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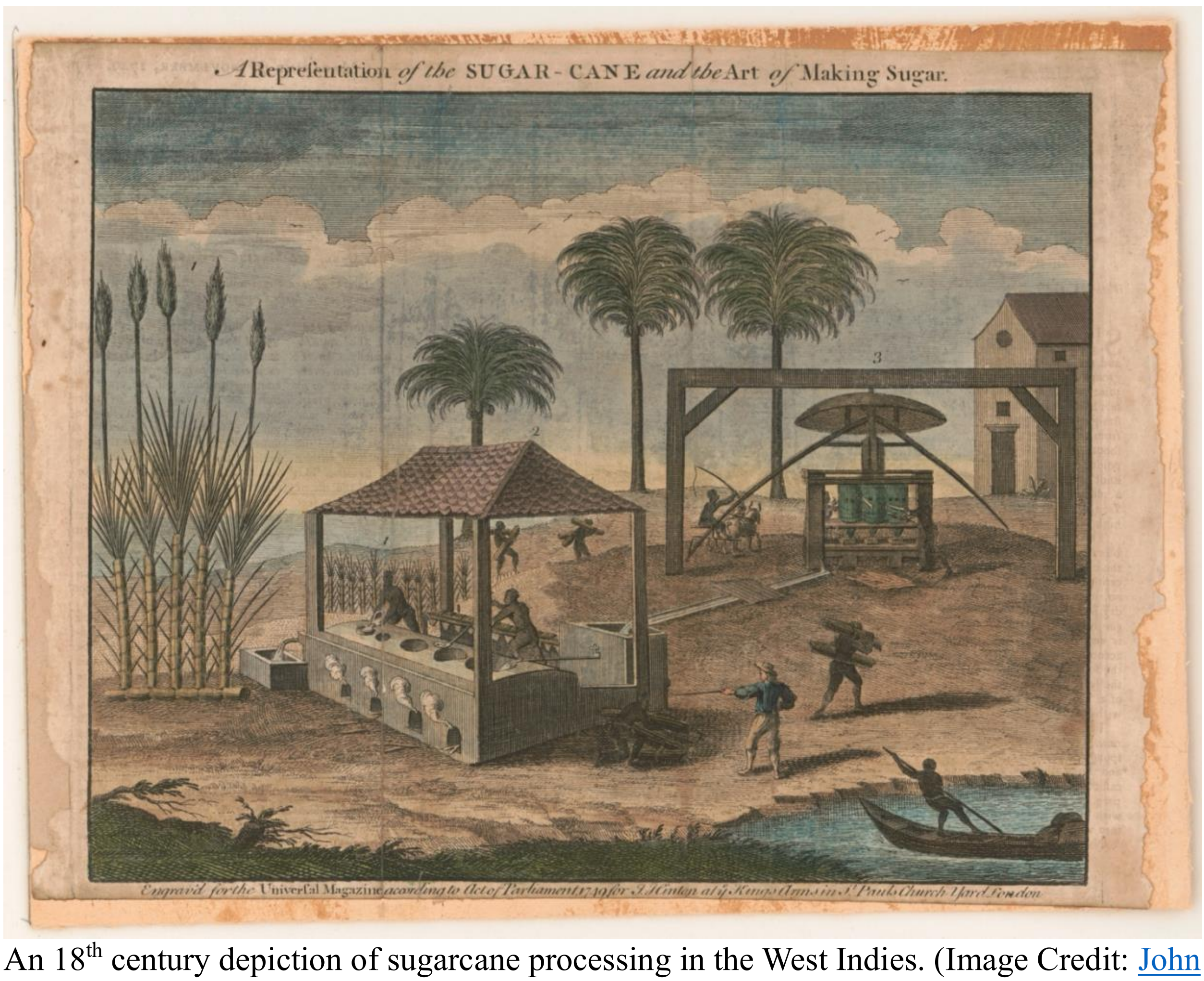
Volume 11

Special Issue in Honor of Professor Susan D. Amussen – "Gender, Race, and Empire: Past and Present"



An 18th century depiction of sugarcane processing in the West Indies. (Image Credit: John Hinton, 1749)

THE UNDERGRADUATE HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL RACE & ETHNIC STUDIES JOURNAL AT UC MERCED

Volume 11

Special Issue in Honor of Professor Susan D. Amussen – “Gender, Race, and Empire: Past and Present” (Spring 2026)

The Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal at the University of California, Merced

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HCRES Undergraduate Journal Editorial Board

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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

This special issue is dedicated to Dr. Susan Amussen, an accomplished academic in the field of History. Dr. Amussen has devoted her career to understanding the impact of gender, class, and race in early modern Britain and the Atlantic world. In honor of Dr. Amussen's pioneering research and scholarly impact, the HCRES Undergraduate Journal editorial board curated this issue to focus on the social, political, and historical aspects of gender, race, and empire. In total, this special issue brings together seven essays and five book reviews, each engaging with at least one dimension of Dr. Amussen's scholarship while collectively spanning a wide range of geographical contexts and historical periods.

The current issue is a product of the hard work of our eight dedicated student editors – Ashley Cendejas, Isaac Gonzalez-Leon, Castner Hatanaka, Byron Hurte, Ruben Paredes, Katya Tapia Becerril, Katy Vargas, and Noe Rangel – and several of our HCRES professors who edited articles and helped get us across the finish line. Central to this effort, however, are the nine undergraduate authors and the two UC Merced alumni authors whose original research, dedication, and intellectual engagement have shaped and enriched this issue. I hope that the contents of this issue can start real conversations amongst those who take the time to read and understand why the topics of race, gender, and empire are so important to social and political structures and institutions that still stand today.

Overall, I am so humbled by this experience to serve as the editor-in-chief for the past two years and I am so excited to bring back the HCRES Journal for another edition! I hope you enjoy this issue and that it prompts you to think critically about the world around you.

Brooke Acebo
Editor-in-Chief
HCRES Undergraduate Journal

Faculty Forward

The History & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies department celebrates Professor Amussen on the occasion of her retirement with a journal issue in her honor. Professor Amussen has been the most generous colleague, professor, and friend to so many of us at UC Merced. We bid her farewell with our hearts full of gratitude for all that she has done for us. UC Merced is a far better place as a result of her many contributions.

We stand in awe of Professor Amussen's academic accomplishments. A pioneer in the studies of gender and culture in Early Modern Europe, her more recent work has led her to consider intersectional elements of race and class together with gender and culture. She has been a consistent and dogged engine of change for the visibility of women in her field, as both scholars and subject of research. She has published four academic monographs, edited two major anthologies, and authored more than twenty-five peer-reviewed essays in academic journals and anthologies. Her research is on gender in early modern England, specifically focusing on its connections to race and class. But her scholarly impact extends well beyond these temporal and geographic boundaries to inform scholarship on slavery in the Anglophone, Spanish, Lusophone, Danish, and Dutch Atlantic worlds into the Modern Period. Her important and groundbreaking books are: An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England (1988, paperback ed.1993), Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700(2007), Gender, Culture and Politics in Early Modern England: Turning the World Upside Down (co-authored with David Underdown, 2017), and finally, What's in a Name?: How Historians Know Shakespeare Was Shakespeare (2026).

Over the entirety of her career, she has modeled the ways that women can pursue professional pathways and succeed in a field that has been heavily dominated by men (not just History but especially British history). As an accomplished, dedicated, and decorated teacher, Professor Amussen brought her innovative research and scholarly accomplishments into her classes. Her courses have focused on groups traditionally underrepresented in the field of European History. Students will remember how she enriched her courses by bringing dozens of samples from her own archival study into her classes. She was twice recognized for having "made a difference" by graduating seniors, who are asked to name professors having made a meaningful impact on their undergraduate experience. A sample of the courses that students had the privilege of taking include History 35: The Making of the Atlantic World; Spark: Shakespeare's London; History 100: The Historian's Craft; History 170: Law and Society in Early Modern England; History 179: Early Modern England 1500-1750; and History 106: Women and Gender in the Early Modern Atlantic World.

Additionally, the History & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies department is grateful for all of Professor Amussen's service to the university. In our department, she selflessly and frequently took on board service tasks in order to protect untenured and junior faculty from time-consuming service responsibilities. Her leadership on a campus that has had proportionally few female voices has had such an impact, as has her inclusive approach to leadership. She has chaired and served on numerous other system-wide, campus, and school committees and programs, including serving as chair of the Merced Division of the Academic Senate twice. She has also chaired the Interdisciplinary Humanities program and the Center for the Humanities. Her wonderful contributions to the university were acknowledged when she won the Fred Spiess award for Senate Service in 2017. Professor Amussen's service extended to the profession, where she has held important leadership positions in the North American Conference on British Studies and the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women and Gender.

To these more visible aspects of Professor Amussen's work, we must add those daily activities that are otherwise invisible but that matter so much. She has been an incredible mentor to faculty in the HCRES department, especially untenured women. Whenever anyone sends a question to the department, whether via text or email, Professor Amussen is usually the first to answer, taking time from her own work to share with her colleagues her vast knowledge of the sometimes Byzantine-like inner workings of the university, saving us all hours of time that we would spend looking for the answer elsewhere. Her remarkable ability to read and comment on the work of colleagues and students working on topics and fields of study far removed from her own has helped so many of us with our own work. And she has been a great friend, always encouraging us, and cheering us on with a welcoming smile. She is someone we have always been able to turn to as a confidant and advisor. HCRES will miss her very much, and we wish her all the best in her future pursuits. We know she will remain an active scholar and a true friend.

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Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Susan Amussen, Distinguished Professor of History and UC Merced Presidential Endowed Chair in the Humanities

By Brooke Acebo

Brooke Acebo (BA), HCRES Undergraduate Journal's Editor-in-Chief: Thank you for taking the time to interview with us, Dr. Amussen. For our readers and all of us at the HCRES Journal Editorial Board, could you tell us briefly about your research area and how your work has shaped your field of study?

