, The Asian Student Union created student committees that engaged in outreach to Chinatown, Manilatown and Japantown.<sup>9</sup> Student organizations extended beyond campus activism and engaged in service projects in the greater community, often lending support to racial and ethnic groups different from their own.

The TWLF used visual art to publicize their movement throughout campus. An image circulating around San Francisco State College during the TWLF strikes depicts a paper chain of homogenous human doll cutouts printing from a machine labeled "Any Public School, Everywhere, Calif."<sup>10</sup> Machine functions include on/off switches for the options of "Initial Creativity Crushing," "Inter[ ] Imagination Reducing," and "Terminal Drain Washing." Engaging with Chinatown's children, the homeless, and other minority groups allowed students to thrive within the entire ethnic community, giving life and a sense of greater unity among minorities and generations. AAM's student activism overcame the machine-like education at SFSU through community outreach, as they were weary of higher education's pipeline from academics to the banalities of the professional world. They yearned to fuse academic interests and

7. Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*, 30.

8. Ferreira, *All Power to the People: A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974*, 88. See note 15 in "Campus Activism" chapter of Maeda.

9. Ogbar, "Yellow Power: The Formation of Asian-American Nationalism in the Age of Black Power, 1966-1975," 30.

10. *Any Public School, Everywhere, Calif.*

real-world experience that inevitably lead to intersecting with people from diverse backgrounds. Author Jeffrey Ogbar argues that the TWLF “simply” used the college campus as a venue to combat the overarching struggles of society, but the TWLF had more than a simple use for the space<sup>11</sup>. For them, establishing campus as a sort of command center was strategic, because students used these outreach programs as opportunities to build intersectional coalitions with communities of color. With each minority group composing about 10% or less of San Francisco’s population in 1960, activists saw intersectionality as the force strong enough to topple academia’s ivory tower and expansive enough to successfully support the diversity of minority communities<sup>12</sup>.

### Students Demand Stronger Minority Studies Programs

As student groups disseminated handouts about the movement across campus, the Asian American Political Alliance was instrumental in exposing the fragility of San Francisco State’s current race and ethnic studies program. In “A Handout Introducing the AAPA School of Ethnic Area Studies,” the AAPA and TWLF found that the current related race and ethnic studies courses “are accredited on an experimental basis” and the accreditation was reevaluated at the end of each semester, running on a semester-by-semester basis.<sup>13</sup> Establishing a comprehensive School of Ethnic Area Studies would create an “institutionally validated matrix” for its courses, making the program autonomous and permanent, as opposed to existent at the whim of SFSU administration. Ultimately, a School of Ethnic Area Studies would legitimize the history and lives of students of color in the face of an oppressive white society.

The importance of intersectionality for the School of Ethnic Area Studies stems from the Black Student Union’s success in 1967 that approved a Black Studies Department and a Department Head, Dr. Nathan Hare.<sup>14</sup> Point two of the BSU and TWLF demanded Dr. Hare “receive a full professorship and a comparable salary according to his qualifications” since “he makes less money than any other departmental head with comparable qualifications.”<sup>15</sup> They wanted a concrete Department, not just a stopgap measure administration

took to appease them. The TWLF was clear in saying the new Department of Black Studies was “NOT a School of Ethnic Studies.”<sup>16</sup> TWLF refused to be complacent with the University’s appeasement of its largest racial group, and would rest only when the demands of the organization as a whole were met. Oba T’Shaka, who would later become Professor Emeritus of the Department of Africana Studies at SFSU, writes, “In approaching the Third World groups, the BSU had the advantage of having a higher level of political consciousness.” T’Shaka establishes a hierarchy of student groups, saying that “the BSU provided the lead that Third World students followed. The Third World groups were the only ones to be able to attach their demands for an Ethnic Studies Department, and a College of Ethnic Studies, onto the BSU demands for a Department of Black Studies.”<sup>17</sup> Though he correctly alludes to the BSU being the first to mobilize on campus, he discredits the other members of TWLF who actually joined the BSU on equal footing; their demands were not secondary to the BSU’s but just as crucially woven into its core. The TWLF’s 15-point, non-negotiable demands solidified the egalitarian alliance of Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Latino and Native American students, and discredits T’Shaka’s hierarchical structuring of BSU as the paramount group.

The specific proposals of study for each Asian-American ethnic group show the students’ commitment to creating a rigorous and challenging program to house Asian-American studies, one equal in gravity to BSU’s specific demands from 1967. The comprehensiveness of these studies made them even more compelling. The students in these studies were required to meet a high academic standard, increasing the program’s legitimacy and the quality of University academics. The Filipino American Studies proposal includes a research seminar, Tagalog language studies, and culture studies through the form of Philippine Dance.<sup>18</sup> The program then details how the seminar consists of written reports and has enrollment qualifications which include mandatory instructor consent. The Philippine Dance class description details how students will not only study tribal dances, but also participate in them for a more realized cultural immersion. Other classes in the proposal include “The Philippine Commonwealth: 1901-1946. Filipino experience in local self-government under the tutelage of

11. Ogbar, “Yellow Power: The Formation of Asian-American Nationalism in the Age of Black Power, 1966-1975,” 30.

12. California Department of Finance Research, “San Francisco City and County 1960 Census.”

13. Asian American Political Alliance, “A Handout Introducing the AAPA School of Ethnic Area Studies.”

14. T’Shaka, “Africana Studies Department History: San Francisco State University,” 4.

15. T’Shaka, “Africana Studies Department History: San Francisco State University,” 4.

16. Asian American Political Alliance, “A Handout Introducing the AAPA School of Ethnic Area Studies.”

17. Third World Liberation Front, “List of 15 Demands Part I,” 22.

18. Third World Liberation Front, “Developing Ethnic Area Studies.”

the Americans” and “Philippine Independence to the Present: 1946----. A study of the role of the Philippines as a part of the Third World; the role of the Philippines as a Far Eastern nation and its role with the United States.”<sup>19</sup> The Chinese-American Studies program required that the English class designed for Chinese speakers only have Chinese instructors so as to facilitate more empathetic study.<sup>20</sup> The Latin American Studies program proposal included a biweekly seminar with a specific focus on the Bay Area Latin American studies, detailed student attendance requirements, a final presentation, a Creole textbook reading list and films to watch. The Native American Research Seminar included studies of geography and the “Three Great Civilizations,” the Mayans, Aztecs and Incas.<sup>21</sup> Though groups customized their curriculum to address their unique issues, they shared the common goals of understanding and appreciation, of peoples oppressed by society. The steadfast demand for administration to address this coalition of platforms in its entirety demonstrated that each subgroup sacrificed its own academic self-interests for the greater cause of unifying with all groups. They sought the defeat of the common enemy, the administration, over the success of any individual group.

### **The Battle Against Administration’s Handling of Race and Ethnic Minorities**

The last paragraph of the Asian American Political Alliance’s “A Handout Introducing the AAPA School of Ethnic Area Studies” declares,

If the White power structure can determine who should teach us, they can determine what we should learn. IF this happens, they will rob us of our minds, our heritage, our independent way of thinking; and this is what is happening!<sup>22</sup>

TWLF and its partners translated this emotional fervor into an exploitation of the administration, claiming that it was a political and economic juggernaut which grew in strength with each student voice it quashed. The Students for a Democratic Society published an expose called “Dudley Swim – Who Are You? An Economic Description and Political Analysis of the Trustees and

22. Asian American Political Alliance, “A Handout Introducing the AAPA School of Ethnic Area Studies.”

Regents” published on November 12, 1968. SDS found that “of just more than half the Regents and Trustees researched, they control or represent firms with aggregate assets of \$46,500,000,000 and profits (1967) of \$930,832,000,” and the board members represented “at least 6 banks, 3 newspaper chains, 2 oil companies, 3 aircraft manufactures, 2 shipping lines, 3 airlines, a half dozen real estate and insurance companies, half the food packing industry (Hunt and Delmonte), several chain stores (Broadway Hale and Nieman Marcus) and 2 giant utilities.”<sup>23</sup> The report identified administration’s self-interest as the cause of student inequality, viewing the trustees’ personal wealth and corporate ties as the cause of discrimination on campus:

Their profits are maximized and their positions secured by instilling racial hatred among white and Black workers, white and Black students. This keeps the oppressed peoples of all colors fighting each other rather than uniting against their common enemy—the monopolists.<sup>24</sup>

The University pitted students against themselves to divert attention from its own discriminatory practices. SDS targeted this exposé at all students of color, explaining to them why coalition building among racial groups was crucial to undermining administration. Intersectionality, then, was the answer to the longest protest in student history, and identifying administration as the common enemy of all students of color helped bring that goal to fruition.

Incriminating administration was not the only way to build cross-cultural student coalitions, as sensational analysis transformed into artistic satire. The Progressive Labor Party published a WANTED poster on November 10, 1969, with the name and face of SFSU President Sam I. Hayakawa. A list of his aliases included the name “Paper Puppet,” and he was described as “moves body in slightly jerky motions as if limbs were attached to strings,” and “quite frequently drapes himself in aromatic flowers, reportedly to counteract the smell of his bloody hands.”<sup>25</sup> The Progressive Labor Party identified the face that went with the body. Their caricaturing of the University President, who now embodied all of administration, its racism, its self-interest and its neglect-

23. Students for a Democratic Society, “Dudley Swim - Who Are You? An Economic and Political Analysis of the Trustees and Regents,” 2.

24. Ibid., 3.

25. Progressive Labor Party, *WANTED: Sam I. Hayakawa*.

fulness, criticized Hayakawa's malleable nature and corrupt tactics.

Appointed as President of SFSU in 1968, Dr. Hayakawa was notorious for silencing student protests. He closed campus on November 26, 1968 as his first official act, and on December 2, 1968, Dr. Hayakawa attempted to disconnect the speakers on a truck student strikers were using.<sup>26</sup> On October 15, 1969, he was presented the "Family of Man" award alongside Nixon at a New York Church. The Nichi Bei Times reported that demonstrators overtook the stage, protesting both Hayakawa and Nixon as the award's recipients. The newspaper said that a 25-year-old Theological seminary student protestor "read a statement saying Nixon's contribution to the masses 'has never been noteworthy' and that Hayakawa had used 'repressive and dehumanizing tactics' to put down student demonstrators at San Francisco State last year."<sup>27</sup> This portrayal of Dr. Hayakawa by The Nichi Bei Times, a popular San-Francisco based Japanese-American newspaper, represents the community's negative sentiments toward Hayakawa. Mr. Shuh juxtaposes Hayakawa and Nixon in the same insulting sentence; students antagonized Nixon, the President-elect, as 1969 marked the peak of the anti-Vietnam War movement. In addition, the article implies multiple protestors of his award. The paper depicts him in a negative light to its Japanese-American and potentially greater Asian-American audience, now pinning him as a common enemy of his own race.

### **Sensationalism and Satire as Forces for Advocacy**

Japanese-Americans began to mobilize in retaliation of Hayakawa's administrative incompetency. One poster specifically requested Japanese-American students attend a Japanese-American community meeting, and the Black Student Union-TWLF poster shows how student ethnic groups sponsored each other's organizing efforts. The poster's headline reads "Nisei and Sansei Students! Are you completely uninvolved, disinterested?" in thick black letters<sup>28</sup>. The headline attempts to broaden its audience, inciting all Japanese students while especially targeting the apathetic; thus, momentum is carried by its inclusivity. One of the poster's subpoints asks "Do you CARE???" evoking emotion and transcending

the frustration of the author onto the reader. The meeting's discussion topics include "issues and problems of the Campus crises (including the subject of Hayakawa) by Japanese-American faculty and students at San Francisco State College and active members of the Japanese American Community." Specifying discussion of President Hayakawa was sure to garner the interest of vehement community members. The meeting location at the local United Christ Presbyterian Church, rather than on campus, shows the movement's emphasis on community and intersectional engagement. Below the date and time, a post scriptum sentence reads "IT IS URGENT THAT ALL JAPANESE-AMERICAN STUDENTS OF SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE ATTEND THIS DISCUSSION!!!! (BRING YOUR PARENTS)". The meeting requested the involvement of the parents of Japanese-American students to close the generational gap of the movement which, at its inception, consisted only of young college members. Engaging the parents of Nisei students engaged the involvement of Japanese immigrants and fostered solidarity among generations. Chinese-Americans also addressed the disinterested and apolitical members of their community. In the paper "Chinatown and the Chinese" by L. Ling-chi Wang in 1968, he criticizes the population's idleness in the face of racial discrimination.

In short, Chinese are expected to be super-human and take the worst in stride. This popular Chinese myth is held by both the white and the Chinese alike... Chinese college students use it as an excuse for tolerating social injustice and for not asserting their rights as U.S. citizens... We Chinese act the way we are expected to act.<sup>29</sup>

Published reports like Wang's and galvanizing flyers served to mobilize people and increase involvement of students and members of the greater Asian-American community who were, beforehand, skeptical of the movement and the fruitfulness of their participation. Unity, therefore, became manifest with the all-encompassing intersection of races, genders, the passionate, and the formerly apathetic to create a powerful and cohesive coalition of activists. Spreading satiric imagery throughout campus was another way students fought

26. University Communications, "A History of SF State."

27. "Dr. Hayakawa Hits Moratorium, Wins N.Y. Church Award."

28. BSU-TWLF, "Nisei and Sansei Students! Are You Completely Uninvolved, Disinterested?"

29. Wang, "Chinatown and the Chinese."



"Happiness Is A Warm Club"



"Arm & Hammer University"

for social justice by unifying diverse causes. The poster “Happiness is a Warm Club” from 1968 grasped political and literary irony.<sup>30</sup> Below the title, a police officer holds a club. Literally, the “Warm Club” means a heated police club, referring what police used to beat protesters, which becomes warm because of its frequent usage, and the red background represents bloodshed. However, the term is also a play on words; “club” represents an insular group as seen as the elitist University administration, and warm also insinuates complacency and satisfaction with its oppressive measures. Another satiric artwork is a poster with the Arm & Hammer baking soda logo that reads “Arm & Hammer University.”<sup>31</sup> The motto of Arm & Hammer, a product used for cleaning and personal maintenance, is “The Standard of Purity.” This adaptation of the company’s logo and implied motto represents the University’s attempts at whitening and cleaning it of diversity and inclusion. The hyper masculine Vulcan god of fire’s arm holding the hammer in the logo represents the arm of the University, which physically brands itself as a symbol of white purity.<sup>32</sup> Through the use of imagery, the artist excludes the viewer, just as the University excludes people of color from getting a fair education and having equal opportunity. Yet simultaneously the artist includes the viewer too. Students of color feel connected in their oppression, as members of the cold club of injustice, and are together hammered down by the purification of society.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the strike mitigated as a result of protest exhaustion and the exhausting of resources after five months. With over 700 student arrests and gradual erosion of support, the TWLF and the Administration settled over the following stipulations. The University would establish the School of Ethnic Studies, absolve discipline against strikers past the autumn of 1969, and allocate remaining special admissions spots to students of color.<sup>33</sup> It would not, however, appoint the proposed 50 full-time faculty to the School, nor permit student self-determination in controlling the faculty and curriculum. Nevertheless, in the next few years, dozens of Asian-American courses spanning almost all the ethnicity’s subgroups emerged, proving a monumental victory for the

TWLF. In a country where Asian-Americans had always been suffocated by White people’s perceptions of them, now they had an opportunity to empower themselves and their communities through introspective study.<sup>34</sup>

These influences impacted every ethnic group in America, white, yellow, brown and black. The cohesiveness of the groups combined made the TWLF a force for change. The Asian-American movement, knowing its population was too marginal on campus to effect change alone, saw intersectionality as integral to student activism, especially after identifying a common hatred for President Hayakawa. Minority students championed interracial solidarity because they understood that all of them, no matter how distinct from each other, together suffered racism and oppression from white America.

TWLF and Asian-American student groups used declarations, exposés, satires and pamphlets to reach every niche in campus and in communities. Though the mediums and authors varied, all works shared a common goal of fostering intersectionality of the people of San Francisco, and power for change developed when people of all colors were united by sharing common bonds and common enemies. This crucial strategy overcame the administration’s fortress; inclusivity fueled the movement and further proved that the administration’s insularity was the cause of its demise. Decades after, universities across the nation still take after the TWLF at SFSU, holding protests and further unlocking the national movement for Asian-American studies and Race and Ethnic studies. During the student activism from 1968 to 1969, Asian-American, Black, Latino and Native American students realized the effectiveness of intersectionality in championing their cause, one united in creating an education that supports students of color to understand themselves and serve their people. Though these students came from diverse backgrounds, their ability to surrender self-interests for the selfless collective remarkable and propelled the cause of coalition building forward in striving for the progress of all people of color.

30. Beal, *Happiness Is a Warm Club*.

31. Unknown, *Arm & Hammer University*.

32. “Arm & Hammer Milestones.”

33. Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*, 43.

34. *Ibid.*, 44.

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## Change from the Periphery:

Christian Wilhelm Von Dohm, David De Issac Cohen Nassy, and an Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters

*Nora Katz*

It is a warm night in the small Dutch colony of Suriname. Members of the Surinaamse Lettervrienden, an inter-religious Surinamese literary society founded in 1786, have been invited to a public discussion and lecture. The lecture is sure to be an interesting one, dealing with topics that these men have read about in books and letters sent across the ocean from the European continent. These colonial residents have never traveled outside of the small colony, and their only contact with the world beyond Suriname occurs through correspondence and reading books sent from Holland to Suriname's library, which is said to rival its North American counterparts. One person arrives early to the lecture, and is surprised to find every seat vacant. As the hour approaches, it becomes clear that he is the only person who will be in attendance. Hardly seeing the point of presenting a paper to one person, the lecturer leaves.<sup>1</sup>

Situations like these, though seemingly comical, were a serious challenge to Surinamese leaders who were desperately trying to create a colonial intellectual community similar to the ones they'd heard so much about in Europe. Surinamese Jews, who considered themselves the intellectual elite of the colony, recognized that throughout the eighteenth century, the European intelligentsia were carrying on public intellectual conversations via the written word, sharing their ideas about equality and liberty with the general population. But what happened when someone who lived and worked far from Europe wanted to participate in this discourse? The Regenten, or Sephardic (Iberian Jewish) community leaders of the Jewish population in Dutch Suriname, were eager to participate in the pertinent discussions of religious freedom that they understood to be happening in Europe. The leader of the Regenten, David de Isaac Cohen Nassy (1747-1806), was an especially prominent and well-educated member of this community who yearned to be included in the discourse among men whom he saw as his peers. When Christian Wilhelm

1. David de Isaac Cohen Nassy, et al., *Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam, 1788*, translated by Simon Cohen (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1974): 164.

von Dohm (1751-1820), a Prussian historian and a strong supporter of Jewish emancipation, published his *On the Civil Amelioration of the Jews* in 1781, the Regenten were eager to respond. They sent him a letter in 1786, congratulating him on a work that they saw as a turning point for the treatment of Jews in Enlightened Europe. He responded in 1787, asking for “some details on the advantages which your wise and enlightened government accords you.”<sup>2</sup> The Regenten responded in turn with their substantial, exhaustively researched, and decidedly liberal *Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam*.

This research puts these two texts into conversation with each other. As a prominent intellectual, Christian Wilhelm von Dohm was an insider in the Prussian court and yet held views that placed him in opposition to other prominent European thinkers of his time. David de Isaac Cohen Nassy and the Regenten saw themselves as insiders (as Portuguese residents of the Dutch Republic) but simultaneously as outsiders – members of a minority religious group and residents of an obscure South American colony that they had never had the chance to leave. As direct products of and contributors to the Enlightenment, Dohm and Nassy positioned themselves as simultaneously outsiders and insiders in order to effect significant political and social change within the intellectual movement.

### Christian Wilhelm von Dohm

A councilor in the Prussian government, Christian Wilhelm von Dohm was a “radical dei[st],” and his writings were meant to garner attention from heads of state as well as the general public.<sup>3</sup> Dohm’s work *Civil Amelioration* is a relatively short text that is very much a product of its geographical and temporal context. He went against what many people in Europe were thinking about Judaism, while simultaneously writing at the precise moment when Jewish emancipation was up for discussion: “This was the finest flower of the enlightened Prussian bureaucracy, which had set as its purpose the rationalization of the state, making of all nationals productive, useful, and therefore happier members of civil society.”<sup>4</sup> Dohm makes it clear that he believes

that Jews have been mistreated by Christian society and therefore have not been able to realize their full potential. Dohm “attributed Jewish immorality to Christian laws,” which he saw as stifling Jews’ ability to fully participate in European culture and society.<sup>5</sup> His argument revolves around creating a more inclusive Prussian constitution, offering specific policy revisions that would make Jews more equipped to live peacefully and fruitfully on the European continent. Dohm wanted to see Jews integrated into European society, and his revolutionary work was one of many that fueled a serious and challenging debate about religious freedoms in an Enlightenment world.<sup>6</sup>

### David de Isaac Cohen Nassy

David de Isaac Cohen Nassy, too, is a challenging historical figure. A prominent physician and scholar, he was born and raised in Suriname but tried to leave the colony in search of a better, more religiously tolerant society. He found this tolerance when he moved to Philadelphia in 1792, having grown frustrated with the lack of liberalization in Suriname.<sup>7</sup> Even before the publication of the *Essay*, however, Nassy was a prominent figure in Jewish Atlantic life. He came from the Nassy family, which had produced numerous Dutch military heroes as well as the founder of the Jewish colony in Suriname, David Nassy (two generations removed from David de Isaac Cohen Nassy). David Nassy the elder (1612-1685) was likely born in Portugal, but he moved to Amsterdam by 1634.<sup>8</sup> He lived a nomadic life, spending time in Dutch Brazil and Curaçao before signing papers with the Dutch West India Company that granted him the land he needed to establish a Jewish colony on the South American mainland. Thus, in 1657, Nassy had established a Jewish colony with a tax-exempt status and the right to build a synagogue.<sup>9</sup> The agricultural community of Joden Savanne and the port city of Paramaribo were Jewish colonial centers, providing the Jews with connections to others in the colony as they accumulated wealth first through cash crops (specifically sugar cane and coffee) and then through Atlantic trade systems. In 1659, Nassy left Suriname to found a new colony in Cayenne. His robust relationship with the Dutch led him to move around and across the Atlantic numerous times, constantly making new investments

2. Dohm, letter reproduced in the *Historical Essay*, 13.

3. David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987): 24.

4. Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism Through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992): 275.

5. Manuel, 276.

6. Manuel, 275.

7. Jacob R. Marcus, “Foreword,” *Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam*, 1788, translated by Simon Cohen (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1974): xi.

8. Wim Klooster, “Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs: The Founders of the Jewish Settlements in Dutch America, 1650s and 1660s,” *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800*, ed. Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009): 43.

9. Klooster, *Atlantic Diasporas*, 44.

in different commercial ventures. Various groups of Jews moved through the Atlantic and settled permanently and impermanently in Nassy's colonies, but it seems that a core group of Jewish merchants and community leaders remained with Nassy throughout his travels.<sup>10</sup> Why were these Sephardic Jews such attractive colonial inhabitants? A new colony requires a stable population and a leader with economic acumen. The Dutch had found that shrewd leadership in Nassy, and they found that stable population in the Jews displaced by European conflict. Who better to populate a new colony than a group of people firmly tied together by religion and community in search of a new homeland? Suriname, then, was a safe haven for Jews who had been drifting around the Atlantic since the Reconquista.

David de Isaac Cohen Nassy (who shares the elder Nassy's name but was born over a century later) followed his ancestors and assumed the role of the leader of the Sephardic Jewish community in Suriname. He is believed to be the primary author of the Essay, as he was the leader of the Regenten. Here, I will assume that Nassy is the primary author of the Essay, but I will try to be as inclusive as possible by also referring to the Essay's authors in the plural. The Essay is a response to Dohm's book, following a series of letters exchanged between Dohm and Nassy. Five years after *Civil Amelioration* was published, the Regenten sent a letter to Dohm congratulating him on his successful work and mentioning the relative liberty that they enjoyed under the Dutch government. Dohm replied enthusiastically, requesting more detailed information about life in Suriname, particularly having to do with relationships between Jews and gentiles, commercial activities permitted to the community, property ownership, taxation, family restrictions, and military service.<sup>11</sup> Nassy and the Regenten, in turn, responded with the Essay, an over-200-page text detailing the history of the colony with a Jewish slant. The work was published in the Surinamese Dutch capital city of Paramaribo in 1788. The Essay, as well as Dohm's *Civil Amelioration*, uses the language of the Enlightenment to join in the conversation about Jews that was happening throughout the last decades of the eighteenth century.

10. Klooster, *Atlantic Diasporas*, 46.

11. Dohm, letter reproduced in the *Historical Essay*, 13.

Although Nassy's book deals with many of the same issues as Dohm's, the text has a very different structure and thesis. The Essay was meant for a wide audience, despite being published as a response to an individual's correspondence. It sought to redefine colonial history with an emphasis on how Jews contributed fully to every aspect of colonial life. The book celebrates Jewish freedoms in Suriname while simultaneously making it clear that Jews deserve a central place in Christian Europe. The book does not argue for assimilation; these men were relatively content with their place as colonial residents of Suriname. However, the Essay argues that their contributions to the colony as its founding members and often some of its most economically productive citizens deserve recognition. They state that "if one carefully examines the various events of the colony, the character of its first settlers, their capacity and even their wealth, one will see that Surinam had the good fortune of having been founded and then enlarged by worthy people whom the persecutions of the Inquisition, that of Cromwell, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a thousand other circumstances threw together there as though by chance."<sup>12</sup> The book is divided into two sections: the first details the history of the colony from the first Dutch settlements in Suriname, and the second provides insights into contemporary cultural, intellectual, and political life.

## Enlightenment

It is important to attempt to conceptualize the world of these sources. I'll begin by characterizing the nature of the relationship between Dohm and Nassy. In many ways, this relationship is very typical of what Dena Goodman calls the "epistolary commerce" of the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> According to Goodman, this type of exchange was very common: "readers often responded to writers by writing to them directly."<sup>14</sup> This network of letters was distinctive and fascinating: "the reciprocity of correspondence both reflected and strengthened the sense of equality that structured relations among citizens of the Republic of Letters. Reciprocity was the fundamental virtue of the republic."<sup>15</sup> By Goodman's standards, then, Dohm and Nassy were ideal citizens of the Republic of Letters. Dohm and Nassy were contributing to

12. Nassy, 36.

13. Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994): 142.

14. Goodman, 142. See also Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau," in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984).

15. Goodman, 18.

a larger Enlightenment conversation about the role of Judaism in the European metropolitan and colonial community. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), both of whom were contemporaries of Dohm and Nassy, can provide fruitful information about how Jews and non-Jews conversed about Judaism in the Enlightenment world. Moses Mendelssohn was a powerful voice in the Enlightenment, a German Jew who combined his strong religious faith with a complete devotion to Enlightenment ideals. By the mid-18th century, his contemporaries called him “the German Socrates.”<sup>16</sup> Mendelssohn was known first as an intellectual voice and second as a Jew<sup>17</sup> – this dual identity and the relative unimportance of his religion in his intellectual relationships points to his ability to participate fully in Enlightenment discourse despite coming from a very different cultural background than many of his peers. A “philosophical soulmate”<sup>18</sup> of Mendelssohn, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was a non-Jew who came to the conclusion that Jews deserved equal treatment in the Enlightenment world. He wrote the play *Nathan the Wise*, “a scathing indictment of the intolerance that Lessing considered the scourge of his age.”<sup>19</sup> The play deals with the relationships between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through the eyes of the character Nathan the Wise (likely based on Mendelssohn), and argues that it is neither possible nor important to know which group consists of God’s chosen people.