Susan Amussen (SA): I am a historian of what we call early modern Britain and the Atlantic world, looking mostly at the period between about 1560 and 1700. My focus has generally been on how people experience structures of power, and it is generally what is now called intersectional research, though that term was not used when I started out. I started wanting to know about women's lives but realized that I wanted to also know about the relationship of patriarchy and capitalism. So, my dissertation and my first book were on the intersections of class and gender, and then in my second book I looked at English settlement in the Caribbean and the way slavery and race were created at home. Mine was the first major monograph to discuss women's lives and gender in early modern England, and my second was the first by an English historian (the Caribbeanists had done it before) to think about how enslavement and colonization changed England, not just the Caribbean. I've written three broad articles with my colleague Allyson Poska on how gender shaped the Atlantic world, to emphasize you cannot talk about a big historiographical theme and leave out women. I finished a book started by my late husband on the cultural idea of the world turned upside down and the anxieties it provoked in the 17th century. And most recently I just published a book on why Shakespeare was Shakespeare – a stealth introduction to historical method along the way.

BA: As you near your retirement, we have learned that historians never truly stop working. Could you tell us about your future research projects?

SA: Generally, in my retirement I want to think more about patriarchy as a social formation that changes over time. How does it adapt? How does it survive? The current piece of this is focused on the children, mostly boys, portrayed in elite portraits at the end of the 17th century: who were they? What happened to them when they grew up? I am hoping to track a few of them to tell a story about the lives of trafficked children.

BA: You came to UC Merced in 2008. What brought you here and how did UC Merced evolve into your professional home during your time here?

SA: I watched UC Merced for some years and was hired the third time I applied for a job! I wanted to come because of what was then a focus on interdisciplinary research and teaching. As a feminist scholar, I have always been pretty interdisciplinary, and I have been in conversation with literary scholars for many years. So, it seemed like a good fit. Also, I had been teaching at a non-residential university outside my specialization for many years and wanted to be part of a campus again!

BA: As a follow up to the previous question, how has UC Merced changed over the years?

SA: When I arrived in 2008, there were 2700 students. There were three academic buildings – COB, KL, and SE1. SSM was under construction. It was small, we knew almost everyone and did everything. We were making things up as we went. It is now much bigger, and everything is more formal, which is good and bad. It is harder to do new things. But it is great to have more colleagues, and more majors, and more support for faculty and students.

BA: Since you have seen so much change in both the campus and student body in the time you have been in Merced, what was something unexpected that surprised you about UC Merced?

SA: I had not been regularly teaching undergraduates for 18 years when I arrived. PowerPoint was new, so was the Learning Management System – at that time something we called CROPS, now Cat Courses. Both of those really changed the way I taught. In the old days, you put an article on reserve in the library, and students went in to read it. Now we could post them online. And I showed slides once a semester, because I had to haul a heavy slide projector into class, and then the shades did not close and … So, I had to relearn to teach. Also, I had been working primarily with adults for 18 years, and so I had to get to know young students again.

BA: We know the last course you are offering this semester is "HIST 179: Everything has a History," a course that focuses on gender, sexuality, women's reproductive history, and power structures. Why did you decide to offer this course as your final class at UC Merced?

SA: Last spring I was trying to decide what to teach, and I was debating between my course on early modern women and gender, and my course on early modern Britain. At the same time, I was watching the news and thinking there is a history here. So, I ended up using parts of both classes that seemed to me particularly relevant to the current moment, to help students understand the way the big questions of the day – from LGBTQ issues and abortion, to immigration, citizenship, and individual rights have been around for a long time. And particularly for the legal rights currently challenged by the government, these were *fought* and argued for 400 years ago. I hope it is helpful to know you have a long history of people for fighting for things you care about – but also arguing about them.

BA: What was your favorite undergraduate or graduate class to teach at UC Merced?

SA: Oh, that is tough. I love all my children equally! I always like the course I am teaching at a given moment. I have enjoyed teaching HIST 100 (I love the range of readings) and the capstone, but I also love teaching about the work I do as a scholar on the more distant past in Europe.

BA: As we reflect on your outstanding career as a historian and faculty member at UC Merced, what would you define as your greatest or most fulfilling accomplishment?

SA: When I started graduate school in 1976, there was no established historian working on the history of women in early modern England. Now there are many, and younger scholars are doing amazing work. It's been a real privilege to be part of that. At the same time, I was educated at Ivy League universities that had a culture that was very upper middle class and upper class. In teaching both at my previous institution, Union Institute and University, and at UC Merced, I have worked with students from a wide range of backgrounds who have also taught me. So, I have been lucky to teach things I care about to really interesting students. I have had a fortunate career!

BA: As students at UC Merced, we have all benefited from mentorship from the faculty here. Could you tell us about your mentors and the advice and guidance that helped shape your development as an academic?

SA: Well, when I was a student, we did not talk about mentors as much, and much of it was pretty informal, and not always helpful! But a few of my early teachers were older men who either supported me in doing work they would never do, or taught ideas and scholarship they did not much like because they knew we needed to know it. And I have always remembered that: my job is not to teach what I like, but to be responsible to a range of views and approaches to work.

BA: Reflecting on your career highlights and all that you have accomplished at UC Merced and in your field, what advice would you offer to history students and new and upcoming historians?

SA: Not one piece of advice, but some observations. Life does not always follow the path you expect. When it goes in a new direction, know that you will learn something from it. Do not be afraid of hard work: you can do it. Trust yourself and your instincts. And be kind: it costs nothing and makes life much pleasanter.

BA: What do you think you will you miss most about UC Merced?

SA: Oh, that is hard. I will miss my colleagues, and the ever-changing group of students. I will miss being in the classroom. I will miss the natural beauty that surrounds the campus: the snow-capped Sierras in winter, the cows grazing in spring and fall, the vernal pools, and the beautiful sunsets when I leave campus late on winter evenings.

BA: Other than your next project, what are you looking forward to most in retirement? Do you have any plans that might be surprising to our readers?

SA: I am looking forward to reading for pleasure and being able to travel when I want to. I do not think those are very surprising!

BA: Thank you, Dr. Amussen for participating in this interview and for your time here at UC Merced. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to get to know more about you and to honor you with this special issue dedicated to your research.

Citizens or Strangers?: The 1930s Repatriation of Mexican and Mexican Americans

By Desiree Correa

Introduction

The 1930s in the United States are often remembered for the Great Depression, but it was also a period in which citizenship and legality were frequently questioned, even for one's own neighbors. During this decade, mass deportations of Mexican and Mexican American populations took place across the country in a process now known as the Mexican Repatriation. These efforts, carried out under President Herbert Hoover's administration and continuing into Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, were not the result of formal law. They emerged from federal pressure, local initiatives, and mass raids that disproportionately targeted individuals of Mexican descent, many of whom were U.S. citizens.[1]

Under the guise of reducing unemployment during the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands of people were forcibly or coercively "repatriated" to Mexico, regardless of their legal status.[2] Overshadowed by later programs like the Bracero Program and Operation Wetback, the legacy of the Mexican Repatriation remains significant. Understanding how these mass deportations were allowed to occur provides critical insight into the role of race, citizenship, and economic scapegoating in U.S. history. A key question guiding this research is: What were the circumstances that led to the mass deportations of the Latino population in the 1930s? Studying

[1] Adam Goodman, "Coerced Removal from the Great Depression through Operation Wetback," in *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*, (Princeton University Press, 2020), 37-38.

[2] Brian Gratton and Emily Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950," *The International Migration Review* 47, no. 4 (2013): 947, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24542812.

these past injustices helps us recognize similar policies today. Historians generally attribute the mass deportations to the economic crisis of the Great Depression and the rise of nativist sentiment, often pointing to President Hoover's rhetoric, which scapegoated Mexican laborers for high unemployment. Historian Adam Goodman, for example, explains that budgetary restrictions during the Great Depression led the United States to adopt stricter policies, particularly along the Southern border.[3] These pressures pushed the Immigration Service to target Mexican communities more directly, resulting in the mass repatriations of the 1930s.[4] Historian Larisa L. Veloz supports Goodman's argument, adding that heightened nativism played a central role in fueling deportations. According to Veloz, "Americans" felt increasingly threatened by immigration and projected their economic and social anxieties onto immigrants, especially Mexicans.[5]

My approach, however, goes further by analyzing the institutions that enabled and enforced discriminatory policies, rather than focusing solely on racism as an abstract force. I argue that the Mexican Repatriation was not caused solely by racism or border security concerns, but rather by a convergence of long-developing economic, political, and social factors that culminated in the 1930s. Specifically, this paper contends that the Mexican Repatriation was shaped by the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), early twentieth-century immigration policies, and labor movements of the same period. By examining the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, the evolution of U.S. immigration policy, and the rise of labor movements, this

[3] Goodman, "Coerced Removal from the Great Depression," 37-38.

[4] Goodman, "Coerced Removal from the Great Depression," 37-38.

[5] Larisa L. Veloz, "The Great Depression and The Great Return: Coming Home 1929-1936," in *Even the Women Are Leaving: Migrants Making Mexican America, 1890–1965*, (University of California Press, 2023), 92.

paper emphasizes how these forces collectively laid the groundwork for mass repatriation.

The Mexican Revolution and its Aftermath

Understanding the history of the U.S.-Mexico border, particularly the impact of the Mexican Revolution, is essential to explaining how political instability and displacement contributed to the Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s. The outcome of the Mexican-American War in 1846, a conflict that ended with the United States acquiring a vast amount of western territory from Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, left the relations between the two nations tense. However, by the 1890s, relations began to stabilize. Much of this shift was due to Mexico's president at the time, Porfirio Díaz. Díaz successfully shifted the tides for Mexico in terms of economic and foreign development, earning recognition from Europe and America.[6]

Despite this period of progress, the peace did not last. By the early twentieth century, the citizens of Mexico grew discontent with Díaz's authoritarian control and lack of political freedom. This frustration is captured in the revolutionary 1911 book *El Triunfo de la Revolución*, published by Rafael Illán a year after the conflict began. Illán declared, "If Don Porfirio Díaz does not resign, the curse of all Mexico will fall upon him, because we… will follow the difficult path of rebellious outcry with weapons in hand until we achieve our anticipated goal."[7] This unrest culminated in the Mexican Revolution, which spanned from 1910 to 1917, taking the lives

[6] Benjamin C. Montoya, "The Basis for the Quota Drive Against Mexico," in *Risking Immeasurable Harm: Immigration Restriction and U.S.-Mexican Diplomatic Relations, 1924–1932*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 19.

[7] Rafael Illán, *El Triunfo de la Revolución*, (Texas: "Imprenta Mexicana", 1911), 3-4."Si Don Porfirio Diaz no dimite, sobre su cabeza caerá la maldición de todo México, pues nosotros con la razón por rodela y la justicia por lanza seguiremos la send abrupta del grito subversivo con las armas en la mano hasta llegar al fin presentido." Translated by Author.

of an estimated 100,000 people.[8] With Díaz fleeing the country, Mexico experienced a power vacuum, resulting in fighting and bloodshed.

This instability affected every aspect of life, including the family structure. Many families experienced disrupted dynamics, as they were displaced or lost members. The revolution reshaped the very idea of what a family could be. In many cases, families had to survive on whatever little they had, often lacking stable shelter, food, or resources. The photo below, dated March 13, 1914, captures a glimpse of this hardship as a Mexican family appears to be living in a tent, sharing clothing, and eating handmade tortillas. Their scant supplies reflect the reality many families faced as they tried to survive the revolution's chaos (see fig. 1).[9] It is important to note, however, that this image was produced and circulated by U.S. observers, potentially framing Mexican poverty through an objectifying lens. While it reflects the difficult conditions faced by families, it also represents the ways outside audiences perceived and interpreted these hardships.

[8] Miles V. Rodríguez, "Introduction," in *Movements After Revolution: A History of People's Struggles in Mexico*, (Oxford University Press, 2022), 6.

[9] Horne, Walter H., *[Mexican Family Sits to Eat #2]*, March 13, 1914, photograph, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth187929/.

Figure 1. Mexican Family Sits to Eat. (Walter H. Horne, *[Mexican Family Sits to Eat #2]*, March 13, 1914, photograph, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth187929/.)

The conflict's impact also extended to the Southern U.S. border, prompting the United States to station military forces in response to raids led by Pancho Villa, a prominent revolutionary during this time period. Villa had gained notoriety for his 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico, where several Americans were killed. According to a government document, during this raid, "... between two and three thousand men attacked the village of Columbus N.M., … burning several buildings and looting."[10] As tensions between the two nations escalated in the mid-1910s, President Woodrow Wilson increased U.S. military presence along the border and launched the Punitive Expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and protect border relations between Mexico and the United States.[11]

The turmoil in Mexico forced many to make difficult decisions, leading to mass migration. Between 1900 and 1910, Mexican nationals made at least 500,000 border crossings into the United States.[12] Despite the end of the revolution, the migration intensified, with annual figures reaching as high as 90,000 immigrants in 1925 alone.[13] Contrary to popular belief, these migrants, who were described as young and single men traveling alone, did not intend to

[10] "Return of casualties of the 13th U.S. Cavalry on the March 9, 1916, 'Pancho Villa' raid," March 9, 1916, Record Group 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 300382, National Archives Catalog, Washington, DC. https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300382.

[11] David K. Work, "Enforcing Neutrality: The Tenth U.S. Cavalry on the Mexican Border, 1913-1919," *Western Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2009): 180-181, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40505472.

[12] Kelly Lytle Hernández, "The Early Years," in *Migra! : A History of the U.S. Border Patrol*, (University of California Press, 2010), 25.

[13] Gratton and Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950," 947.

permanently settle in the United States.[14] They were often seeking higher wages to support families back in Mexico, and opportunities were often available along the border. This characterization of migrants as temporary, single men contributed to a U.S. perception of Mexican laborers as transient and expendable, laying the groundwork for policies in the 1930s that targeted Mexican-American families for deportation, even those with U.S.-born children. By framing these early migration patterns in this way, it becomes clear that the social and governmental attitudes toward Mexican migrants during and after the revolution influenced how birthright citizenship was often disregarded in later mass deportation efforts.

At the same time, economic conditions along the U.S.-Mexico border encouraged a cyclical pattern of migration. As American labor economist Marie T. Mora explains, "... around the turn of the century, an abundance of agricultural and mining opportunities along the U.S.-Mexico border, aided by the expansion of railroad, created an economic boom that lasted until the late 1920s ...."[15] This economic growth gave many migrants a reason not only to stay but to return in cycles, allowing them to provide for themselves and their families. This cyclical migration pattern persisted through the early twentieth century, and well into the 1930s, shaping both the labor market and the social dynamics that would later influence U.S. immigration and deportation policies. Building on these repeated migration cycles, historical documentation, such as immigrant identification cards from the National Archives, further illustrates these trends. For instance, Florencio Aceves, a thirty-two-year-old migrant, aimed to enter the United States

[14] Gratton and Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950," 947.

[15] Marie T. Mora, "Changes in Occupational Earnings along the U.S.-Mexico Border between 1900 and 1920," *Journal of Economic Issues* 39, no. 4 (2005): 1043-59, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4228206.

through Calexico, California on August 16, 1930 (see fig. 2).[16] These identification cards, issued starting July 1, 1928, by the U.S. consul, included personal details and intended destinations. This practice diminished by August 1940, but highlights the transient nature of Mexican migration during this period.[17] While many migrants returned to Mexico, others found stability

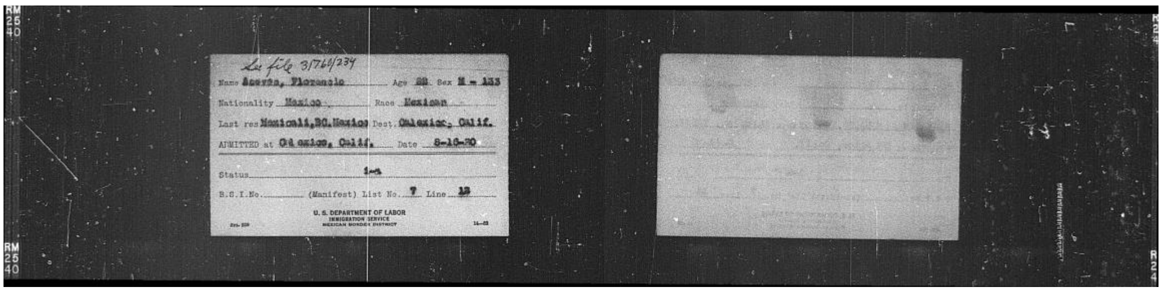

Figure 2. An example of immigration identification cards. (*Aceves, Florencio-8/16/1930*. August 16, 1930, photograph, National Archives Catalog, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/24772233.)

and opportunity in the United States, leading to a growing Mexican and Mexican-American population. By 1930, 1.6 million individuals of Mexican origin lived in the United States, compared to just over 600,000 in 1910.[18] However, this growth coincided with rising hostility. With the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, economic anxieties and increased competition for jobs fueled anti-Mexican sentiment. Mexicans became scapegoats for economic hardship, leading to repatriation campaigns and eventually mass deportations.

Building on the migration patterns set in motion by the Mexican Revolution, this period of forced deportations and voluntary returns underscored the racial and economic tensions that

[16] "U.S. Department of Labor Card of Florencio Aceves, August 16, 1930," 24772233, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives Catalog, Washington, DC.

[17] "Lecture on Immigration and Naturalization Documents, Records, and Indexes," May 1, 1943, 21621, File no. 165/217-B, INS Lecture Series 2 [1943], U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Camp Springs, MD.

[18] Gratton and Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950," 948.

defined the U.S.-Mexico relations during this era. While the Mexican Revolution involved political and social upheaval, this discussion focuses on its effects on migration patterns and U.S. perceptions, rather than revolutionary ideology. In examining the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, it becomes clear that the convergence of political instability, labor demands, and racial prejudice laid the foundation for the Mexican Repatriation. Anti-Mexican prejudice predated the Revolution, shaped by decades of land dispossession, systemic local violence, and exclusion from political power across the Southwest following Mexican independence and the Mexican-American War. The Revolution intensified and transformed these longstanding tensions. This is supported by border immigration records from Mexico to the United States which were considerably low, staying well below 22,000 migrants from 1880 until 1900.[19] It was not until the middle of the twentieth century that Mexicans began migrating to the United States in greater numbers, especially when looking at later decades, which saw as many as 83,205 migrants from July to December 1955.[20] Thus, the number of immigrants at the start of the twentieth century was relatively small compared to the overall population in later decades and the extended period it took to reach those figures.

This demonstrates how the political instability and social upheaval of the Mexican Revolution, along with the resulting migration, shaped American perceptions of Mexico and its people, portraying Mexican communities as both transient and potentially threatening. As immigration became an increasingly contentious issue, public attention shifted toward the Southern border, often placing blame on Mexican immigrants for broader social and economic

[19] Gratton and Merchant, “Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950,” 947.

[20] “Immigration and Naturalization Service Report of Field Operations, July to December 1955,” (1955 Reports), 381634506, General Records of the Department of Homeland Security, National Archives Catalog, Washington, DC.

issues. The Mexican Revolution accelerated patterns of displacement and cyclical migration, resulting in a growing Mexican population in the United States. Mexican labor, while essential to key industries, became a primary target of blame, making Mexican communities especially vulnerable to exclusion and removal. In this way, these developments did not merely precede the Mexican Repatriation, but actively helped justify and enable the mass deportation campaigns of the 1930s. These migration patterns created large and visible Mexican communities throughout the American Southwest. When the economic crisis of the Great Depression struck in the 1930s, these same communities became the primary targets of repatriation campaigns that sought to remove Mexican laborers from the United States.

Evolving U.S. Immigration Policies of the Early Twentieth Century

U.S. immigration policies and government actions in the early twentieth century played a critical role in shaping the experiences of immigrant communities, laying the groundwork for the large-scale targeting and mass deportations of the Mexican and Mexican-American population during the Mexican Repatriation. Even though government officials, school districts, and local programs had been monitoring Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans since the 1910s through labor oversight, segregation policies, and "Americanization" programs, they became particularly visible in public discourse and statistical accounts by the mid-1920s.[21] Rather than taking accountability for economic issues, the United States government chose to disrupt opportunities, livelihoods, and families to address an almost inescapable economic depression. Employers and government officials soon treated Mexican immigrant workers as disposable,

[21] Gratton and Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950," 948.

viewing them as “temporary” or even “replaceable” laborers. This racialization allowed the U.S. government and employers to exploit their labor while simultaneously scapegoating them for the economic turmoil of the Great Depression.