It is from this intellectual legacy that Dohm likely drew his inspiration. He identifies the challenges and triumphs of Enlightenment, joining the ranks of thinkers like Lessing and Mendelssohn to argue that tolerance should be the movement’s primary goal. Both Dohm and Nassy were aware of European dialogue about Jewish rights and freedoms. Both men were outsiders (socially, politically, religiously, or otherwise), which meant that their contributions were potentially subject to more scrutiny but were also potentially more fruitful. Dohm contradicted much of the traditional European thought of this time (although he was very much in line with Mendelssohn and Lessing). Nassy, too, had radical ideas, but his outsider status came from his position as a religious minority in an outlying colony without extensive European contact. As insiders, Dohm and Nassy needed to define the conversations in which they were

16. Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994): xi.

17. Arkush, xi.

18. Ronald Schecter, introduction to *Nathan the Wise* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004): 8.

19. Schecter, 12.

participating. As outsiders, they needed to prove themselves to be worthy of participating in this conversation. Toeing this line, both authors take great pains to define, critique, and praise Enlightenment throughout their works.

Christian Wilhelm von Dohm was, in many ways, primarily concerned with the concept of Enlightenment itself. His work is decidedly a product of the Enlightenment; he is very concerned with describing “our Enlightened times,” which he characterizes as both laudable and lacking in terms of their egalitarian goals.<sup>20</sup> Dohm is clear to distinguish the intolerant past from the semi-utopian present: “Like the rest of the European countries, the German states still show traces of the dark centuries in their constitutions regarding the Jews.”<sup>21</sup> This distinction between past and present, between darkness and light, is an essential part of his work. In reference to the Jews, he asks:

What might be the reasons that induced the governments of almost all European states almost unanimously to deal so harshly with the Jewish nation? What has induced them (even the wisest) to make this one exception from the laws of an otherwise enlightened policy according to which all citizens should be incited by uniform justice, support of trade, and the greatest possible freedom of action so as to contribute to the general welfare?<sup>22</sup>

In one breath, Dohm simultaneously praises and tears down Enlightenment governments, lauding their egalitarian policies and criticizing their treatment of Jews. He calls these states “wise,” but hints at the need for a complete overhaul of their socio-political systems. Dohm was conditioned to respect the Enlightenment as a positive departure from the dark past, but he still sees darkness in the present. Perhaps, according to Dohm, the problem was that Enlightenment had not entered far enough into the European psyche: “Portugal and Spain prove in this point, too, that enlightenment has not yet penetrated to any great extent to their lands. Holland has for a long time enriched itself by receiving the Jews expelled from these countries, who brought besides their own industry also considerable wealth.”<sup>23</sup> Referring to the idea that Enlightenment perhaps began with Jews, Dohm states that “it becomes very probable that there was a

20. Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, *Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews* (1781), translated by Helen Lederer (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1957): 45.

21. Dohm, 39.

22. Dohm, 5.

23. Dohm, 40.

time when European Enlightenment was found mainly with the circumcised.”<sup>24</sup> This is high praise for the Jewish population, and serves to sow seeds of doubt in Enlightenment mindsets about the origins of the intellectual movement. Dohm’s critique of the Enlightenment, therefore, comes from his very real concern for the welfare, status, and equal treatment of the European Jewish population.

David de Isaac Cohen Nassy likely would have been keenly aware of this intellectual tradition; his critique of the Enlightenment begins at the opening of his introduction. In a very similar style to Dohm, Nassy’s work defines and characterizes the Enlightenment. The introduction to the Essay opens with a plea, a call for help, a statement about the sorry state of Jewish emancipation in Europe and its colonial outposts.<sup>25</sup> The authors of the Essay state that they have been wronged and therefore they need to set the record straight. Next, they state that, as long as they are critiquing European views on Judaism, it is only logical for them to offer their own insights on the challenge of integrating Jews into Christian Europe. The authors of the Essay have not been invited to enter this larger conversation; instead, they create their own opportunity to participate in Enlightenment discourse. By contrasting Europeans’ intellectual prowess with their intolerance, the authors of the Essay begin a critique of Enlightenment views on Judaism with very little offense.

Of course, not all Enlightenment writers were as liberal or tolerant as Mendelssohn and Lessing. Christian Wilhelm von Dohm faced immense pressure from the Prussian community throughout the publication of his work. *Civil Amelioration* is a response to an earlier series of texts, written by Johann David Michaelis in 1770 through 1775: “as one of the Enlightenment’s foremost authorities on – and admirers of – ancient Judaism, Michaelis also took an engaged role in the early debates on whether to grant contemporary Jews rights.”<sup>26</sup> Michaelis and Dohm were locked in a heated debate about what should be done about Europe’s substantial Jewish population. Dohm’s publication date is, therefore, quite strategic: he is participating in a larger debate about Jewish liberties in Europe and around the world. Michaelis’ argument focuses

on improving the status of Jews by removing them from Europe. According to Jonathan Hess, “as a ‘southern race’ descended from the ancient Israelites, the Jewish Diaspora apparently need[ed] to be displaced once again, sent to a Caribbean climate analogous to its place of origin where Jews might become colonial subjects promoting the wealth of the European fatherland.”<sup>27</sup> Dohm’s argument, of course, is that Jews should remain in Europe and that Christians and political authorities should make more of an effort to accept them as worthy citizens on the mainland. However, Hess makes it clear that Dohm and Michaelis have much more in common than it appears: “both perceive contemporary Jews as ‘degenerate,’ and both solve the Jewish problem by recourse to visions of colonial expansion, albeit very different ones.”<sup>28</sup> Michaelis and Dohm’s debate was at the center of emerging Enlightenment arguments about race, religion, and nationalism. Michaelis’ proposal to deport Jews to a European sugar colony fed directly into newfound ideas about Jews as a degenerate race.<sup>29</sup> Both authors sought to move Europe away from its past: Michaelis wanted to allow Christian Europe to move beyond Judaism by removing Jews from the continent, while Dohm sought to improve Jewish living conditions by giving Jews the opportunity to participate in the traditional agricultural and crafts traditions of rural Europe.

Nassy, too, fights his own intolerant demons. He opens the Essay with an attack on Voltaire, blaming him for general European prejudices against the Jewish community: “This great man, meant to enlighten the world, in the midst of his digressions against religions, preaching tolerance, trampling all cults under foot, conjointly took unfortunate pleasure in crushing the Jewish community and making it hideous in the eyes of the world.”<sup>30</sup> If nothing else, this striking opening statement is an incredibly effective way to get attention. Voltaire was a prominent member of the European intellectual community, and criticism of him was very much in vogue. Adam Sutcliffe characterizes the difficulty of Voltaire’s intellectual stance when it came to Judaism: “Voltaire’s judaeophobia is repeatedly off-set by his commitment to universal tolerance – and vice versa. Individual Jews, as Jews, are hopelessly immersed in a culture of absurdity, but, as individuals, they are both entitled to toleration and deserving

24. Dohm, 31.

25. Nassy, 15.

26. Jonathan M. Hess, “Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary: Orientalism and the Emergence of Racial Antisemitism in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 57.

27. Hess, 59.

28. *ibid*

29. Hess, 88.

30. Nassy, 15.

of sympathy for their suffering.”<sup>31</sup> Voltaire’s main critique of Judaism came from the religion’s reliance on the Old Testament, a document that he sought to dismiss as an absurd fairy tale. Jonathan Hess describes a “theological antagonism toward Judaism” which was a key element of Enlightenment fears and concerns about the religion, and Voltaire seems to play directly into this prejudice.<sup>32</sup> Voltaire’s problem with Jews and Jewishness, then, stems from his distrust for organized religion. However, he seems to critique Judaism particularly harshly, potentially because he came from a cultural context in which disparaging Judaism was in vogue or at least normalized. This cultural context was rife with opportunities for critique, and Nassy and the Regenten leaped at the opportunity to argue against Voltaire.

### Diaspora

Both authors exist at a distinct turning point in the Jewish historical narrative. This narrative is a nomadic one – with voluntary and forced movements all over the world – rather than one that is specifically centered around a single homeland. “The basic social unit of the Diaspora,” according to Sophia Menache, “was the community (kehillah).”<sup>33</sup> This social unit was recognized by secular governments, giving Jews special rights and privileges as members of a community within a larger society. Unfortunately, this community structure often relegated Jews to the status of second-class citizens because they were differentiated as the “other” in largely Christian societies. Jews had comparatively high literacy rates and were likely to own books, giving them the vocabulary with which to communicate within and between communities and with outsiders. Perhaps the most powerful way in which Jews participated in the larger world was through trade, becoming increasingly wealthy economic agents by using their established connections with Jewish communities around the world to create trading routes.<sup>34</sup>

What we consider to be the Diaspora had largely ended by the eighteenth century. Jews remained marginal citizens, migrating through the Atlantic and around Europe in search of political and religious acceptance. They found

this acceptance, to varying degrees, in the Dutch Republic. The Dutch valued Jewish business acumen and tended to be much more religiously tolerant than many other European powers. By the seventeenth century, Jews had moved to Dutch New World colonies by the thousands, establishing themselves as traders and cultural brokers. The Dutch colony of Suriname is somewhat of an outlier; Jews moved there first to start an agricultural colony, and for over 100 years they thrived on cash crops of sugar cane and coffee. By the late eighteenth century, however, the plantation culture of Suriname declined, and more and more Jews lived in the port town of Paramaribo.<sup>35</sup> These Jews were of Portuguese heritage, having moved from the Iberian Peninsula to Brazil to Amsterdam and through multiple Atlantic colonies before settling in Suriname. By the late eighteenth century, the majority of the Jewish community in Suriname had been born there and had never traveled outside of the colony. Despite the relative permanence of Jewish settlement in Suriname, this community was decidedly Atlantic, interacting with its Dutch benefactors and other communities around the ocean through communication, travel, and trade.

David de Isaac Cohen Nassy and the Regenten came out of this historical tradition, giving their views on the future of Judaism a very different color than Dohm’s. Unquestionably members of the Jewish diaspora, the Regenten did not have the typical life experiences of most European thinkers, meaning that a portion of their outsider status was attributable to their history. While the majority of Nassy’s text is dedicated to the historical study of the Jews in Suriname, the preface and introduction provide a compelling call to action for European governments to accept Jews as a valuable group of citizens, economic agents, and cultural brokers. The Essay is meant to “contribute to some extent to the welfare of a suffering part of the human race” by characterizing the Jewish colonial experience.<sup>36</sup> The Regenten desired a level of political and social freedom that was not yet afforded to them by the Dutch Republic: “we have demonstrated, with all the force of which we are capable, the rights of our colonists in general, and the protection which they rightfully claim and await in accordance with the justice and equity of their mother country and the merchants of Holland...”<sup>37</sup> The Jews of Suriname do not propose a plan of

31. Adam Sutcliffe, “The Ambiguities of Enlightenment: Voltaire and the Jews,” in *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 243.

32. Hess, 57.

33. Sophia Menache, “Communication in the Jewish Diaspora: A Survey,” *Communication in the Jewish Diaspora* ed. Sophia Menache (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996): 15.

34. Menache, 48.

35. Jonathan I. Israel, “The Jews of Dutch America,” *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1500-1800*, ed. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001): 336.

36. Nassy, 5.

action like Dohm's; they do not even outline specific political or social changes that must take place in order for Jews to have a sustainable European future. Instead, they use nebulous terms like "freedom" to loosely define their desires for an ideal Dutch Republic. On one hand, this makes sense. The Essay is primarily an informational work, meant to argue that Jews deserve a much more prominent place in Suriname's historical narrative. The Essay is concerned with sharing Jewish life as it is, not necessarily making concrete arguments as to how it can be improved. The Regenten existed in a very specific socio-political sphere, delicately balancing their status as tenuous colonial citizens with their status as religious outsiders. This balancing act was, in many ways, a direct product of their status as Atlantic Jews.

An outsider to the Jewish experience but an insider as it related to Enlightenment views on history, Dohm deals with the diaspora with more temporal depth. He goes all the way back to ancient Egypt and Rome in order to characterize the Jewish experience.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Dohm applauds the treatment that Jews received under Roman rule and states that the rise of Christianity is to blame for the Jews' downfall: "the Jews would have stayed more enlightened and less corrupt had not fanatic church fathers later talked weak emperors into abolishing the wise laws of their predecessors, and to prove their zeal for the religion of love by treating non-Christians without charity."<sup>39</sup> Dohm's preoccupation with the past is difficult to understand. A plausible explanation is that Dohm sought an example, a yardstick by which to measure the progress of the treatment of Jews. Seeing no such comparative case in contemporary society, Dohm turned to the deep past. Dohm's characterization of the Jews as members of a diaspora further supports his beliefs about the sources of prejudice against them: "the dispersal of the nation over almost all parts of the known world, the close connection of their various groups, and their greater culture and knowledge, gave them advantages in commerce against the ruling peoples of Christian Europe..."<sup>40</sup> Thus, in Dohm's eyes, jealousy and economic competition drove Christians to dislike and attempt to take advantage of Jews. For Dohm (and to a lesser extent for Nassy), the diaspora contributed in a significant way to the contemporary Jewish experience, specifically as it related to mistreatment by non-Jews.

37. Nassy, 9.

38. Dohm, 23.

39. Dohm, 25.

40. Dohm, 31.

## Mistreatment of the Jews

Christian Wilhelm von Dohm's work is, at its core, a text that argues wholeheartedly and thoroughly for Jewish emancipation through analysis of the mistreatment of the contemporary Jewish population. Dohm refers to Jews as "unfortunate Asiatic refugees," a cultural group that has long suffered at the hands of Christians.<sup>41</sup> He spends much of his work describing and critiquing this reprehensible treatment of Jews, calling for widespread reform and reconsideration of the position of Jews in society. He describes "this unfortunate, who has no fatherland, whose activity is restricted on all sides, whose talents have no scope for free utterance, in whose virtue nobody believes, for whom honor is almost non-existent..."<sup>42</sup> Dohm's language aligns with Enlightenment conversations, as demonstrated by Moses Mendelssohn's writings, and it views the Jews as a pitiable group rather than one that deserves to be antagonized. His harsh words about the treatment of Jews play directly into his plans for the future of Judaism in Europe.