This period also marked a significant contraction in how whiteness was defined in the United States. As immigrant communities grew, racial categories extended beyond a simple Black-white binary, yet these expansions were accompanied by increased exclusion and discrimination. Those who were not considered white faced limited access to opportunities and social mobility, reinforcing a growing eugenics movement that shaped both immigration policy and public attitudes during this time.

The rise of anti-Mexican rhetoric in newspapers and political campaigns further intensified hostility, portraying Mexican immigrants as job stealers and threats to American stability. Many newspapers echoed the government’s sentiments. For instance, when addressing the deportation of alien criminals in his annual message to the Senate and House of Representatives, President Hoover remarked, “... thousands of persons have entered the country in violation of the immigration laws… I recommend that the Congress provide methods of strengthening the Government to correct this abuse.”[22] This statement fueled sensationalist headlines. One such article titled, “County Saves Large Sum by Mexican Repatriations,” highlighted how Los Angeles County in California saved more than two million dollars in taxpayer money by deporting over 36,000 Mexicans.[23] The article framed these deportations as beneficial for unemployed American workers and advocated for further removals. These

[22] President Hoover, speaking on the Economic Situation, on December 2, 1930, 71st Cong., 3rd sess., *Congressional Record* 74, pt. 1: 36.

[23] “County Saves Large Sum by Mexican Repatriations,” *Monrovia News-Post*, March 4, 1933, 4.

portrayals not only reflected public sentiment, but also reinforced the idea that Mexican immigrants were responsible for economic instability, further legitimizing exclusionary policies and later enforcement practices.

Building upon the growing nativist sentiment of the early twentieth century, the evolving legislation reveals that the United States strategically weaponized immigration policy to marginalize and scapegoat immigrant communities. The *Immigration Act of 1924* laid the foundation for racial exclusion, yet the roots of this exclusion can be traced back to the landmark Supreme Court case *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*. Decided on March 25, 1898, this case centered on a child born in the United States to Chinese immigrant parents who permanently resided in the country.[24] The Supreme Court ruled that the child was a U.S. citizen by birth, citing the first clause of the Fourteenth Amendment: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."[25] This decision established birthright citizenship as a constitutional right, protecting all individuals born on American soil, regardless of race or heritage. However, the Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s exposed the government's blatant disregard for this precedent. Under the guise of addressing economic instability during the Great Depression, local and federal officials forcibly deported not only Mexican immigrants but also Mexican Americans who were U.S. citizens by birth. This mass deportation campaign demonstrated the government's selective and racially motivated application of the law, directly violating the constitutional protections established in *Wong Kim Ark*.

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[24] *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169, U.S. 649, 649 (1898).

[25] U.S. Constitution, amend. 14, sec. 1.

Similarly, the *Immigration Act of 1924* was another piece of legislation that played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. immigration policy and set the stage for future exclusionary measures. It exemplified the standards that were originally set by *Wong Kim Ark*. While the law aimed to regulate immigration, its provisions worked to control and channel migration into narrow and highly monitored pathways. It introduced key policies, such as the establishment of immigration visas, a formal distinction between "quota" and "non-quota" immigrants, and, most notably, gave rise to the creation of the U.S. Border Patrol.[26] These measures reflected the growing concerns over regulating migration and reinforced the federal government's authority in controlling who could enter the country. Understanding the *Immigration Act of 1924* is essential to recognizing the shifting focus of the U.S. immigration enforcement in the years leading up to the Mexican Repatriation.

The *Immigration Act of 1924* established strict immigration policies that shaped future U.S. immigration laws. A key provision of the act outlined visa distribution, requiring immigrants not only to obtain a visa but also to comply with border patrol regulations for its use. Notably, under the subtitle, "Immigration Visas" Section F, the act was deliberately vague, granting officials broad discretion to deny entry. As stated in the bill:

> No immigration visa shall be issued to an immigrant if it appears to the consular officer, from statements in the application, or in the papers submitted therewith, that the immigrant is inadmissible to the United States under the immigration laws….[27]

This ambiguity allowed the U.S. government to reject applicants more easily while also enhancing border surveillance. To clarify, the law primarily aimed at limiting European immigration. It did not impose restrictions on all U.S. borders, such as the Southern border,

[26] Immigration Act of 1924, Pub. L. No. 68-138, 43 Stat. 153 (1924).

[27] Immigration Act of 1924, § F.

where Mexican migration had been increasing. However, following the act's implementation, Mexican immigration dropped significantly, falling under 40,000 migrants according to the U.S. Commissioner General of Immigration, or around 20,000 migrants as per U.S. Census data.[28] While this decline is not directly linked to the act, it suggests a shifting landscape in U.S. immigration policy and foreshadows more stringent restrictions in the future.

The act distinguished between quota and non-quota immigrants, further shaping the nation's immigration framework. In the subtitle, "Definition of 'Immigrants'" Section 3, the act defines an immigrant as, "... any alien departing from any place outside the United States destined for the United States, …."[29] It further clarifies that non-quota immigrants, those exempt from visa limits, faced fewer restrictions, while quota immigrants encountered stricter limitations on obtaining and renewing visas. These restrictions aligned with the U.S. government's broader goal of tightening immigration controls. This intent was explicitly stated by W.W. Husband, the Commissioner General of Immigration at the time, in a February 9, 1924 newspaper clipping from Washington D.C. Husband remarked, "To-day the word immigration is rather commonly associated with the idea of filth and crime and paupers and undesirables generally. If we can cut down the flow of immigrants…the term immigration will take on a better meaning."[30]

Such rhetoric reinforced the growing perception of immigration as a societal threat. The term "undesirables" was later formalized in legislation, such as the *Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929*. Husband, frequently quoted in the article, openly expressed bias in favor of Northwestern

[28] Gratton and Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920–1950, " 947.

[29] Immigration Act of 1924, § 3.

[30] "Immigration Quota on Naturalization Basis is Proposed, 9th February," 1226235, Box 5611, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives Catalog, Washington, DC.

European immigrants, and emphasized their supposed superiority in building the United States. These discriminatory views were part of a larger framework that shaped future anti-immigrant campaigns, particularly against Mexicans. Although this act and the discourse surrounding it are often overlooked, they played a crucial role in shaping U.S. immigration policy. Without this law, the establishment of later border security measures and their lasting enforcement at the Southern border might have unfolded differently. Overall, the *Immigration Act of 1924* demonstrates the government's significant role in shaping public attitudes toward immigration. While the act primarily targeted European immigration, it also laid the groundwork for another key policy: *Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929*.

Prior to the mid-1920s, national policies and public discourse largely targeted Asian and European immigrants, portraying them as economic threats and cultural outsiders. However, as restrictions tightened on those groups, attention increasingly turned toward Mexican immigrants. One example of the growing anti-immigrant sentiment can be seen in a letter from a Pittsburgh resident to James J. Davis, the Secretary of Labor during the 1920s. Written on March 5, 1928, four years after the implementation of the *Immigration Act of 1924*, the letter reflects the writer's support for a bill, which aimed to restrict Mexican immigration. The resident expresses approval of Davis's stance, stating, "... Detroit is flooded with them [Mexicans]; - in fact they are to be found in every bity town … I think they are the worst type of immigrant."[31] This letter illustrates the widespread hostility toward Mexican immigrants and highlights the growing racial tension that intensified as the United States approached the 1930s.

[31] "Letter to James J. Davis, Secretary of Labour, on the Box Bill," 5 March 1928, 1226235, Box 5611, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives Catalog, Washington, DC.

The *Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929* had a direct impact on Mexican Repatriation, as it focused on the Southern border, criminalizing and restricting Mexican immigration to the United States. Senator Coleman Livingston Blease strongly advocated for the act, though some employers opposed it, recognizing that Mexican labor remained essential to the agricultural industry. As a compromise, the *Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929* specifically penalized those who entered the country illegally through unauthorized ports of entry. Violators faced fines, imprisonment, or deportation.[32] The timing of this law coincided with the onset of the Great Depression, which marked a turning point in U.S. immigration policy.

Although deportation was not always the intended consequence of illegal entry, the economic crisis led the government to forcibly repatriate many immigrants. Immigration raids increased, and individuals unable to prove their legal status, both Mexicans and Mexican Americans, were deported.[33] This demonstrates how early twentieth-century immigration policies not only regulated migration but also helped construct Mexican immigrants as expendable, shaping both public perception and the government's actions that culminated in the Mexican Repatriation. These immigration laws expanded the federal government's ability to monitor, categorize, and police migrant populations. When the economic crisis of the 1930s intensified demands for job protection, these legal and bureaucratic tools made it far easier for authorities to carry out the mass repatriation campaigns that targeted Mexican communities.

The Rise of Labor Movements in the Early Twentieth Century

[32] "Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929 (Blease's Law)." Immigration and Ethnic History Society, accessed March 26, 2025, https://immigrationhistory.org/item/undesirable-aliens-act-of-1929-bleases-law/.

[33] Immigration and Ethnic History Society, "Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929 (Blease's Law)."

Labor movements in the early twentieth century played a crucial role in shaping public attitudes toward Mexican workers, contributing to the economic pressures and nationalistic rhetoric that fueled the Mexican Repatriation. At the same time, the United States was rapidly becoming an economic superpower, fueled by growing industrialization and urbanization. However, this transformation was not achieved in isolation. Mexican immigrants, along with other immigrant groups, had long been vital to the U.S. labor force, particularly in agriculture. This heavy reliance on immigrant labor laid the groundwork for future tensions, contributing to the conditions that eventually led to mass deportations.

The fast pace of urbanization also reshaped the labor landscape, prompting the rise of powerful labor movements and unions. These organizations played a critical role in protecting the workers who were helping to build the modern United States. Unions not only fought for better wages and working conditions but also served as a defense against widespread exploitation. A key example was the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905. It rivaled the American Federation of Labor (AFL), founded in 1886, and was a dominant labor union at the time, by offering workers a sense of purpose, shelter, and low membership fees.[34] Unlike other unions, the IWW was seen as an organization created by and for the workers themselves, making it especially appealing to various laborers and quickly gaining support.