Dohm also focuses on what it is to be Jewish – in this regard, of course, he is an outsider. Raised Christian and eventually adopting deist beliefs, Dohm was hardly an internal representative of the Jewish community. He describes the Jewish experience from Roman times to the present day, mentioning "fanatical religious hatred" as a key element of this experience.<sup>43</sup> He decries the treatment of Jews in specific terms: "never has any nation had to suffer such cruel and inhuman persecutions for such a long period of time. If there was any natural catastrophe it was assumed that the Jews were the unfortunate cause that had angered heaven and that their extermination would reconcile God."<sup>44</sup> With this poor treatment, how could Jews possibly be expected to participate fully and effectively in society? Dohm's critique is, surprisingly, more biting than that of Nassy and the Regenten. Did Dohm have more freedom to speak openly about the Jewish experience as a non-Jew? The Regenten were likely wary to offer such harsh criticisms of their experiences because they remained at the mercy of the Dutch Republic, whose policies could change at a moment's notice.

41. Dohm, 1.

42. Dohm, 3.

43. Dohm, 22.

44. Dohm, 34.

In the Essay, the Regenten are careful to avoid harsh criticisms of their colonial leaders and other European powers. They spend the vast majority of the book presenting past events with very little interpretation or analysis. How is it possible, then, to characterize their work as one that argues for Jewish emancipation? The work does contain powerful statements about the potential for the improvement of the Jewish condition, which come at the beginning and end of the Essay. These serve as bookends and framing information for a work that, without these introductory and concluding comments, would be very different. At the beginning of the Essay, Nassy states, "...without fearing criticism, we have ventured to compose this work, the result of which and the consequences which may derive from it will perhaps contribute to some extent to the welfare of a suffering part of the human race."<sup>45</sup> This statement leads the reader directly into the first pages of the first section of the Essay, demonstrating that what could be an innocuous and wholly descriptive historical text is actually meant to serve as the basis for changes in the treatment of Jews in Europe and the Atlantic. In the last paragraph of the book, the Regenten write, "...if this work, despite its faults, is worthy of attracting the attention of the public and of effecting in some manner a change favorable to a community that has been unfortunate for so many centuries, then we shall consider ourselves happy."<sup>46</sup> Certainly, the goal is understated. But its placement in the book's final paragraph could not be more strategic. This reimagining of colonial history can effect change on a global scale, and the Regenten are sure to emphasize it.

In the Essay, what it is to be Jewish stems from extensive cultural and community connections. The extensive historical context that the Regenten provide in the Essay suggests that something of what it is to be Jewish in Suriname is to be aware of history, celebrating the community's triumphs and learning from its failures. The most intriguing elements of Nassy's depiction of the Jewish experience are presented in the second half of the Essay, where the Regenten describe contemporary life in Suriname. They bemoan the lack of intellectual life in the colony, claiming that the educational system has not equipped the colonial population with the tools that they need to succeed globally.<sup>47</sup> Howev-

45. Nassy, 5.

46. Nassy, 168.

er, they also describe the extensive libraries and book collections in the colony, all of which are owned or managed by Jews. Therefore, at least according to the Regenten, to be Jewish is to be an intellectual leader with historical awareness and cultural acumen. Unfortunately, the Regenten also recognize that an enormous part of what it means to be Jewish in eighteenth-century Suriname is to experience prejudice and discrimination.

### Fixing the Problem of Prejudice

Both authors seek to explore the future of Judaism in the enlightened world, characterizing their expectations for religious freedom and tolerance. Both are outsiders, arguing against the status quo for more equal treatment for Jews. Dohm's argument is one of political inclusion. His work is peppered with utopian comments, but his idealism for the future of European Jews becomes most prominent in the last pages of his work. He lays out a set of nine points that he sees as essential in making "Jews more useful and happier members of society."<sup>48</sup> His basic points are outlined here:

1. Jews must have "equal rights with all other subjects."<sup>49</sup>
2. Jews should be encouraged to pursue all economic outlets, and should potentially be discouraged from trade, at least at first.
3. Jews should be encouraged to go into agriculture.
4. Jews should not have a complete monopoly over one specific area of the market.
5. Jews must seek the highest possible levels of education.
6. The state should take responsibility for educating the Jewish population.
7. Christians should be re-educated so as to eliminate all of their prejudices against Jews.
8. Jews must be allowed to worship and build synagogues freely.
9. Jews must be allowed to govern themselves according to ancient Jewish laws.

In Enlightenment eyes, these tenets provided a very clear road map for a potential solution to the problem of Jews in Europe. Much like Mendelssohn and many other authors of this time, Dohm argued for assimilation and re-education. Perhaps in true Enlightenment fashion, these tenets revolve around

47. Nassy, 163.

48. Dohm, 60.

49. Dohm, 60.

the liberties that are afforded to marginalized populations through education and following complex legal codes. His nine tenets are meant to provide a basic outline for a national constitution meant to include Jews as newly minted citizens.

It is in this realm that Dohm's most powerful argument emerges. He describes what it is to be a citizen "in our lands," characterizing the European continent as a united entity despite national differences.<sup>50</sup> He is concerned with questions of liberty and equality, stating that to be a citizen is to be free. The issue of citizenship arises on the first page of his text: "in most...states the Jews were received under most cumbersome conditions, not as citizens, but as inhabitants and subjects only."<sup>51</sup> This impactful language would have resonated with thinkers who were considering national identity in a new light. It would especially have resonated with Jews (like Nassy) who were describing themselves as existing outside of national identities. Within the European political system, "the Jew, too, is entitled to this privilege [of full citizenship], to this love."<sup>52</sup> This language of citizenship and acceptance would have been very appealing to Jews of this era, who traced their history back centuries but who were also products of a very recent diasporic movement out of the Iberian peninsula. Dohm uses Christian Europe as the standard by which to judge other cultures, an ideal that fit into other Enlightenment conversations about cultural and social change. Suriname was exotic – a new, rarely discussed place where this cultural group he so supported had found peace. In addition, Surinamese history provided a direct parallel for Dohm's desires for Jewish life: "I do not wish to see the Jews encouraged to become owners of big estates or tenants," he says, "but peasants working their own land."<sup>53</sup> In Joden Savanne, the parents and grandparents of the Regenten had formed an agricultural system that met many of Dohm's requirements for an ideal Jewish community. As descendants of those who created Dohm's semi-utopian Jewish community, the Regenten argue for socio-cultural inclusion. They address this history of forced movement with a series of pointed questions:

Does not policy at all prescribe that the Jews of Surinam are to be regarded

50. Dohm, 45.  
51. Dohm, 1.  
52. Dohm, 45.  
53. Dohm, 63.

with more favorable eyes? Do not Jews, rich or poor, always remain in the places in which they have once settled? Does not the contrary happen every day with individuals of other groups?...How many examples of this nature could be cited on this subject in order to prove incontestably that it is only the Jews who are indeed the true citizens and inhabitants of Suriname?<sup>54</sup>

Nassy and the Regenten make it clear that Jews can form permanent settlements if they are allowed to do so, thereby addressing the diaspora and arguing that the Jews are in Suriname to stay. This series of questions rings true with the rest of the text. In general, Nassy simply wants his community to be recognized as a significant contributor to colonial life, especially socially. He states, "the Jews have made, as we have already proved in numerous passages of this work, the same progress in Surinam as the Christians; they were as rich there, and as good planters as the Christians, and, like them, they have become impoverished."<sup>55</sup> Christians and Jews, then, experienced similar hardships in Suriname – and they should be treated equally in the world at large. The Regenten even mention Jewish participation in military history, leveraging their sacrifices in war as evidence for their need to be included as equals in European society. However, the argument remains social. The Regenten do not recommend specific political moves for the Dutch government, nor do they seem to be actively soliciting structural change. They clearly want to be thought of as social equals in the colonial community. But inquiring minds still need to know: is that really all they want?

The text does provide a legal argument, albeit in a much subtler manner than Dohm's. The Essay describes (in limited detail) the legal maneuvers that were necessary for David Nassy to establish the Jewish colony in Suriname, characterizing the various Dutch governors of the colony and describing the Jewish leaders (especially David and Samuel Nassy) who orchestrated agreements between the Dutch and the Jews.<sup>56</sup> This rather unspecific treatment of legal issues is characteristic of the Essay. But midway through the appendix, included without comment from the authors, is a section titled "Justificatory Documents for the Clarification of the Work with Reference to the History

54. Nassy, 108.  
55. Nassy, 100.

of the Jewish Community Established in Surinam.”<sup>57</sup> Here, the Regenten have published the full text of the charter between the elder Nassy and the Dutch West India Company establishing the colony in Cayenne. The reader can peruse countless letters detailing legal battles between Paramaribo and Amsterdam, dealing with issues such as marriage laws, land disputes, property rights, religious authority, and military action. The documents speak volumes about the logistical and legal red tape surrounding Jewish existence in Suriname, offering examples for Dohm as he encouraged his fellow Prussians to engage in these same legal struggles. In these letters, the Jews write candidly about their synagogues, community relationships, and material possessions. They offer criticisms and ask directly for policy changes. Though the main text of the Essay itself remains non-confrontational, the appendix provides evidence for the solidly activist approach that the Regenten and their predecessors took to effecting colonial change. Nassy includes these documents, then, as a silent commentary on Dohm’s explicit statements about the necessity of specific legal reconfigurations.

### **An Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters?**

This project raises questions about the realities of the particular world in which Nassy and Dohm lived. The primary (and perhaps most contested) of these is the idea of an Atlantic Jewish republic of letters – that is, a network of written communication spanning an increasingly interconnected oceanic sphere. This is a topic for another researcher – but it is one worth mentioning. This idea of a republic of letters is familiar to Enlightenment scholars, but broadening the republic to include the non-European community might cause discomfort. Despite apparent reluctance to expand the traditional definition of the republic of letters, it is quite logical to place Nassy and his colonial contemporaries in this network of verbose communication. We can complicate this concept further by introducing the relatively new field of Jewish Atlantic studies into the equation. In the Jewish Atlantic, how did information travel? What was the nature of communication? Was Judaism a defining factor in how these conversations were conducted? Arthur Kiron is quick to establish the exis-

tence of networks of Jews in the Atlantic from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries: “the relationships that emerged were constantly in motion, a fluid circulation of people and ideas, business and news.”<sup>58</sup> Kiron argues for the existence of “a contemporary self-consciousness” in the mid-nineteenth century, at which point Jews in the Atlantic were aware of their existence within larger networks.<sup>59</sup> Dohm and Nassy were active participants in this “conscious cultural project constituted by a network of opinion makers, information providers, authors, and translators who exploited the agency of print both for positive and apologetic purposes.”<sup>60</sup> Based on their depictions of the Jewish past and present, their characterizations of the Enlightenment, and their hopes for the future of Judaism in Europe, it is clear that Dohm and Nassy were strategic and prolific members of an Atlantic Jewish republic of letters, using the network to their advantage in order to gain access to a potentially more prominent European conversation.

It is clear, at least to this historian, that Nassy’s work represents a significant contribution and response to the Enlightenment. With strategy, poise, and a command of discursive practices, the Regenten and Dohm were able to contribute meaningfully to the Enlightenment from its periphery. Although Nassy and the Regenten often bemoaned a lack of literary intellectual life within Suriname’s borders, their Essay represented a significant contribution to a much larger, more impactful Atlantic and European conversation.

56. Nassy, 39.

57. Nassy, 183.

58. Arthur Kiron, “An Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters,” *Jewish History* 20 (2006): 171.

59. Kiron, 174.

60. Kiron, 176.

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# **A Reflection of Changed Expansionist Ideologies: An Analysis of the Insular Cases and U.S. Imperial- istic Policies at the Turn of the Previous Century**

*Caroline Buhse*

The turn of the previous century was a volatile time in the United States: many shifts were under way on political, economic and social levels. Particularly in regards to foreign policy, the late 1800's and the early 1900's marked a change in U.S. expansionary and imperialistic actions. During the nineteenth century the U.S. saw a shift from anti-imperialist ideologies of the Monroe Doctrine to a new interventionist outlook presented through the Insular Cases and the Roosevelt Corollary. The Insular Cases, a set of six U.S. Supreme Court decisions addressing the status of the territories acquired after the Spanish–American War, reflect changed American philosophies on imperialistic expansion and global economic hegemony. The cases posed the question of whether the Constitution and the protection it provides to the American people applied to territories acquired by the United States in its expansion to Latin America and the Pacific. While American ideologies towards expansionism and imperialism were changing throughout the 1800's, the turn of the century marked a paradigm shift where legal, political, and military factors converged to consolidate a new American doctrine on foreign policy: one that projected U.S. power and exported American ideologies on a global scale.

## **Legal Consolidation of a New Imperialist Ideology**

While some may believe that U.S. law is somehow insulated from politics, the Insular Cases illustrate that law is inevitably a product of its time. The Insular Cases, argued in 1901, dealt with the status of the newly acquired territories that came out of the Spanish–American War. More specifically, the cases involved whether the United States had the right to place tariffs on goods coming from unincorporated territories.<sup>1</sup> *De Lima v. Bidwell*, one of the first

1. Charles Littlefield, "Insular Cases," *Harvard Law Review* 15.3 (1901-1902): 169-190. Accessed March 26, 2015, HeinOnline.

cases addressed by the courts, involved the question of whether Puerto Rico was considered a foreign country for the purpose of U.S. tariff laws.<sup>2</sup> The case was concerned about whether a duty collected on goods imported from Puerto Rico to New York was Constitutional. The Court struck down the tariff on the grounds that after the Treaty of Paris “Puerto Rico ‘became territory of the United States—although not a territory in the technical sense of the word.’”<sup>3</sup> Scholar and writer from the nineteenth century, Charles Littlefield, cites the decision of *De Lima v. Bidwell*, “The court held ‘that at the time these duties were levied, Porto Rico was not a foreign country within the meaning of the tariff laws, but a territory of the United States, that the duties were illegally exacted, and that the plaintiffs are entitled to recover them back.’”<sup>4</sup> The Court ruled under the Uniformity Clause in the Constitution that because the island was in the possession of the United States, its goods could not be taxed as imports from a foreign state. The island was part of the United States as a result of the Treaty of Paris, and the taxes levied against them had to correspond to the taxation policies for all other U.S. states and territories.<sup>5</sup>

The language used in the opinion reflects these initial ideas circulating in the United States surrounding the taxation of goods from the newly acquired islands. Justice Brown’s opinion in regards to taxing goods from the territories states:

This theory also presupposes that territory may be held indefinitely by the United States; that it may be treated in every particular, except for tariff purposes, as domestic territory; that laws may be enacted and enforced by officers of the United States sent there for that purpose; that everything may be done which a government can do within its own boundaries, and yet the territory may remain a foreign country. To hold that this can be done a matter of law we deem to be pure judicial legislation. We find no warrant for it in the Constitution or in the powers conferred upon this court.<sup>6</sup>

Justice Brown expressed it would be unconstitutional for the U.S. government to place a duty on the imports of the territories and still maintain political

control over the islands. He strongly contended that treating Puerto Rico as a domestic territory in all ways except for tariff laws, when the island would be treated as a foreign state, was not legal under the Constitution. However, one of the most prominent Insular Cases, *Downes v. Bidwell*, soon overturned the decision of *De Lima v. Bidwell*, consolidating the shift towards a new ideology surrounding U.S. expansion.

*Downes v. Bidwell*, argued in January of 1901 alongside *De Lima v. Bidwell*, was one of the most prominent cases within the series of Insular Cases as the case’s ruling changed U.S. policies towards expansionism.<sup>7</sup> The question of the case dealt with issues surrounding tariffs on goods coming from Puerto Rico to the United States, similar to that of *De Lima v. Bidwell*.<sup>8</sup> *Downes v. Bidwell* involved the Foraker Act of 1900, which established a civilian government in Puerto Rico, creating the island’s own governing body. Despite the establishment of a civilian government in Puerto Rico under the Foraker Act, the U.S. government still maintained control over the island’s politics: the governor, legislators, and the Supreme Court were presidentially appointed and the U.S. Congress had the power to veto any legislation.<sup>9</sup> The creation of a government in Puerto Rico established the island as an unincorporated territory to the United States.<sup>10</sup> The court ruled that “As to ‘merchandise coming into the United States from Porto Rico Congress is not restrained by the Constitution in imposing a discriminating tariff against Porto Rico.’”<sup>11</sup> Previous to the Foraker Act, the court considered Puerto Rico an incorporated territory, not a state, but still a part of the United States in terms of trade laws. After the creation of a civilian government in Puerto Rico, the Court classified the island as an unincorporated territory with foreign government status in regards to trade laws, despite the island’s lack of full sovereignty from the U.S. As a result, the United States was legally allowed to place tariffs on goods imported from Puerto Rico, while simultaneously controlling the island’s political situation, an action that was previously seen as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.<sup>12</sup>

The ruling of *Downes v. Bidwell* established that the U.S. Constitution does not “follow the flag,” which indicates that the U.S. Constitution does not apply

2. Littlefield, “Insular Cases,” 170.

3. Torruella, Juan R. 2013. “Ruling America’s Colonies: The Insular Cases.” *Yale Law & Policy Review* 32, no. 1: 57-95. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed August 4, 2015).

4. Littlefield, “Insular Cases,” 170.

5. Torruella, “Ruling America’s Colonies: The Insular Cases,” 66.

6. *De Lima v. Bidwell* 182 U.S. 1 (1901), quoted in Torruella, “Ruling America’s Colonies: The Insular Cases,” 68-69.

7. *Downes v. Bidwell*, 182 U.S. 244 (1901), *Justia: US Supreme Court*, accessed August 12, 2015, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/182/244/>.

8. Torruella, “Ruling America’s Colonies: The Insular Cases,” 173.

9. Meléndez, Edgardo, “Citizenship and the Alien Exclusion in the Insular Cases: Puerto Ricans in the Periphery of American Empire.” *Centro Journal* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 106-145. Accessed July 1, 2015, *America: History & Life*, EBSCOhost.

10. Foraker Act (Organic Act of 1900), *Library of Congress*, last modified June 22, 2011.

11. *Ibid*.

12. Littlefield, “Insular Cases,” 170.

to unincorporated territories.<sup>13</sup> Four of the justices on the court dissented from the decision, as it created a precedent whereby the rights of American citizens protected by the Constitution did not apply to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico and other unincorporated territories such as Cuba and Guam. The case declared, “There is in reason, then, no room in this case to contend that Congress can destroy the liberties of the people of Porto Rico by exercising in their regard powers against freedom and justice, which the Constitution has absolutely denied.”<sup>14</sup> *Downes v. Bidwell* established a new precedent in the United States in regards to territorial and economic expansion: the United States now excluded unincorporated territories from political rights and protections established under the Constitution, while simultaneously taking advantage of their trade in order to benefitting economically.

The Insular Cases supported the growth of U.S. power to the point where it became acceptable for the United States to economically take advantage of territory under their political and military control, but not to grant the people or governments rights under the Constitution. It is important to note, however that the basis of these ideologies were not completely new to the courts—a similar philosophy was seen years earlier in 1831 in the case *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia*. The case established the idea that the U.S. could have a dependent population, subject to American economic and political control, but full citizenship and rights could be withheld.<sup>15</sup> While *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia* was still inwardly focused as the Cherokee lived within the physical borders of the United States, the imperialistic ideology was evident. The case started the debate over the idea of sovereignty and U.S. control over a territory and a population, a discussion to which the Insular Cases contributed. The Insular Cases, however, took the sentiments of *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia* one step further: they expanded power to territories that were considered “foreign,” due to geographical separation from the mainland of the U.S. and drastic cultural differences.

The Insular Cases were a legal consolidation of a change in American interventionist ideology. U.S. foreign relations philosophy began with anti-imperi-

alistic policies under the Monroe Doctrine but shifted with U.S. imperialism in the Spanish–American War. The cases illustrated America’s conception of its expansion and power over the territories it controlled. The new U.S. outlook on imperialism involved the use of political control of territories to facilitate trade and economic expansion. By claiming territories politically, using them for trade, and not incorporating them into the United States or protecting them under the Constitution, the U.S. had officially embraced imperialism and began projecting U.S. power on an international scale.

To understand the Insular Cases as a consolidation of a new American philosophy on expansion it is important to consider the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, arguably one of the earliest U.S. documents regarding imperialism. The Doctrine, which Secretary of State John Quincy Adams drafted for James Monroe, had three main components: it created two spheres, the Old World and the New World, and stated that they should not become entangled; it forbade European aggression in Latin America and claimed that intervention in the region by a European state would be seen as an invasion and merit U.S. involvement; finally it declared that the U.S. would not become involved in the movements for independence in Latin America.<sup>16</sup> The Monroe Doctrine was one of the first official policy documents to suggest U.S. intervention in another region. Despite the imperialistic undertones of the document, the Monroe Doctrine in reality worked to consolidate American power and control internally. It was not looking to expand U.S. power outward or actively, through the military, trying to prevent European intervention in the Americas, but instead making a unifying statement to shelter the United States and the Americas from the possibility of European intervention.

The Monroe Doctrine adopted a very cautious ideology towards expansionism, possibly due to the United States’ inability to follow through on expansionist claims. When the Monroe Doctrine was announced the U.S. was still focused on developing as a nation; the American frontier at the time was also still relatively undiscovered, and captured the attention of expansionists to a greater degree.<sup>17</sup> What is more, when the Monroe Doctrine was issued, the

13. Borgwardt, Elizabeth, lecture March 24, 2015.

14. Littlefield, “Insular Cases,” 174.

15. *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia*, United States Supreme Court. Accessed in Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Volume 1: To 1920*, (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010), 183.

16. Monroe Doctrine, 1823.

17. Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011), 62.

United States had a very weak navy in comparison to European powers, and most likely would not have been able to effectively expand territorially through military force.<sup>18</sup> As the century progressed, however, the U.S. began to expand not only economically and territorially, but also militarily. A modern historian, Thomas Paterson, discusses how an increase in technology and the growth of the U.S. economy contributed to the rising global power of America.<sup>19</sup> While these factors contributed to the U.S. becoming a world power, a stronger navy was imperative to advance imperialistic foreign policy. In the late 1800s, America began developing its navy to compete with the strength of Britain's navy, which had been famous for its power throughout the entire century.<sup>20</sup> By 1893, the United States had developed a new fleet, which was the focal point at the Chicago World's Fair, illustrating honor, national growth and achievement.<sup>21</sup> The modern and powerful navy was necessary as the U.S. expanded globally, as "economic development clashed with political and social tradition," and often led to conflict.<sup>22</sup> As the world became more and more globalized through trade, the United States needed to defend its commerce, in addition to new political entanglements that accompanied international trade. Walter LaFeber, American historian, writes in reference to the expansion of U.S. economic and political power, "The navy had to be present, prepared, and superior."<sup>23</sup>

Not only new ships made the U.S. competitive on the world stage, but a new ideology surrounding the growth of the navy was also a contributing factor. Alfred Thayer Mahan was an imperialist naval officer in the mid-1880s who developed a theory that revolutionized American naval advances. In his book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan argued for a strong navy to protect U.S. economic expansion, stating the role of the navy was to "destroy opponents commerce in battle, and annihilate the opponents fleet in decisive combat."<sup>24</sup> Mahan also contended that a navy would require coaling bases and rest stops around the world, another reason supporting U.S. territorial and political expansion.<sup>25</sup> The expansion of the navy to protect foreign commerce was believed to be necessary not only by Mahan but by many politicians and powerful members of Congress, including Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>26</sup>

The improvement and expansion of the navy permitted U.S. economic growth through trade, and political and territorial expansion around the globe. The new United States navy was a vital component in the American shift from anti-imperial to imperialist policies due to the fact that the stronger navy allowed the United States to confidently enter military conflicts, and develop and protect U.S. trade. The advanced U.S. military and naval capabilities were illustrated during the expansionist wars at the end of the century against Spain and in the Philippines, all of which reflected a new U.S. ideology towards imperialistic policies and expansion of U.S. power on a global scale. With the increase in political and territorial expansion, the United States needed new legal precedents for handling acquired territories and trading partners. The Insular Cases provided the imperialistic legal framework necessary for expanding the United States without taking responsibility for new citizens or territory. The cases were the consolidation of shifted U.S. ideologies: The United States no longer followed cautious foreign policy, established under the Monroe Doctrine, which limited imperialism, but instead used its new navy and expansionist ideology to project power throughout the world by force.

### The Spanish–American War

While the Insular Cases marked the legal consolidation of American imperialistic ideals and policy, the Spanish–American War was the start to a series of events that later became a paradigm shift for U.S. foreign relations. While many different factors influenced American involvement in the Spanish–American War, the United States mainly entered the conflict to defend U.S. markets, land, and citizens living in Cuba, all of which were threatened by the war.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the 19th century the United States had significant investments in tobacco mills and sugar plantations in Cuba and many U.S. citizens were living on the island.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the political and economic reasons for intervening in the Cuban conflict, there was a general sentiment in the U.S. in favor of Cuban independence from Spain.<sup>29</sup> The press encouraged the United States to support Cuban independence through portrayals of Cubans in need of American help against the exploitative and violent Spanish.<sup>30</sup> Despite the use

18. Borgwardt, Elizabeth, lecture February 3, 2015.

19. T. G. Paterson "U.S. Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpreting the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War." *OAH Magazine of History* 12.3 (1998): 5. Accessed March 4, 2015. JSTOR.

20. Borgwardt, Elizabeth, March 17, 2015.

21. Walter LaFeber and Warren I. Cohen. *The American Search for Opportunity: 1865-1913*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 114.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Mahan, Alfred Thayer cited in LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*, 116.

25. Ibid.

26. LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*, 116–117

27. J. Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" *OAH Magazine of History* 12.3 (1998): 19. March 4, 2015. JSTOR.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid, 20.

30. Borgwardt, Elizabeth, March 17, 2015.

of humanitarian explanations justifying U.S. interference in the conflict, regulating the economic and political situation in Cuba, for the benefit of American markets and citizens, was the main reason for U.S. intervention.

Despite many Americans clamoring for war against Spain, there was a substantial group of non-interventionists who were prominent in American society. There were many different types of anti-imperialist supporters, and each had a different concept of what it meant to be anti-interventionist. Many businessmen considered themselves anti-imperialist because they only wished to expand economically as opposed to territorially.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, some strict anti-imperialists believed that even economic expansion was an imperialistic act. Edward Atkinson was a prominent anti-imperialist and spoke out against McKinley's acquisition of land in Puerto Rico and Cuba after the war.<sup>32</sup> He believed McKinley's act of expansion was equal to the "barbarous" Europeans and their imperialistic tendencies.<sup>33</sup> However, Atkinson did support U.S. economic expansion to Asian and Latin American markets, illustrating his belief that imperialism was strictly tied to political control.

Charles Francis Adams was another anti-interventionist opposed to the Spanish–American War. Adams was concerned with the view held by many Americans that the U.S. had a divine right to expand and annex Cuba, and cited problems with contemporary rhetoric such as "inferior races, duty, and destiny," which were used as explanations for expansion.<sup>34</sup> The anti-interventionist movements faded around 1900 when imperialism was institutionalized into the American ideology through the Insular Cases and new policy<sup>35</sup>. Many still believed, however, that imperialism went against American ideals of freedom, representative rule and other provisions in the Constitution.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, even though the Spanish–American War marked a shift in American foreign policy where the U.S. began projecting power globally and embracing an imperialist ideology, a strong American anti-imperialist movement was still present at the time.