It was in this evolving labor environment that the first waves of Mexican immigrants arrived. Labor, and its value, existed in a gray area that corporations often exploited. Many Mexican immigrants, whether seeking seasonal or long-term work, were unfamiliar with labor protections, making them particularly vulnerable to mistreatment by employers. A key event in

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[34] Robert L. Tyler, "I. W. W. in the Pacific N. W.: Rebels of the Woods," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1954): 3, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20612131.

labor history that reflects these struggles is the Wheatland Hop Riot, which took place on August 3, 1913, in Wheatland, a small city of under 3,000 residents located about 15 miles from Yuba City in Northern California. By this time, the IWW had established a presence in California, though its membership remained small, fewer than 5,000 members statewide and less than 8% of migratory laborers. Despite its size, the IWW's activism drew opposition from business owners and lawmakers, who sought to suppress radical labor organizing by passing laws that criminalized union activities and labor strikes that were perceived as disruptive. It was these legal efforts that played a role in the events leading up to the riot.[35]

The Wheatland Episode took place at Durst Ranch, which was California's largest employer at the time due to its enticing advertisements that drew thousands of workers. The ranch hired laborers regardless of nationality, valuing them for their perceived efficiency and the ease with which they were exploited for lower wages. Women and children were also commonly employed making up nearly 50% of the labor force as well.[36] Despite the ranch's large workforce, working and living conditions were far from adequate. Laborers who arrived seeking work were met with, "...intolerable sanitary, housing, and working conditions and a wage-payment system on a piece-rate and bonus basis ranging from 90 cents to $1.90 a day…" (see fig. 3).[37] This immediately sparked outrage, especially among members of the IWW.

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[35] Woodrow, C. Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," *Pacific Historical Review* 17, no. 1 (1948): 37-38, https://doi.org/10.2307/3634767.

[36] Don Mitchell, "Labor and Landscape: The Wheatland Riot and Progressive State Intervention," in *The Lie of the Land*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 36-37.

[37] Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," 38. *Hop Workers Camp*, 1913, photograph, 90 x 135 mm, CSU Chico Digital Collections, http://archives.csuchico.edu/digital/collection/coll11/id/21069/rec/6.

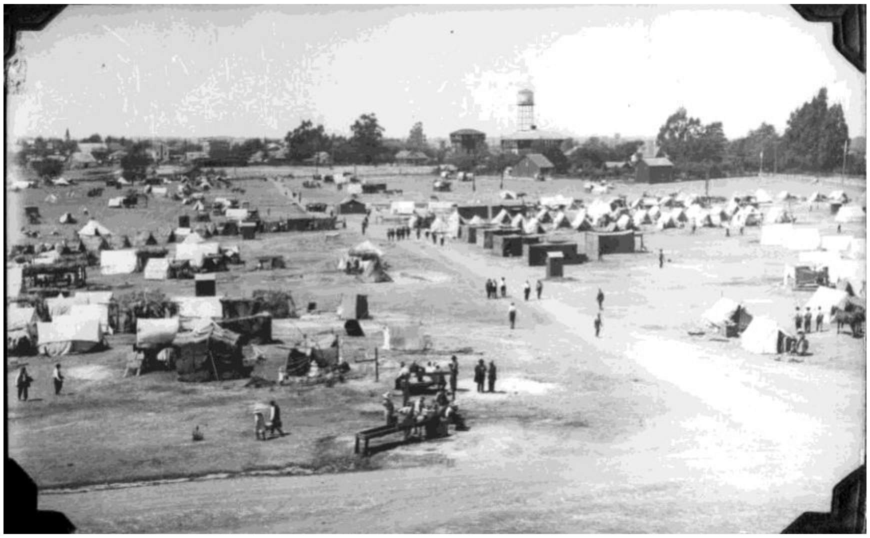

Figure 3. Hop Workers Camp. (*Hop Workers Camp*, 1913, photograph, 90 x 135 mm, CSU Chico Digital Collections, http://archives.csuchico.edu/digital/collection/coll11/id/21069/rec/6.)

When the harvest season began in August, a group of workers confronted the ranch owner, demanding better conditions, including, "... drinking water to be furnished in the fields twice a day, improved sanitary conditions in the camps, especially separate toilets for men and for women, and $1.25 a hundred [payment per 100 units]."[38] As tensions escalated, the owner refused to meet their demands, ultimately leading to the violent events of August 3, 1913. That day, the sheriff and his deputies arrived at the ranch to disperse a workers' meeting. The growing crowd became more agitated, and a deputy on the outskirts of the crowd fired shots into the air in an attempt to restore order. Instead, violence erupted, resulting in a clash that left four people dead, including two laborers.

Notably, an examination of news coverage following the event reveals that the deaths of the two laborers were largely ignored. Reports primarily focused on the officials who were killed. For instance, a clipping from the *Windham County Observer*, reads, "E.T. Manwell,

[38] Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," 39.

district attorney and two deputy sheriffs killed in riot at Wheatland hop fields today."[39] There was no mention of the laborers who also lost their lives, a pattern reflected across many newspapers at the time. This selective reporting highlights the social position of laborers, whose lives were seen as less valuable than those of the authorities who sought to suppress their cause.

In the aftermath, detectives were dispatched across California to arrest protest participants. These individuals faced brutal treatment and were denied basic legal rights. For example, a man by the name of Alfred Nelson was arrested by one of these detectives. During this time, Nelson was moved from one city to another before finally residing in Contra Costa County. Although he was never allowed to seek counsel or be formally charged, he was held in the county jail for several hours before being taken to a hotel room, where detectives beat him to force a false confession.[40] As reported by the *El Paso Herald*, "Nelson was supposed to know who killed district attorney Manwell and deputy sheriff Riordan in the recent hop field riots at Wheatland."[41] With so little media attention given to people like Nelson, the door remained open for others to be mistreated in the same way.

Of all the individuals arrested, four were eventually put on trial. Two of them were convicted of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder, and were sentenced to life

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[39] "Late Happenings Told in Tabloid," *Windham County Observer*, August 6, 1913. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn92051419/1913-08-06/ed-1/seq-8/#date1=1756&sort=date&rows=20&words=hop+riot+Wheatland&searchType=basic&sequence=0&index=3&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=Wheatland+hop+riot&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

[40] Mitchell, "Labor and Landscape: The Wheatland Riot and Progressive State Intervention," 41.

[41] "Detective Held for Assault," *El Paso Herald*, September 22, 1913. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88084272/1913-09-22/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=1756&sort=date&rows=20&words=hop+riots+Wheatland&searchType=basic&sequence=0&index=4&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=Wheatland+hop+riot&y=23&x=13&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

in prison.[42] The trial and convictions highlighted the harsh realities faced by labor movements in the early twentieth century, exposing the risks laborers took in fighting for better working conditions. The Wheatland Episode itself had lasting consequences, fueling both changes in California's agricultural labor practices and the broader labor movement. Moreover, the Commission of Immigration and Housing was formed to investigate labor conditions and submit annual reports that, as one account stated, "...bring light to deplorable housing and sanctuary conditions in labor camps throughout the state."[43] This prompted further investigations by the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations and bolstered support for the IWW.

The growing labor movement extended beyond California. On September 28, 1913, just over a month after the August 3rd incident, prominent labor leader Vincent St. John addressed a public protest held in Chicago. Speaking before a crowd of fellow IWW members and supporters who had organized in solidarity with the Wheatland Hop Pickers, St. John rallied workers to unite against widespread injustices facing agricultural laborers. As one of the founding members of the IWW and a formal metal miner himself, St. John deeply understood the hardships these workers endured.[44] In his speech, he directly condemned the exploitative practices of the Durst Brothers. He stated that:

> The Durst Brothers [owners of the farm], who profited by using the labor power of these 2,500 men and women, were not concerned whether the latter had a roof over their heads where they labored or not. … Durst Brothers maintain a commissary and every worker in these hop fields was supposed to buy his supplies from this commissary at whatever price Durst Brothers chose to charge for the same. And you may be sure the provisions were sold at the highest

[42] Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," 39.

[43] Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," 40.

[44] "Vincent St. John: Associate of "Big Bill" Haywood Dies in San Francisco," *The New York Times*, June 24, 1929.

> possible prices, while being the very cheapest the bosses could find on the market.[45]

This speech reflected the widespread frustration among laborers and underscored the broader push for better conditions. However, while the movement gained traction, it also sparked backlash from farmers who pushed for restrictive laws against the IWW, intensifying conflicts on the labor front.[46] Many Mexicans had already moved to the United States, either permanently or temporarily, in search of better opportunities. A significant number of migrants were not only seeking economic opportunity, but were also shaped by the social and political upheaval of the Mexican Revolution. Many carried with them a heightened awareness of labor rights and, in some cases, prior exposure to activism, which influenced their willingness to organize and challenge exploitative working conditions in the United States. While some found solidarity in labor unions, others faced exploitation, harsh working conditions, and employer resistance to their organizing efforts. As strikes and union activity increased, frustration among employers grew, further deepening resentment toward migrant laborers. This escalating tension contributed to growing anti-immigrant sentiment, as Mexican workers were increasingly viewed not only as economic competitors, but also as sources of labor unrest. In this context, the Wheatland Hop Riot was not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of labor unrest during this period, reflecting growing tensions between employers and migrant laborers.

The early twentieth century saw the exploitation of Mexican workers, which increased their visibility within key industries. As the labor tensions rose, particularly through organizing

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[45] Vincent St. John, "The Wheatland Victims: Speech at a Protest Meeting for the Wheatland Hop Pickers: Chicago - Sept. 28, 1913," *Solidarity* 4, no. 40 (1913): 2, http://www.marxisthistory.org/history/usa/unions/iww/1913/0928-stjohn-wheatland.pdf.

[46] Whitten, "The Wheatland Episode," 42.

efforts and strikes, Mexican workers came to be viewed as both essential and expendable. The economic crisis of the Great Depression further intensified these perceptions, allowing employers and government officials to justify their removal. In this way, labor conflicts and economic dependency did not simply precede the Mexican Repatriation, but actively shaped it, as these tensions were used to justify immigration raids, forced removals, and large-scale deportation campaigns throughout the 1930s.

The Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s

William N. Doak, who served as Secretary of Labor under President Herbert Hoover, played a central role in organizing and publicizing deportation campaigns as a solution to rising unemployment during the Great Depression. The Hoover administration, supported by Doak, argued that so-called "illegal aliens" had taken jobs from U.S. citizens, framing deportation as a way to restore economic stability. As a result, immigration agents were deployed, particularly in Southern California, to carry out raids targeting Mexican communities. However, as Professor Francisco E. Balderrama demonstrates, these efforts were not carefully limited to undocumented individuals.[47]

Contemporary newspaper coverage reinforced and amplified these efforts by framing deportation as both necessary and justified.[48] Reports frequently referred to Mexican migrants as "aliens" and emphasized their alleged role in worsening unemployment, contributing to a climate

[47] Francisco E. Balderrama, "The Deportation-Repatriation Campaign Against La Raza," in *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican Community, 1929 to 1936* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1982), 32-34.

[48] "Repatriation of Mexicans to Be Studied," *San Bernardino Sun* (San Bernardino, CA), Jan. 7, 1933.

of fear and uncertainty.[49] In many cases, articles failed to distinguish between undocumented individuals, legal residents, and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, further legitimizing indiscriminate enforcement practices.[50] This media framing not only reflected public sentiment, but also helped normalize the widespread targeting of Mexican communities during the repatriation campaigns.

Although relatively few undocumented individuals were formally detained at first, these campaigns ultimately had a far broader impact. Many Mexican families, including those with legal status or citizenship, chose to leave the United States out of fear and uncertainty. Los Angeles County became a central site for these departures, as trains transported thousands to Mexico during the height of the repatriation campaigns.[51]

As Historian Natalia Molina argues, these events were made possible by earlier racial constructions that positioned Mexicans outside the boundaries of full belonging. Despite legal ambiguities following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans were not consistently recognized as white, and instead came to occupy a racialized category that marked them as both foreign and expendable.[52] This categorization created significant challenges for immigration authorities, who struggled to classify individuals of Mexican descent within existing legal frameworks.[53] By the 1930s, as immigration restrictions tightened and border enforcement

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[49] "Governor Supports Alien Deportation," *Imperial Valley Press* (El Centro, CA), Mar. 30, 1938.

[50] Balderrama, "The Deportation-Repatriation Campaign," 32-34.

[51] Balderrama, "The Deportation-Repatriation Campaign," 38-39.

[52] Natalia Molina, "'What is a White Man?': The Quest to Make Mexicans Ineligible for U.S. Citizenship," in *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 56-57.

[53] Molina, "'What is a White Man?,'" 60.

increased, these racialized assumptions became further embedded in policy. In this context, the economic pressures of the Great Depression did not create anti-Mexican sentiment, but rather activated existing ideas that framed Mexican labor as temporary and removable. As a result, repatriation campaigns were not merely reactive measures but part of a longer process through which officials sought to define and control Mexican populations within the United States.[54] Taken together, these developments demonstrate that the Mexican Repatriation was not simply a response to economic crisis, but the result of earlier migration patterns, labor exploitation, and racialized assumptions that made Mexican communities particularly vulnerable to removal.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the Mexican Repatriation alongside the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), early twentieth-century immigration policies, and labor movements reveals the interconnected conditions that made the mass deportations of the 1930s possible. The instability caused by the Mexican Revolution initiated patterns of displacement and migration, bringing thousands of Mexican laborers into the United States in search of economic opportunity. As this population grew, so too did its visibility, particularly within industries that depended heavily on their labor.

At the same time, rising nativist sentiment and restrictive immigration policies, such as the *Immigration Act of 1924* and the *Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929*, worked to define Mexican migrants as both necessary and undesirable. Labor movements further intensified these tensions, as Mexican workers who organized for fair treatment were increasingly seen as threats rather than contributors. Events like the Wheatland Hop Riot demonstrated that demands for labor

[54] Molina, "'What is a White Man?,'" 72-73.

rights were often met with repression, reinforcing the perception of Mexican workers as expendable.

By the onset of the Great Depression, these economic, political, and social pressures converged. Mexican communities, once valued for their labor, became convenient scapegoats for widespread unemployment and instability. The Mexican Repatriation was not a sudden or isolated response to the economic crisis, but rather the culmination of years of migration patterns, labor exploitation, and exclusionary policies that made the removal of Mexican and Mexican-American populations both possible and publicly acceptable. This contradiction did not end with repatriation. In the decades that followed, the United States continued to demonstrate an ambivalent relationship with Mexican labor, revealing a pattern of exclusion and dependence. The Bracero Program allowed the United States to recruit Mexican laborers for agricultural work while maintaining the ability to send them back once their labor was no longer needed. It lasted from 1942 until 1964. The long-term effects of such labor programs are preserved in the voices of those who lived them. The University of Texas at El Paso conducted an oral history project documenting the experiences of "braceros," or laborers, including Héctor Solis Fuentes. Born in Hidalgo, Mexico, Fuentes was the fifth of nine children and had worked in agriculture his entire life before joining the Bracero Program in 1953. That year, he traveled to California, where he harvested crops such as almonds and tomatoes.[55] Once he began the program, Fuentes initially believed he was working under fair conditions and that his contract guaranteed him proper wages. Unfortunately, the reality was far worse than this. Like many other braceros, Fuentes was unaware of terms in his agreement. He recalled:

[55] Héctor Solis Fuentes, Oral Interview, in discussion with Violeta Domínguez, Mexico City, Mexico, July 10, 2002.

> And then we were seeing that this one was carrying a contract for three months, and at that time because one did not realize, until today we are realizing that if we had claimed, they would have made us valid the three-month contract and would have compensated us.[56]

What Fuentes described is how many laborers, unable to read their agreements, simply followed employers' orders. As a result, employers took advantage of this vulnerability, manipulating agreements to avoid properly compensating workers.[57]

The U.S. government also maintained strong control over the program. For instance, in a letter rejecting a request to bring in 300 Mexican nationals to harvest pears, officials emphasized that such labor could only be approved if there were not enough domestic workers available, and only if hiring foreign laborers did not lower wages or working conditions for American farmworkers.[58] This reveals how the United States prioritized its own economic interests, limiting Mexican laborers' entry unless it directly benefited domestic agricultural needs. This systemic exploitation echoed earlier injustices, such as those seen in the Wheatland Episode, where Mexican laborers were easy targets for abuse. While labor movements led by the IWW provided some support, they were not a complete solution for migratory workers who often entered the country unaware of their rights and available resources. In this instance, America targeted the vulnerable and used this to its advantage, foreshadowing a larger pattern of exclusion and discrimination that followed. This cycle of exploitation and exclusion reveals that

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[56] "'Y luego estábamos viendo de que este llevábamos un contrato por tres meses, y en aquel tiempo pues uno no se daba cuenta, hasta hoy nos estamos dando cuenta que si nosotros hubiéramos reclamado, nos hubieran hecho válido el contrato de tres meses y nos hubieran indemnizado.'" Translated by Author.

[57] Fuentes, Oral Interview.

[58] "A Denied Request for '300 Mexican nationals' to harvest pears, issued by the US Department of Labor," 1960, 29 July 1960, Mexican Labor and World War II: The Bracero Program, Digital Public Library of America, Boston, MA. https://dp.la/item/4f595f82e26504a393a7aeb773fc3472.

the treatment of Mexican laborers was not temporary, but deeply embedded within U.S. economic and social structures.

Despite its magnitude, the Mexican Repatriation remains overshadowed in public memory. Yet its legacy endures. The same patterns of scapegoating, legal inconsistency, and racialized exclusion continue to shape immigration policy and public discourse. Understanding this history is not simply an act of reflection, but a recognition of how deeply rooted these systems are. Without confronting the conditions that made repatriation possible, the structures that enabled it remain intact.

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Knowledge Is Power: Assessing the Failures of British Colonial "Adapted Learning" Strategies

By Ruben Paredes

From the era of the transatlantic slave trade, European merchants, missionaries, and slave traders had established outposts in Lagos and other areas of what would become colonial Nigeria. In the late nineteenth century, during the era of the Scramble for Africa, Church Missionary Society (CMS) officials and local British residents of Lagos built the first European-styled secondary school in Nigeria. The introduction of colonial and missionary schools occurred throughout many of the African societies that were claimed by European powers across the continent. In Nigeria, the CMS would eventually establish several other schools as a means of further evangelization in the region, and it would not be until 1909 that the British government would have direct involvement with the establishment of secondary schools.[1] In September 1909, King's College, Lagos was founded by the British government using British university examination boards to conduct exams to design the curriculum for secondary education in colonial Nigeria.[2] This essay explores the origins and implications of colonial education systems and curricula in Nigeria during the era of British rule. By focusing on the implementation of "adapted learning" in Nigeria, I argue that British-led schools served only to maintain British colonial control over the territories of Nigeria. Moreover, through the experiences, critiques, and outcomes of African students, this paper contends that British curricula had a detrimental impact on Nigerian culture and values.

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[1] Magnus O. Bassey, "Missionary Rivalry and Educational Expansion in Southern Nigeria, 1885-1932," *The Journal of Negro Education* 60, no. 1 (1991): 40-44.

[2] Michael Omolewa, "Educating the 'Native': A Study of the Education Adaptation Strategy in British Colonial Africa, 1910-1936," *The Journal of African American History* 91, no. 3 (2006): 268.

Origins and Evolution of Colonial Nigerian Education

Prior to Nigeria's annexation by the British, missionaries served as the primary force behind European-westernized education in Nigeria through theology. One of the earliest missions and schools within the southern region of the country was established by Rev. Thomas Freeman and accompanying Wesleyan Methodists in 1842.[3] The annexation of Lagos in 1861 and later establishments of the Southern and Northern Nigeria Protectorates in 1900 expanded missionary schooling in the region as multiple missionary groups established institutions to further intertwine notions of religion and education. Early forms of British government involvement in missionary schools involved small allocations of the colonial administration's budget, such as the first grant-in-aid of £200 in 1877 to missionary groups in Lagos.[4] However, government financial-aid to missionary schools came as a response to mounting pressures from colonial subjects who had attended missionary elementary schools and were considered unprepared and incapable of the demands of further education and emerging technical posts in the rapidly-industrializing colony.[5] As such, the efficiency of the missionary schooling systems propagated by the government-favored missionary societies was becoming heavily questioned in the late 19th century, not only by the native population, but also by the colonial government.