The Cuban independence movement began in 1895 when Cubans began ex-

pressing discontent under Spanish rule.<sup>37</sup> First Grover Cleveland then William McKinley encouraged Spain to grant reforms to quell the discontent and stop the revolutionaries in Cuba.<sup>38</sup> In 1897, Spain lost control and riots broke out in Havana. McKinley worried that the riots would turn anti-American in addition to anti-Spanish.<sup>39</sup> As a result, McKinley sent a warship, the *Maine*, to Havana to protect American citizens and property. Soon after, in February of 1898, the *Maine* exploded in the Havana harbor killing more than 250 sailors on board. Americans were horrified when a "secret" investigation was leaked saying the explosion was caused externally and a public call for war against Spain ensued.<sup>40</sup> Soon after the *Maine* explosion, McKinley ordered the U.S. navy to prepare for war. The war only lasted three months due to continual American victories against a much weaker foe, and the United States came out of the Spanish–American War not only as a winner, but also as a new global imperialist player.<sup>41</sup>

As previously discussed, at the turn of the previous century the United States was willing to become politically entangled in conflicts in order to protect and advance its economic trade. While the justification behind entering the Spanish–American War may not have originally involved an imperialistic or colonial agenda, the war marked the start of a changed U.S. foreign policy. The Spanish–American War indicated that the United States now used force and naval power to project U.S. economic and political dominance internationally—a shift from the preceding U.S. policies of internal consolidation of power and domestically focused territorial expansion. With the projection of political and economic power, and the resulting acquisition of territories, the dilemma arose of how conquered territories would be treated constitutionally. The Insular Cases ultimately decided the role of the U.S. Constitution in the conquered territories, denying the territories the protections provided by the United States Constitution, while simultaneously consolidating the exportation of American power.

### **Political Reinforcement of American Projection of Power**

The legal consolidation of projected U.S. power through the Insular Cases was

31. Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 85.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, 113.

35. *Ibid.*, 216.

36. *Ibid.*, 216-217.

37. Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?," 20.

38. Walter LaFeber, *The American Age - United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, Vol. 1: To 1920*. (W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 199.

39. Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?," 22.

40. LaFeber, *The American Age*, 200.

41. Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?," 22.

coupled with foreign policy supporting U.S. imperialism. U.S. foreign policy documents produced at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century trace American ideologies towards imperialism and illustrate a change in U.S. philosophy from the start of the Spanish–American War to the end of the conflict. At the beginning of the war the United States government passed the Teller Amendment, attached to the declaration of war against Spain, which asserted that the U.S. was not entering the conflict to conquer territory, but instead to liberate Cubans from oppressive Spanish rule.<sup>42</sup> The Amendment states, “The United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island [Cuba] except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination to leave the government and control of the island to its people.”<sup>43</sup> As a result of the Teller Amendment it is evident that the United States, at least initially, was not interested in entering into the Spanish–American War with the goal of territorial expansion, but instead to stop the fighting and grant Cuba its independence. However, the non-expansionist ideology had changed by the end of the war, when, in August of 1889, McKinley negotiated a treaty with Spain regarding Cuban independence without consulting Cuban leaders.<sup>44</sup> The treaty required Spain to release its authority over Cuba, leaving the United States in control of the island, it demanded Puerto Rico as an indemnity of war, and gave the U.S. command over a territory that would later become Guam.<sup>45</sup> These provisions politically shifted U.S. ideologies towards expansion: the United States was no longer only looking to consolidate its power through the acquisition of territory, but instead to extend American power beyond its territorial borders through political involvement and negotiations. While the war was not imperialistic at its start, by the end of the three-month conflict it was evident that the U.S. had imperial aims and was actively looking to become an imperialist and a world power.<sup>46</sup>

Since the era of John Quincy Adams the United States had been debating taking control of Cuba and incorporating the island into U.S. territory.<sup>47</sup> While the U.S. did not act on these impulses until the Spanish–American War, these expansionary ideals were longstanding. However, after the United States gained

control over Cuba in 1898, the U.S. policy on expansion changed, as America was no longer looking to expand territorially in the traditional way. As Walter LaFeber states in his book *The American Search for Opportunity*,

[Cuba’s] racial mixture, advanced independence movement, and attendant constitutional problems in Washington made absorption unappealing. Its ninety-mile proximity to the United States, moreover, seemed to make annexation unnecessary. Control could be exerted more indirectly and cheaply.<sup>48</sup>

This does not mean to say that the U.S. was not interested in controlling Cuba—America wanted authority over Cuba not by incorporating the territory and its people into the United States, but instead by maintaining political and economical jurisdiction over the island, while withholding both full sovereignty and U.S. citizenship. After the U.S. had acquired control of Cuba from Spain, Americans lacked interest in annexation largely because of racism against Latin Americans. LaFeber quotes General Leonard Wood, the new commander in Cuba, “We are dealing with a race that has been steadily going down for a hundred years and into which we have got to infuse new life.”<sup>49</sup> As General Wood’s comment makes evident, Cubans were seen to be racially inferior to Americans and as a result the U.S. was hesitant to annex Cuba into the United States. Eliot Root, one of McKinley’s cabinet members, was the first to state that outright annexation of Cuba was not the best option, but that economic, military, and limited political control would be more beneficial to the United States.<sup>50</sup> These provisions later became the Platt Amendment (1903), which restricted Cuban independence and consolidated American control over the island.<sup>51</sup> While the Amendment allowed Cuban self-government it also stated “The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty.”<sup>52</sup> The trajectory from the Teller Amendment to the Platt Amendment is illustrative of the change in American conceptions of imperialistic right from the start of the Spanish–American War until a few years after its conclusion. The first amendment was anti-imperialistic, while the second embraced imperialism as one of

42. Teller Amendment, United States Congress, April 20, 1898.

43. Ibid.

44. Offner, “Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?” 23.

45. Ibid.

46. LaFeber, *The American Age*, 209.

47. LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*, 149.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid, 151.

51. Platt Amendment, United States Congress, March 2, 1901.

52. Ibid.

its main tenants. However, it is important to note that the Platt Amendment was not expansionist, as it did not annex Cuba to the United States, but instead established the island as a protectorate with some freedom, but not full sovereignty. The U.S. benefited from the arrangement both in terms of acquisition of power and economic expansion, in addition to the fact that America was not required to provide government services to the citizens of Cuba.

The change in U.S. policy regarding imperialism and expansion began at the turn of the century with the Teller and Platt Amendments and was consolidated under the Roosevelt Corollary. The Corollary, presented by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, declared the United States a civilizing power in Latin America.<sup>53</sup> The official purpose of the Corollary was to regulate Latin American debt so that European nations would not intervene in the hemisphere and gain economic or political control.<sup>54</sup> However, the United States only intervened once in a debt battle, stopping a conflict between Venezuela and Britain.<sup>55</sup> By intervening in Santo Domingo, Venezuela, the United States sent a message to the rest of Latin America illustrating its ability to intervene when necessary, but the U.S. never exercised this ability again. As a result, the Corollary took on a broadened role in Latin America—it was used as a justification for any form of U.S. intervention in the region, including the construction of the Panama Canal.

The Corollary reserved the right of the United States to intervene in Latin American states if it saw fit, “We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.”<sup>56</sup> The Roosevelt Corollary expanded U.S. power beyond its newly acquired territories to the rest of the hemisphere. The establishment of the U.S. as a regional power or “police force” consolidated the shift in U.S. ideology towards imperialism. The rights claimed by the United States under the Roosevelt Corollary asserted that the U.S. had virtually unlimited authority to intervene in other states in the region. The Roosevelt Corollary marked a

final development in U.S. imperialistic policies where the United States was not looking for territorial gains or internal order, but instead to grow economically and further the U.S. foreign policy agenda through intervention. The U.S. was extending its ideologies of civilization (based in racism), government and economics on a global scale. The Roosevelt Corollary, in addition to the Platt and Teller Amendments, was the political solidification of events at the turn of the century. The political consolidation of U.S. imperialism complemented the legal validation that American expansion was not only Constitutionally permitted, but also an American right. The combined political and legal affirmations of U.S. outward looking development set the precedent for U.S. foreign policy for decades to come.

## Conclusion

The Spanish–American War marked a paradigm shift for American expansionist and foreign policy ideology. At the turn of the century, military, political and legal elements converged to create a new American philosophy towards imperialism. The change can be measured against the original Monroe Doctrine: while many scholars see the document as inherently imperialistic, in reality it was inward-looking and protected the United States from Old World power politics and diplomacy. The Spanish–American War and the political and legal repercussions of the conflict changed previous policies that consolidated power, as seen under the Monroe Doctrine, and worked to project U.S. power on a global scale. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century Americans looked to physically expand their borders by acquiring territory to incorporate into the United States, a form of internal and domestic growth. However, when the United States began claiming political and economic control over Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam without incorporating them as traditional U.S. territories, the United States was extending its power and ideologies outward to influence more than just U.S. citizens, but also international populations.

While the political and military factors contributing to the U.S. ideological shift at the turn of the century are important, the Insular Cases are the most telling

53. Roosevelt Corollary, Theodore Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1904.

54. Kris James Mitchener and Marc Weidenmier. “Empire, Public Goods, and the Roosevelt Corollary.” *The Journal of Economic History* 65.03 (2005), 690. March 5, 2015. JSTOR.

55. Ibid.

56. The Roosevelt Corollary, 1904.

element in the movement towards an imperialist philosophy not only because of what they reveal about American ideals, but because of the precedent they set for future imperialism. The Insular Cases can be considered radical documents because they expanded the right of the United States government to reach beyond its borders and its people, a very far-reaching step for a country founded in isolationist beliefs. While *Downes v. Bidwell* ultimately established that the United States could place duties on imports from unincorporated territories and vice versa, other Insular Cases ruled the opposite. *De Lima v. Bidwell* was only one of the cases that ruled it was unconstitutional to place tariffs on goods coming from Puerto Rico. Similar to *De Lima v. Bidwell*, *Dooley v. United States*, 183 US 151 (1901), addressed the issue of tariffs placed on goods imported to Puerto Rico from New York. The Supreme Court, using the ruling of *De Lima v. Bidwell* as precedent, ruled these tariffs unconstitutional as they were collected by the military commander who was stationed in Puerto Rico while the civilian government was being established, a time during which the island was considered to be part of the United States.<sup>57</sup> In both *De Lima v. Bidwell* and *Dooley v. United States* the Supreme Court originally declared that tariffs were not constitutional between the United States and Puerto Rico, no matter which state imported the goods. As was seen with policy documents regarding U.S. intervention, the Insular Cases trace a change in U.S. imperialism—the Court began by ruling that tariffs between the territories and the United States were illegal, but concluded with the constitutionality of these same tariffs. The trajectory of the Insular Cases is illustrative of a shift in U.S. foreign policy where the United States began projecting power and expanding American ideologies globally.

While the Insular Cases were part of a greater legal movement in the United States, they particularly illustrate the Courts' beliefs in American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism involves the idea that the U.S. is remarkable in comparison to other territories, states and populations, to the point where it is justifiable for the United States to export their ideologies and control over other states around the world. The Insular Cases reinforced the Supreme Court's outlook: America had the right to imperialistically expand, projecting its

57. *Dooley v. United States*, 183 US 151 (1901), *Justia: US Supreme Court*, accessed August 13, 2015, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/183/151/>.

power internationally, because of America's exceptionalism. While the belief in American exceptionalism was not new to the United States at the turn of the previous century, it became more prominent on an international level through the rulings of the Insular Cases. The convergence of military victories and new policy, in addition to the Insular Cases, made the late 1800's and early 1900's a moment in history where America began projecting and consolidating power globally in way never before seen in the history of the United States. As a foreign diplomat stated three years after the Spanish–American War, “I have seen two Americas, the America before the Spanish–American War and the America since.”<sup>58</sup>

58. Kennedy, David M. and Lizabeth Cohen. *The American Pageant*. (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015): 620.

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## The Spirit of Change: The Evolution of Restaurants in New York City and the Birth of a Modern Dining Culture

*Miki Takeshita*

*Chicken paprika wi peas and rice. Moo Goo Gny Pan. Roulade of Venaison, Grand Veneur. Broiled Calf's Liver with Beech-nut Bacon and Mashed Potatoes. Creamed Chicken a la King en Casserole.* These were just a few of the dishes available at the estimated 7,000 restaurants in New York in 1934.<sup>1</sup> During the early twentieth century, restaurants popped up on every corner of the city, from bustling downtown, to the Theater District, to the quieter residential areas uptown, featuring cuisines from around the world, fit for every mood, appetite and wallet. Whether they were New Yorkers on a night out, or tourists who wanted to try new foods that the city had to offer, a *New York Times* article published in 1929 estimated that two million people ate at least one meal a day in restaurants.<sup>2</sup> Food columnists ran page-long articles in major newspapers informing readers of the hottest restaurants, their prices and the food they offered.<sup>3</sup> The food scene in 1930's New York certainly resembled that of today in New York – bustling, vibrant and eclectic.

It was not always like this, however. At the dawn of the twentieth century, there were only two types of restaurants available in New York: restaurants like Delmonico's and Palm Garden in Hotel Astor, which served a small but very visible upper class, and restaurants located downtown near factories and offices that served the lower and working classes. This dichotomy accurately reflected the hierarchical structure of New York society at the time and thus, these spaces served different functions. The high-end restaurants were a public space for the elite to prove their status, while the restaurants downtown were where workers could grab a quick lunch and satiate their appetites. However, throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, the number, variety and style of restaurants in New York City expanded dramatically. Building off of previous scholarship on the evolution of restaurants, this paper argues that by the 1930s, the decline of Victorian values that had previously restricted social

1. Henrietta Ripperger, "The Restaurant Enjoys a Revival: No Longer the Mere Dispenser of Food, It Becomes the Host to Leisurely Diners," *New York Times*, July 29, 1934.