Government inspections of missionary schools became the common method to understand and combat the quality control issues that were plaguing these institutions in the eyes

[3] Uche Uwaezuoke Okonkwo and Mary-Noelle Ethel Ezeh, "Implications of Missionary Education for Women in Nigeria: A Historical Analysis," *Journal of International Women Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 186.

[4] Immaculata Nnenna Enwo-Irem, "Colonialism and Education: The Challenges for Sustainable Development in Nigeria," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 5 (2013): 164.

[5] Bekeh Utietang Ukelina, "The Mis-Education of the African Child: The Evolution of British Colonial Education Policy in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1925," *Athens Journal of History* 7, no. 2 (2021): 145.

of the colonial administration. Henry Rawlinson Carr was one such inspector whose reports shifted the strategy of government support to government supervision and more direct involvement in the mission schools. In 1899, Carr was assigned by the Governor of the Lagos Colony, Sir William McGregor, to inspect schools in southern Nigeria, in which he concluded that the issue revolved around the contradicting learning objectives of the missionary societies and the colonial government. Carr stated in an annual report for 1899-1900 of the southern Nigerian colony:

> The missionaries look upon schools as the instruments for making converts, other men view them as instruments for making good and useful citizens…when schools are without Government inspection the tendency is to under-staff them, to under-pay the teachers, and to ambition a multiplicity of subjects without a thorough grounding in the elementary matters of instruction.[6]

Carr's reports brought a newer perspective to many officials in the southern Nigerian colony, arguing that the ultimate goals of the missionary schools were to create converts and emphasize spiritual salvation through Christianity. In stark contrast, the colonial administration was dependent on the labor of the native population and thus required education to focus more on skills relevant to the growing employment market in the Nigerian colonies. Carr presented a strong case to British officials for increasing government intervention in missionary schools as a means to eradicate the dissimilar aims of the missionary societies and promote the intentions of the British government. The works of Carr and other inspectors would culminate into the colonial administration and supervision over the construction of schools and curricula in the 20th century.

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[6] *Annual Report, Southern Nigeria 1899-1900*, (His Majesty's Stationery Office: 1901), 12. https://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books2011-05/3064634/3064634_1899_1900_southern_nigeria/3064634_1899_1900_southern_nigeria_opt.pdf, Accessed 25 February, 2026.

The 20th century saw the gradual power shift from missionary societies to the colonial government and its school-focused administrations. Key legislation included the Education Proclamation No. 19 of 1903, which granted the Board of Education in the Southern Nigerian Protectorate the, "power to draw up a code of rules governing education in the Protectorate," which was enacted in the form of the standards for annual examinations and syllabi for both primary schools and intermediate/high schools.[7] Furthermore, the 1908 new Code would create a new outline of subjects to be taught to primary and secondary students in Nigeria that strayed away from the English Education Code (EEC), with the justification that the EEC was "quite unsuitable for West Africa."[8] This shift in mandated subjects for Nigerian students would serve as the precursor for the adapted learning strategy, and further discussions surrounding the needs of the native populations would take place until the mid-1920s.

Following the end of World War I, rapid developments occurred within the education sector of West Africa to adjust British education to fit the "needs" of the Nigerians. Organizations such as the Phelps-Stokes Fund (which became involved in Nigerian education when collaborating with the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society) played a vital role in the discussion and promotion of the narrative that Nigerian curricula must be changed to provide both the people and the colony the greatest opportunity for growth. The Phelps-Stokes Fund, in specific, argued that the failures in the colonial educational system can be attributed to a lack of

[7] *Annual Report, Southern Nigeria 1903, (*His Majesty's Stationery Office: 1904), 26. https://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books2011-05/3064634/3064634_1903_southern_nigeria/3064634_1903_southern_nigeria_opt.pdf, Accessed 25 February, 2026.

[8] *Annual Report, Southern Nigeria 1908,* (His Majesty's Stationery Office: 1909), 23-26. https://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books2011-05/3064634/3064634_1908_southern_nigeria/3064634_1908_southern_nigeria_opt.pdf, Accessed 25 February, 2026.

adjusting curricula to "Native life."[9] The Commission pushed for an emphasis on agricultural development rather than other subjects, claiming that there is an abundance of educated Nigerians who are skilled in writing and orating, but a lack of educated Nigerians who possess agricultural skills.[10] The Phelp-Stokes Fund's influence is reflected in a later memorandum, written in part by the Governor of Nigeria, Frederick Lugard, regarding education policy in British-colonial Africa.

Frederick Lugard would prove to be one of the most influential figures in the establishment of the adapted learning strategy in Nigeria. Following his order to create a unified Nigerian colony in 1914,[11] Lugard and the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies would state their desire to change to the educational system in 1925. In this memorandum, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, W. Ormsby-Gore, would state:

> Its [education] aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the training of the people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of true ideals of citizenship and service.[12]

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[9] Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education In Africa: A Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America and Europe* (Phelp-Stokes Fund: New York, 1922), 16.

[10] Ibid., 17.

[11] By 1906 the Lagos Colony and the Southern Nigerian Protectorate had merged under the Southern Nigerian Colony and Protectorate. Lugard was the Governor of both the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1912 and the later unified Nigerian colony until 1919.

[12] W. Ormsby-Gore, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: Memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies*, (His Majesty's Stationery Office: 1925), 4. https://www.scribd.com/document/497242688/ad1715-19-27-001-jpeg, Accessed 25 February, 2026.

The influence of the Phelps-Stokes Fund can be seen through the promotion of agriculture and a "development of native industries," a claim that Nigeria's natural resources are to be exploited just as much as its peoples. The objectives and outlines in this memorandum would come to be known as the adapted learning strategy, proposed by Lugard and the Advisory Committee, and would remain as the dominant design strategy of school curricula until the 1950s. However, what was promoted as a form of education to best assist colonized Africans hid the intentions to grow British influence and control throughout Nigeria.

Hidden Objectives and Faults of the Adapted Learning Strategy

British colonial influence and control over the vast landscape of Nigeria was dependent on a variety of factors, one of the most important being the unique skills the native populations possessed. Historian Heather J. Sharkey, who has produced a number of works on colonial and postcolonial African history, argues that the British government strived to train natives to serve the colonial empire while simultaneously "enlightening" them with Western values.[13] Sharkey further extends her ideas that government institutions and colleges sought to groom young native men for clerical, judicial, and technical posts, leading many to adopt English as a second language, European clothing, and commitments to nationalistic ideologies.[14] Using an intimate understanding of the languages and cultures that encompassed the Nigerian colony to further the British colonial agenda was an effort much more easily placed on the shoulders of the colonized rather than the colonizers. Britain's expansionist objective came under the guise of social advancement and mobility for the Nigerians, though it required a medium to be made believable.

[13] Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 40.

[14] Ibid., 40.

Adapted education, as a system of schooling, facilitated and promoted these supposed opportunities of social advancement for the colonized under British rule.

In order to place the expansionist objectives in motion, specific modes of teaching and learning were conducted and built upon by the British examination boards' "adapted learning" strategy. Education historian Michael Omolewa is one of many scholars who writes extensively on adapted learning and its shortcomings, and summarizes it through the concept that adapted learning strives to adjust formal schooling to the needs of the local population.[15] The most immediate issue with adapted learning is that it creates a sense of "otherness", in which colonial Nigerians were considered so far from assimilating into the cultural sphere of Great Britain as they were that they needed an adapted form of education to compensate. The shortcomings of adapted learning extended further beyond the implications of socio-economic separation of the colonizers and the colonized, but also the failure to prepare both the student and teacher for the adjustments of adapted learning.

The micro-faults of the adapted learning strategy through its demands placed on teachers and its silent hopes for students would prove to be the gateway towards the larger failures of adapted learning. According to historian Udo Bude, one aspect of adapted learning was teaching local populations community development skills, such as efficient agricultural practices, yet little training was offered to the teachers who were (1) trained in mostly textbook-based instruction rather than creative lessons and (2) were not given the material nor the institutional support to instruct on these concepts.[16] While Bude's work was in response to an early 20th century observation on Northern Nigerian primary schools' adaptation strategy, it can be argued that

[15] Michael Omolewa, "Educating the 'Native'," 270.

[16] Udo Bude, "The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education," *Comparative Education* 19, no. 3 (1983): 347.

these same issues plagued the secondary schools all the same; massive changes in what local teachers were accustomed to teaching and little support in learning how to teach these unfamiliar subjects. However, many young students clung to adapted learning and government-propped schools due to their promises of socio-economic security and stability, which came at the cost of direct attacks on Nigerian cultural, historical, and political values.

As Britain expanded its influence over the region of Nigeria so did its commerce, and skilled laborers were needed to keep the flow of commerce steady and British expansion strong, all under the guise of the aforementioned social advancement. Missionary and government schools with strong European influences tended to emphasize literacy in English, a skill required for jobs made available by the British, such as teachers, translators, and orderlies.[17] Historian F.O. Ogunlade notes how public service positions were especially known for providing high security, salary, and social status compared to many technical posts in colonial Nigeria, thus incentivizing more locals to attend British-constructed schools to gain the skills necessary for these positions.[18] Granted, education proved to be a secure form of socio-economic advancement in colonial Nigeria, however the attacks conducted on the Nigerian culture and way of life would prove to outweigh every possible benefit to the colonial British education system.

Effects of and Resistance to the Adapted Learning Strategy

While under-trained teachers and the misplaced hope for students to commit themselves entirely to the nationalistic and Euro-cultural concepts within the British colonial adapted

[17] Lawrence E. Amadi, “Church-State Involvement in Educational Development in Nigeria, 1842-1948,” *Journal of Church and State* 19, no. 3 (1977): 489.

[18] F.O. Ogunlade, “Education and Politics in Colonial Nigeria: The Case of King’s College, Lagos (1906-1911),” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 2 (1974): 328.

education system proved to be an issue internally, these internal issues caused a larger attack on the Nigerian livelihood in terms of long-standing political traditions. Historian Grace Alele Williams has produced works on the disintegration of ethnic and clan authority among the locals of Nigeria, linking this reduction in authority to the urban movement following the annexation and Christianization of Southern Nigeria, in which locals who became literate under the educational systems put forth by the British government and the missionary societies would leave their villages in search of jobs that would provide them economic security in the colony.[19] In comparison to the more Islamic Northern Nigeria, Williams differentiates the erosion of pre-colonial powers through the manipulation of powerful leaders' sons, as many were sent to British schools due to a deceitful promise of little to no degradation of existing cultural and religious values, only at the cost of grooming these young men into specific positions to better serve the colonial empire, such as teachers to allow the opening of more schools in the North.[20] Erosion of pre-colonial government and hierarchical powers in Nigerian communities allowed for greater incentivization and commitment to nationalistic ideals of expansion, which were ever-present in the adapted schools, allowing colonial Britain to continue extending its influence throughout the region.