2. Eunice Fuller Barnard, "We Eat Still, But No Longer Do We Dine: In the Sandwich and Dinner Dance Era the Art of the Chef Languishes in Hurried America," *New York Times*, December 22, 1929.

3. Examples include: Lawton Mackall's "Seven Nights in New York's Food Jungle" in *New York Times*, Jan. 28, 1913; H. I. Brock's "Strange Foods That Come Out of New York's Melting Pot" in *New York Times*, July 29, 1928, and others.

classes to their exclusive public spheres, and repressed individual desires and self-expression, along with the emergence of the middle class, led to this shift in the function of these restaurants. With the loosening of restrictions on individuality, restaurants in New York developed their own personalities to create an individualized dining experience through food, design, service and atmosphere in order to attract patrons not just of the middle-class but of all classes, who could then express his or her own individuality through frequenting these restaurants.

During the end of the nineteenth century, the elite, a small but visible percentage of the population, dominated New York society. The end of the Civil War brought about the Gilded Era, which saw unparalleled growth in industry and with it rapid urbanization and the mass arrival of cheap immigrant labor.<sup>4</sup> Although consisting of only 1% of the American population, those who rose to the top controlled 27% of the nation's wealth by 1870, and by 1892, 1,368 millionaires and their families lived in New York.<sup>5,6</sup> As the nation's capital of industry, New York was constantly in flux with a high turnover rate of wealth and competition to be at the top.<sup>7</sup>

Money was not enough to be considered part of the elite, however, and as one's social position was in flux, one had to be seen in order to participate as a member of high society. New York was home to a number of expensive and luxurious restaurants catered towards the elite, such as Delmonico's, Sherry's and hotel restaurants, such as the Waldorf-Astoria and Hotel Astor. These restaurants became a public space in which one could assert his or her wealth. For example, the Palm Garden at the Hotel Astor was lined with floor-to-ceiling mirrors, in which patrons could literally see themselves and others.<sup>8</sup> Restaurants were often decorated extravagantly; for example, the Waldorf-Astoria was modeled to look like the grand salon in King Ludwig's Palace in Munich.

Living in a young nation with practically no history of aristocracy, the eager American elite looked towards Europe, specifically France, for social markers

on how to best publicly display their wealth.<sup>9</sup> Several newspaper and magazines featured high-class roof gardens, noting that these roof gardens were only frequented by high-class patrons, who found "real comfort" in New York during the summer, rather than at their "country homes and resorts."<sup>10</sup> Most patrons came to dine at these roof gardens from the nearby suburbs by car, an expensive luxury at the time. These restaurants were built to mimic the terrace in European cities, a feature hoped for by many well-to-do travelers who had come back from Paris and Vienna, where "dining en pleine air was such an attractive feature of summer life."<sup>11</sup> But perhaps the most attractive feature was that its physical location above ground could allow patrons to bask in their wealth:

"This very aloofness – distance above the crowd – perhaps constitutes a principal source of attraction for those who afford the high-class roof garden. Gazing downward into the artificial day which nightly dawns over the Tenderloin, the complacent roof garden patron sees things bearing an odd resemblance to beetles and ants. The beetles may be cabs, the ants human beings – human, but of an inferior sort to his or her roof garden self."<sup>12</sup>

Such elite snobbery was also addressed in *The New York Times*, when a reader, presumably one of a lower class, wrote to the *Times* complaining that dining cheaply and well in New York was impossible. However, the *Times* retorted that the diner was not only paying for the food, but "for the lights and music, the flowers, and other decorations, and for exceptional service."<sup>13</sup> Thus these restaurants were exclusive solely to the upper classes.

The other type of restaurant in New York, more visible in the urban fabric of the city, was the working-class restaurant, whose sole purpose was merely to feed the busy worker. These restaurants were located in the Financial District near the factories and catered towards an all-male clientele. Because their primary purpose was to feed the busy worker, less emphasis was placed on the quality of food than the efficiency of its service. These restaurants all featured the same traditional American foods, which were considered substi-

4. Andrew P. Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011): 21.

5. Ibid.

6. Lewis Allen Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981): 36.

7. Ibid, 12.

9. Healy, 23.

10. W.G. Robinson and F.L. Brace, "New York's Open Air Restaurants," *Town and Country* 3146 (1906): 10.

11. W.G. Robinson and F.L. Brace, 14.

12. "How New York Dines Outdoors", *New York Times*, July 23, 1905.

13. "Restaurant Prices." *New York Times*, February 1, 1908.

tutes for home cooking as the worker could not return home for lunch. Most home cooking in America was very simple at the time; the beef section in cookbooks for example featured varieties of the same beef dish, such as boiled beef, braised beef, fillet of beef, broiled fillet of beef, broiled fillet of beef with oysters, “sautéed fillet of beef, corned beef, corned beef hash, etc.”<sup>14</sup> Their sections on vegetables, desserts and fish were just as simple and varied; one 1907 cookbook featured five varieties to cook tomatoes: broiled, fried, sautéed, scalloped and stuffed.<sup>15</sup>

The early twentieth century, however, saw a major shift in these restaurants. The strict dichotomy between upper-class and lower-class eateries loosened as restaurants evolved to become more prevalent, diverse, individualized and easily accessible for almost all classes. What accounted for the shift? Andrew P. Haley’s *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* analyzed newspaper articles, menus, guidebooks, photographs and architecture journal articles to argue that the emerging urban middle class, excluded from the high-end restaurants, but not willing to go to the working-class establishments where rushed waiters served food of poor quality, was the rising force in the creation and shift of restaurants that accommodated middle-class tastes, manners and values. By using newspaper articles, cartoons, menus, food journals and photographs, he argues that the middle-class, by rejecting monocultural hegemony of French cuisine, placed more value on cultural pluralism and cosmopolitanism and thus frequented ethnic restaurants, often always inexpensive, to get a taste of the world. Haley asserts that the middle-class restaurant culture arose consciously to distinguish the middle-class from both the upper- and lower-classes.

A renewed study of these primary sources confirms the notion that working-class restaurants from the early 1900’s featured a lack of variety in dishes with rushed service.<sup>16</sup> The cover of a menu from Smith & McNell’s from January 31, 1900 is bland and lacking personality, perhaps because the patron would not pay any attention to it, going straight to the contents of the menu. The menu follows a rigid format which is prevalent in other menus at the time:

starting with oysters, stews, salads, puddings, pies, then roasts, soups, eggs, steaks and chops, and vegetables; it also offers four varieties of porterhouse steak.<sup>17</sup> One can assume that because so many of these restaurants in downtown New York featured similar dishes, these restaurants had to provide a little variety to maintain regulars.

A 1913 menu from Rigg’s Twentieth Street Restaurant follows almost exactly the same format as Smith & McNell’s, this time featuring over 300 dishes for its patrons. What is interesting to note, however, is that the instructions to waiters on the cover of the menu read, “be quick and quiet, and have NO conversation with customers, except what is absolutely necessary.”<sup>18</sup> It later goes on to discourage annoying customers with “overattention” and to “have no conversation among yourselves while on duty.”<sup>19</sup> These instructions show that the function of the server was to merely bring out the food and to bring the plate back once the patron was finished, to preserve efficiency. The concept of good service did not exist yet back in the early 1900’s, except for at restaurants targeted for wealthy clients.

One of the only known photographs of a working-class restaurant gives us insight into what the dining experience might have been like for the average blue-collar worker. In a photograph of Blossom Restaurant at 103 Bowery, one can see that the restaurant is blended in with the bustling cityscape, squeezed next to a barber shop.<sup>20</sup> Many of its menu items have been written on any available surface of the window front, possibly to allow patrons to quickly scan the menu before entering the restaurant and telling the waiter his order as soon as he walked in, thus increasing the efficiency of the restaurant even more. Because working-class restaurants prioritized efficiency and merely satiating the appetite of the customer, quality of the food was often comprised, as was noted in several New York Times articles. One commented on the terrible quality of the food in a letter to the editor, writing that he was one of many who relied on these “‘popular’ priced eating house for our daily rations”<sup>21</sup> but that restaurants in New York were “far behind Boston” and “even soporific old Philadelphia” in terms of the “quality of its restaurant fare.”<sup>22</sup> Even dishes

14. Maria Willett Howard, *Lowney’s Cook Book*, (Boston: W. M. Lowney, Co.: 1907): 77-78.

15. Howard, 103.

16. I’ve studied over 100 menus of New York restaurants from 1900-1940 through the “Buttolph Collection of Menus,” a digitized menu collection at the New York Public Library.

17. Refer to Figure 1 - “Smith & McNell’s.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-3fe5-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

18. “Rigg’s Twentieth Street Restaurant.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c6d5d0ca-dd2c-54db-e040-e00a18063df6>

19. Ibid.

20. Refer to Figure 2. “Blossom Restaurant.” The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-4f80-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

21. “Bad Restaurant Fare,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1901.

22. Ibid.

that were “very dear to the stomachs of every genuine American” were hard to get in good quality at the moderately priced restaurants in New York.<sup>23</sup> In 1922, *The New York Tribune* wrote that the city was “hardly, as yet, what you would call a gourmet’s paradise”, “one of the penalties we pay for our national boast of ‘quantity production.’”<sup>24</sup> He astutely noted that the restaurant was not a place “to dine but to feed.”<sup>25</sup>

New York’s restaurants in the 1920’s and 1930’s went through a drastic change, which George Chappell noted in his 1925 New York restaurant guide. In a humorous anecdote recalling a time when he and his friend tried to find a small side-street restaurant that he had frequented a year ago, they found that it was no longer there.<sup>26</sup> Chappell’s friends had told him that writing a restaurant guidebook would be impossible, “for we are in such a state of flux, not to say chaos. Our social life has no settled order.”<sup>27</sup> The early twentieth century did see big social changes in New York: specifically the emerging middle class, as Haley notes. In the last half of the nineteenth century, New York saw the rise of white-collar workers, such as clerks, lawyers, managers, salespeople and administrators.<sup>28</sup> These people could not afford to eat at fashionable restaurants where the elites ate, nor did they want to eat at the cheap restaurants meant for the lower-classes. Thus, Haley argues, the middle-class became a force in rebelling against the elite culture by transforming restaurants and summoning the creation of new restaurants to better reflect their own needs and values: specifically, both Anglo-American and cosmopolitan foods served at low prices. The middle-class sought eating places that were open for dinner, for those who had long commutes from the surrounding New York suburbs and for the many people who lived in kitchen-less apartments.<sup>29</sup> A look at many of the menus from the 1920’s and 1930’s do show Anglo-American foods akin to home-style cooking that were favorably priced; the table d’hôte restaurant, for example, served a number of courses, including wine, for a fixed price.

Although many enjoyed traditional American cooking, the middle-class also embraced cosmopolitanism and worldliness by frequenting ethnic restaurants, rejecting the mono-cultural hegemony of expensive French food preferred

by the elites. As Haley writes, “familiarity bred tolerance, patronage brought accommodation, and middle-class Americans had become champions of a new culinary adventurism.”<sup>30</sup> Ethnic restaurants were quick to capitalize on emerging middle-class consumerism:

“And always the business of the alien cook is to make these people feel not so strange, to tempt them to come again. Therefore carefully printed on the card of a Cingalese restaurant among the curries and mangoes is a reassuring line: ‘steaks and chops, American style.’ How like a life preserver the sight of the little words “club sandwich” somewhere between the smorgasbord of ilad ail and the Swedish pancakes whose proper Svensk name I have forgotten at the moment! It is by the help of these familiar bits – habits of native victuals – That the likes of us get to feel at home in exotic eating places.”<sup>31</sup>

A 1938 menu from Shanghai Food Shop on 45th Street shows that it featured both American and Chinese dishes.<sup>32</sup> Some restaurants adopted a hybrid fusion of American and ethnic to better appeal to the middle class. For example, Nadal’s Café and Restaurant featured American dishes like “Pork and Beans, Boston Style”, Spanish dishes like “Patatas de Ternera con Garbanzos”, and fusion dishes like “Bone Sirloin Steak with Fried Spanish Onions.”<sup>33</sup>

Haley’s interpretation of the evolution of restaurants is based in studying menus and newspaper articles. However, a critical look at other primary sources that Haley has overlooked, such as restaurant guides, architecture journal articles, and other reveal that a decline of Victorian values may also have contributed to the shift in function of these restaurants. Lewis Erenberg, in his book *Steppin’ Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930*, attributes the development of nightlife in New York City, such as cabaret establishments and late-night entertainment, to the decline of Victorian values. Victorianism, according to Erenberg, suppressed individual desires and dictated that each sex, class and race had to occupy its exclusive sphere.<sup>34</sup> In the 1920’s and 1930’s, restrictions placed on the individual’s personal desires and impulses lessened, and more emphasis was placed on

23. Ibid.

24. “Dining,” *New York Tribune*, December 31, 1922.

25. Ibid.

26. George Chappell, *The Restaurants of New York* (New York: Greenberg Publishers Inc, 1925): 3.

27. Chappell, 1.

28. Haley, 45.

29. Haley, 76. See also: “Dining Out with Kitchenless New York”, *New York Times*, January 25, 1925.

30. Haley, 97.

31. H. I. Brock, “Strange Foods That Come Out of New York’s Melting Pot”, *New York Times*, July 29, 1928.

32. “Shanghai Food Shop.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bc3bede1-ab45-cebb-e040-e00a18064596>

33. “Nadal’s Café and Restaurant.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c6d5d0ca-de05-54db-e040-e00a18063df6>

34. Erenberg, 5.

self-fulfillment, individuality and the development of a personality.<sup>35</sup> Restaurants distinguished themselves and developed their own personalities, through food, interior design, service, and atmosphere to attract individuals who were also trying to express themselves and their personalities through dining. The menus reflect increasing restaurant specialization. A 1940 menu from Caviar, a restaurant located in Midtown, shows that the restaurant is an example of a French-American fusion restaurant that the middle-class liked so much. It featured hybrid dishes like “Chicken en Casserole, Grand Mere” and “Frogs Legs à la Provençale.” However, one can see also that this restaurant attempted to specialize and individualize the dining experience, per the loosening of Victorian ideals. The menu was considerably smaller, featuring only thirty or so dishes, as opposed to more than 100 dishes. The menu featured intricate designs, drawings and curly type font. Most importantly, this restaurant derived its personality from its service; the picture of the host along with the words “‘Raymond’ is again your host at The Caviar” signifies that the service at the Caviar was especially attentive, personalized and welcoming.<sup>36</sup>

Another restaurant, Rosoff’s, derived its personality from its location in Times Square and its eclectic offerings. The menu cover shows pictures of its two locations, blended into the cityscape of Times Square.<sup>37</sup> Notice that the restaurant’s name is not just “Rosoff’s”, but “Rosoff’s in Times Square”, signifying its establishment as a restaurant in the cultural heart of the city where people could go eat before a Broadway show. The restaurant did try to make its dishes more complex within its confines of Anglo-American cuisine, by offering dishes like “fried deep sea scallops with sauce Remoulade,” “ragout of fresh ox tail” and “mocha layer cake.” It did not offer the average steak served in the very early 1900’s, but offered steak items such as “potted chuck steak, jardinière”, signifying a step away from simplicity to creativity. In addition, the restaurant didn’t serve just American food but also ventured into dishes like Chicken Chow Mein (Chinese) and Veal Schnitzel a la Holstein (German), revealing also its eclectic personality.

The ways in which restaurants distinguished themselves from others, and

developed their own personalities, were not limited to food or menu design. Architects focused on the interior design of restaurants, hoping to give diners a personalized experience that could not be replicated anywhere else. Baker and Cromwell, architects of the Piazzetta, an Italian restaurant, understood that in order to make patrons want to return, “originality” in the interior design and being “different”, even “radical,” was required.<sup>38</sup> Thus the architects designed the Piazzetta to represent a “piazzetta in an Italian village” – “facades of small village houses” with their “rough stucco fronts, red tile roofs and gabled hooded doorways” added to the authenticity of the design.<sup>39</sup> A “romantic atmosphere” was added by “a vender’s push cart filled with his wares.” Waitresses wore “brilliant Italian costumes and headdresses” and the restaurant even featured a “Neapolitan orchestra” to provide ambience to one’s dining experience.<sup>40</sup> The most radical feature, the article explains, was the balcony, whose “theatrical effect” was “to create an illusion that one is out-of-doors in the full knowledge that one is not.”<sup>41</sup> The Piazzetta differentiated itself from other Italian restaurants by developing its own radical personality while adhering to Italian authenticity.

Another restaurant, Old Algiers on Broadway and 104th Street, desired to move away from the “standardization so prevalent in everything we do” through the design of the dining room and kitchen. Old Algiers’ goal was to allow diners to experience Algiers without ever leaving New York through “an old world setting of quiet comfort and relaxation” while providing “a vivid impression of Moorish life.”<sup>42</sup> The design of the ceiling was a reproduction of the ceiling in the “Palace of Tameslouht”, the Moorish windows made of “cedar wood grilles” were authentic replicas, and wall frescoes told “the story of Algiers with color and beauty.”<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the design, the architects paid much consideration to the furniture and the kitchen to provide a personalized experience. The furniture was arranged so as to give diners “the most of privacy”, and tables and chairs were purposely different to stray away from “uniformity.”<sup>44</sup> The kitchen was also designed in such a way to allow for individualized cooking – the architects

35. Erenberg, xiii.

36. Refer to Figures 3 and 4. “The Caviar.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/b917eb3b-dc70-ad32-e040-e00a18060e3e>

37. “Rosoff’s.” Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/b917eb3b-ddb8-ad32-e040-e00a18060e3e>

38. Baker & Cromwell, “The Unusual in Restaurant Design: The Piazzetta, New York,” *American Architect* 125 no. 2467 (1925): 230.

39. Baker & Cromwell, 231.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Pruitt & Brown, “Old Algiers Restaurant: New York City,” *Architecture and Building* 62 no. 5 (1930): 129.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

wrote that designing the kitchen for “the individual cooking of orders” and “cooking in small quantities” rather than “wholesale cooking” that the writer for The New York Tribune had criticized years ago allowed for even chefs to give diners a more personalized experience.<sup>45</sup>

While early restaurant guides, such as Chappell’s, were organized by location for the purpose of mere convenience, later restaurant guides were categorized by atmosphere and the kind of dining experience the reader wanted. The reader could then go to the restaurant that best fit his personality or desired dining experience. George Ross’ 1934 restaurant guide, *Tips on Tables*, gave thought to every kind of dining experience possible – a couple looking for a romantic dinner could consult the chapter “For Two Young Things Very Much in Love,” whose listed restaurants, featuring “soft lights” and “sweet music,” were frequented by “puppy-love swains and those absorbed in serious *affaires de cœur*.”<sup>46</sup> Those who wanted to stuff their faces, once a Victorian taboo, could refer to “A Guide to Gluttony”, featuring restaurants where one could eat without judgment “huge forkfuls of spaghetti and gulps of ‘Dago’ red”<sup>47</sup> or “a stew that fairly bulges with huge chunks of beef.”<sup>48</sup> A city family looking for a family-friendly experience could consult “Fit for the Family,” where restaurants would provide an “atmosphere [that] is home-like and sedate.”<sup>49</sup> The author made sure to indicate prices in his book, using markers like “inexpensive,” “medium priced,” and “expensive”, and indicated how much certain dishes cost to make these restaurants available for all readers. Location and even nationality of cuisine took a backseat, only appearing in an index in the back of the book – by 1934, diversity of cuisine had already been accepted as the status quo and thus was another way of many to express one’s individual dining desires.

With the emerging middle class, as well as the loosening of once repressed ideals that discouraged individualism and the development of a personality, New York in the 1920’s and 1930’s saw a great proliferation of dining that suited every person’s needs and desires. This paper has looked at many primary sources that other historians have overlooked to add another possible reason for the evolution of New York restaurants – the encouragement of individualism and

self-expression. Furthermore, the dining culture from the 1920’s onwards may have been the predecessor for the gourmet dining culture of the 21st century – restaurants today focus on specialized dishes, excellent service, providing a great atmosphere that makes patrons want to come back, and being featured in the most well-known restaurant guides, like Michelin or Zagat. Therefore, restaurants, as a dynamic space that reflected both social and economic changes to the city of New York, provide a window into the development of American urban centers at the start of the 20th century and offer the opportunity to understand present-day trends.

45. Ibid, 130.

46. George Ross, *Tips on Tables: Being a Guide to Dining and Wining in New York at 365 Restaurants Suitable to Every Mood and Every Purpose* (New York: Covici Friede Publishers, 1934): 19.

47. Ross, 84.

48. Ibid, 86.

49. Ibid, 117.

<b>DINNER</b>		
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1900		
<b>TO-DAY'S EXTRAS</b>		
BOILED TURKEY, OYSTER SAUCE 29	STEWED TRIBE WITH ONIONS 15	BOILED BEEF, HORSE RADISH SAUCE 15
ROAST PORK, APPLE SAUCE 15	BEEF A LA MODE 15	BREKFESTK PIR 15
CHILI CON CARNE, MEXICAN STYLE 15	FRANKFURTER SAURAGES AND SAUERKRAUT 20	BAKED CHICKEN PIE 20
CHICKEN FRIGASSIERE 25	BAKED HAM, CHAMPAGNE SAUCE 25	CHICKEN PATTY 20
OYSTER PIE 15	PORK AND BEANS 15	CHICKEN PATTY 20
OYSTER PATTY 15		
<b>ROASTS</b>	<b>ROASTS</b>	<b>ROASTS</b>
Beef 15	Veal 15	Beef loin 25
Lamb 15	Beef tenderloin 25	Pork 15
<b>SOUPS</b>	<b>SOUPS</b>	<b>SOUPS</b>
Green turtle 30	Beef 10	Clam 15
Vegetable 10	Mutton barley 10	Ox-tail 15
Pea 10	Clam broth 10	Tomato 10
		Bean 10
<b>EGGS</b>	<b>EGGS</b>	<b>EGGS</b>
Sardines 15	Baked halibut 15	
<b>TO ORDER</b>	<b>TO ORDER</b>	<b>TO ORDER</b>
Bluefish 25	Fish cakes 25	Codfish 25
Sardines steak 30	Halibut steak 25	Pickled-up codfish 25
Salt mackerel 25	Bids 25	Shad fried or broiled 25
Fried smelts 25	Fresh mackerel 25	Finnan haddie 25
<b>BOILED</b>	<b>BOILED</b>	<b>BOILED</b>
Smoked ham 15	Mutton, plain 15	Corned beef 15
Smoked beef tongue 25	Mutton, caper sauce 20	Corned beef hash 15
<b>POULTRY WITH APPLE SAUCE OR CHAMPAGNE SAUCE</b>	<b>POULTRY WITH APPLE SAUCE OR CHAMPAGNE SAUCE</b>	<b>POULTRY WITH APPLE SAUCE OR CHAMPAGNE SAUCE</b>
Roast spring chicken 35	Chicken frigate 25	Chicken, broiled on toast 50
Roast spring duck 35	Roast turkey 30	Chicken, fried, Vienna style 50
<b>STEAKS AND CHOPS TO ORDER</b>	<b>STEAKS AND CHOPS TO ORDER</b>	<b>STEAKS AND CHOPS TO ORDER</b>
Porterhouse steak 70	Bone sutton steak 40	Top sirloin steak 30
Porterhouse steak, tomato sauce 75	Sirloin steak with fried potatoes 25	Sirloin steak tomato sauce 30
Porterhouse steak with mushrooms 80	Porterhouse steak for two with tomato sauce 1 05	Rump steak 25
Porterhouse steak for two with mushrooms 1 15	Pork chops 25	Hamburger steak 25
Tenderloin steak 40	Tenderloin steak, tomato sauce 45	Vest cutlet, plain or broiled 25
Tenderloin steak with mushrooms 50	Corned beef hash, broiled 15	Ham hash broiled 15
Corned beef hash, broiled 15	Country sausages 25	English mutton chop, single 25
Corned beef hash with one poached egg	English mutton chops, brace 40	Broiled or fried ham 25
Broiled or fried ham 25	Rib of veal, single 15	brace 25
Pork tenderloin 25	Rib of veal, single 15	brace 25
Country sausage 25	Broiled pig's feet 25	Liver and bacon 25
<b>EGGS</b>	<b>EGGS</b>	<b>EGGS</b>
Two fried or boiled 15	Three poached plain 20	Bacon and eggs to order 25
Three fried or boiled 20	Two poached on toast 20	Onslet, ham or oyster 25
Two scrambled 15	Three poached on toast 25	Onslet, plain 20
Three scrambled 20	Fried beef and eggs 25	Onslet, parsley 25
Two poached plain 15	Ham and eggs to order 25	Onslet, rum 25
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	<b>VEGETABLES</b>	<b>VEGETABLES</b>
Stewed tomatoes 10	Cauliflower 15	Lettuce 10
Stewed corn 10	Sliced onions 10	Potatoes, fried to order 10
Green peas 10	Extra cabbage 5	Potatoes, French fried 10
Succotash 10	Green peas 10	Potatoes, mashed 5
Spinach 10	Celery 10	Potatoes, lyonnaise 10
Boiled onions 10	Boiled sweet potatoes 5	Fried sweet potatoes 10
<b>LAMBS TONGUE</b>	<b>LAMBS TONGUE</b>	<b>LAMBS TONGUE</b>
Broiled, half 30	whole 50	Stewed, half 30
whole 50	Plain, half 25	whole 50
LAMB'S TONGUE 10	TWO 15	

Figure One

Dinner at THE CAVIAR is thoroughly enjoyable—yet comparatively inexpensive!



**Dinner**

Blue Point or Cape Cod Oysters  
Maitre Herring in Wine Sauce  
Famous Ham  
Honey Dew Melon  
Shrimps à l'officer  
Assorted Hors d'Oeuvres

**Potages**

Broque of Lobster, Nantua  
Soupe à l'Oignon

**Entrées**

Breaded Silver Smelts, à l'Anglaise  
Goujonettes of Sole, Belle-Meunière  
Frog Legs à la Provençale  
Brook Trout au Court Braillon  
Chicken en Casserole, Grand Mère  
Filet Mignon, Marchand de Vin  
Mallard Duck à la Presse, Tour d'Argent (p.p.)  
Sweetbreads of Venison, Grand Veneur  
Broiled Baby Turkey, Eugénie  
Braided Canadian Ham, au Xérés  
Partridge en Casserole, Véronique  
Roast Pheasant on Causape (p.p.)

**Légumes**

Haricots Verts au beurre  
Choux Potirées  
Egplant, Oriental  
Au grain potatoes

**Salades**

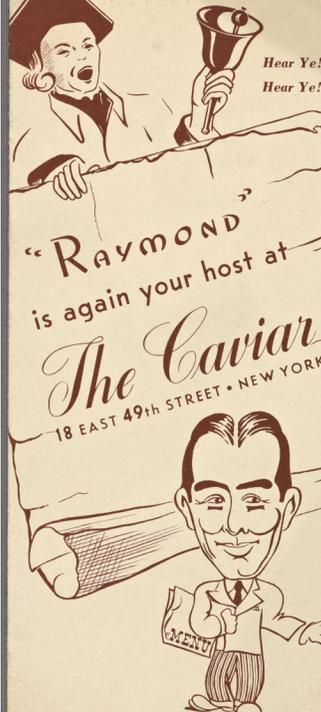
Salade à la Française  
Lettuce, Romaine or Mixed Green

**Desserts**

Savarin Cake au Rhum  
Fruit Tartelette

SERVED AS A DINNER

Figure Three



Hear Ye!  
Hear Ye!

"RAYMOND"  
is again your host at

**The Caviar**  
18 EAST 49th STREET • NEW YORK

Figure Four



Figure Two

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