Attacks on the local customs and long-standing cultural values outside of politics was also an objective of great importance for the British colonial government, for the more they could erode the Nigerian peoples, the more they would be able to manipulate and convert the region into their image. Locals ranging from chieftains to students alike were critical of both the content and the values being taught within schools of adapted learning, with historian C.N. Ubah

[19] Grace Alele Williams, "Education and Government in Northern Nigeria," *Présence Africaine,* no. 87 (1973): 165.

[20] Ibid., 169.

noting that the Igbo peoples resisted early introductions to Westernized learning as it conflicted with the idea of productivity. Ubah notes how the Igbo saw a day well-spent meaning productive efforts in community development (such as fishing, basket-weaving, and farming), efforts which usually produced a tangible result, while Westernized education did not provide such results and kept the children separated from these duties by requiring attendance away from the community and providing assignments that took time away from such activities.[21] Historians Thomas J. Davis and Azubike Kalu-Nwiwu further this idea through the argument that education shifted the focus of young natives away from their indigenous environments and into that of the colony, leaving many natives to view education not as a system of instruction for practical living, but as a tool for nothing more than employment security.[22] Of course, the incentives of social and economic security and prestige proved a greater priority for many younger natives who wished to establish themselves in the growing colonial employment market. While attitudes have shifted regarding the efficacy and utilitarianism of Britain's adapted education system, so have the criticisms of the system itself.

Early resistance to Westernized education from Britain took the form of criticisms of the practical usage of the curriculum and expectations of education, though later forms of resistance more specifically attacked the underlying implications of adapted learning. Omolewa argues that Nigerians after 1909 criticized British education for diminishing important cultural values of community, love, and spirituality while promoting individualism, intolerance of valued ideals,

[21] C.N. Ubah, "Western Education in Africa: The Igbo Experience, 1900-1960," *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 3 (1980): 377.

[22] Thomas J. Davis and Azubike Kalu-Nwiwu, "Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria: Continuing Problems of Africa's Colonial Legacy," *The Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 1 (2001): 5.

pride, arrogance, and so forth.[23] Furthermore, Nigerians criticized the racism surrounding the British education system, attempting to combat the stereotypes sprouted by Europeans that adapted learning could not "save" the natives from becoming more than mediocre clerks (not due to the faults of adapted learning, but due to the inherent "nature" of Africans).[24] Nigerians would prove this stereotype wrong by using their educational resources to become efficient doctors, journalists, lawyers and other revered positions, though this could not eliminate the prejudices that proved to be so ripe in the European consciousness. The erosion of Nigerian cultural values, just as with the disintegration of the local political authorities, was mostly successful despite the criticisms it faced, though one of the failed attacks of British education would be that of the historical education of Nigeria.

The erosion of cultural and political values in Nigeria was of primary concern to the British, both of which were accomplished through the spread of British education and influence, though limited success was found in the complete erosion of the locals' understanding of Africa's history. According to historian J.F. Ade Ajayi, one aspect of many British adapted school curricula was influencing both primary and secondary students' respect for and understanding of the British colonial empire, utilizing Britain's history of imperialist conquests in lectures and producing the image of "saviorhood" to the colonized peoples and territories.[25] Ajayi also notes how this attempt of breaking Africa's sense of historical continuity ultimately failed, as resistance in the form of educated Nigerians recording and returning to traditional sources of African history, as well as the struggles of Christianizing and Westernizing the

[23] Michael Omolewa, "Educating the 'Native'," 269.

[24] Ibid., 280-81.

[25] J.F. Ade Ajayi, "Historical Education in Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 8, no. 1 (1975): 5.

educational format of rural Nigeria, ensured a halting of great proportions towards the British expansionist objectives.[26] While replacing the continuity of African history with the grandeur of British conquest failed, the byproduct of such efforts came in the form of nationalistic sentiments, which was incredibly harmful in its own right. From nationalism extends a dangerous branch of apologists to a nation-state's evils, and though it perhaps did not plague all of Nigeria's young students within the adapted learning system, to undermine the influence the apologists may have had could be dangerous to our modern understanding of the effects of the adapted learning schools.

Conclusion

The British government's ultimate hope for the adapted learning strategy was not to better the livelihood of its colonial subjects, but to manipulate the long-standing traditions and the youth into committing themselves to British adapted learning in order to produce skilled laborers for a growing trading market in colonial Nigeria. In this regard, adapted learning itself failed to provide instruction that correlated and addressed the needs of the local population, as it manipulated the pre-colonial traditions of community politics, culture, and historical education. Children of villages and tribes left their homes for promises of high wages, though they would find that adapted education pushed forward nationalistic sentiments, as well as conflicting with valued cultural concepts of love and community by promoting individualism and competitiveness among students. The adapted learning schools perhaps did grant students the necessary skills needed to market themselves in an incredibly competitive employment market, but adapted learning was not once concerned with the social advancement it was providing for

[26] Ibid.

locals, only that it was producing laborers to ensure the steady flow of trade, expansion, and influence throughout Nigeria.

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Breaking the Rules One Drink at a Time: Prohibition in British Colonial Africa

By Byron Hurte

"*The Duke of Westminster rose to call attention to the evils attending the introduction of foreign spirits among native races in Africa, and to appeal to the government to continue their efforts to mitigate them by restriction, and where possible, by prohibition of the liquor traffic*." – "House of Lords," *The Times*, May 7, 1889.[1]

In the colonial era of Africa, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the British colonial government strictly prohibited African colonial subjects from consuming imported and local beers, as well as other spirits. The introduction of anti-alcohol ordinances in British colonies disrupted long-held drinking practices that were embedded in pre-colonial societies' cultures and social practices. Before the colonial period, Africans across the continent consumed native beers, ales, meads, and fermented wines at communal events, such as weddings, religious ceremonies, harvest time, saints' days, and holidays.[2] For example, the low alcohol content of South African "kafir beer," made from maize, grain, and honey, allowed individuals to enjoy their imbibements generously without becoming inebriated.[3] These widespread and socially significant drinking practices were upended and transformed by the colonization of Africa, during which European nation-states established and consolidated vast territories across the continent. British traveler A.W. Hall describes this transformation through an interview with Mr. Betts, a native alcohol dealer in the British colony of Sierra Leone. In the

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[1] "House Of Lords." *The Times*, May 7, 1889, 6. The Times Digital Archive.

[2] Charles H. Ambler, "Drunks, Brewers, and Chiefs: Alcohol Regulation in Colonial Kenya 1900-1939," *Drinking,* University of California Press, 2023, p.166. Mark Lawrence Schrad. "Black Man's Burden, White Man's Liquor in Southern Africa," *Smashing the Liquor Machine: A Global History of Prohibition,* United Kingdom: Oxford University Press (2021): 170.

[3] Ibid, 170.

interview, Mr. Betts states, "I have on the road now thousands of gallons of rum, and several thousands of demijhons of gin…They have become slaves to the white man's rum and gin. Rum and gin are their incessant demand and cry..."[4] Missionaries and teetotalers (non-drinking Europeans) criticized the harmful effects of alcoholism, such as violent confrontations, a state of inebriation or incapacity, excessive drinking, moral degradation, and public drunkenness, demanding that colonial governments adopt and implement temperance or prohibition policies. For instance, in the late nineteenth century, during their campaign to abolish the liquor trade in West African territories, abolitionists, humanitarian societies, and other anti-liquor crusaders entered a heated debate with liquor merchants. Humanitarians Bishop Tugwell of Western Equatorial Africa and British M.P. Sir John Kennaway condemned liquor traffic in West Africa, claiming that "gin and rum shipped to West Africa contained poisonous alcohol that led to widespread drunkenness and laziness, demanding its abolishment."[5] Liquor merchants argued that the trade in spirits boosted African trade, supplying the natives with durable European merchandise.[6] Theoretically, by drawing on prevailing racist discourse of the period, and painting West African subjects as morally corrupt and lawless, the anti-alcohol crusaders were attempting to gain support for a humanitarian intervention. Ultimately, British powers responded to public outcry by establishing prohibition measures and temperance bans. This paper will explore and assess the effectiveness of British prohibition laws in Africa. In the first part of this paper, I will argue that colonial measures to prohibit alcohol in the British colonies of Africa were largely

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[4] A. W. Hall, *Three Hundred Miles in a Hammock; or, Six Weeks in Africa*, Houghton, N.Y: Houghton index print, 1889: 108.

[5] A. Olorunfemi, "The Liquor Traffic Dilemma in British West Africa: The Southern Nigerian Example, 1895-1918," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 17, no. 2 (1984): 229.

[6] Ibid, 229.

ineffective because colonial governments profited from the importation of European alcohol and used prohibition to control colonial subjects. The second part of the essay examines how colonized individuals and African communities in British settlements navigated and resisted prohibition, further underscoring the ineffectiveness of colonial anti-alcohol laws.

British measures to prohibit the consumption and distribution of alcohol in Africa proved difficult because colonial administrators depended on revenues from the sale and taxation of European-made spirits. For example, within a five-year span, 1889-1893, a combined 5,431,888 gallons of brandy, gin, rum, and whiskey, valued at £423,517, were imported into the Gold Coast.[7] Likewise, in Lagos, a combined 7,348,054 gallons of brandy, gin, rum, and whiskey, valued at £518,399, were imported into the colony from 1890 to 1894.[8] The British government capitalized on alcohol in Africa to finance and sustain its newly established colonies. Taxes and duties imposed by administrators on liquor accounted for half to three-quarters of all colonial revenues, making alcohol the most critical import for self-sustaining settlements.[9] The price of alcohol continued to climb over the years until it peaked just before the Great Depression. For instance, by 1930, the total value of liquor imports and exports into Southern Nigeria was £27 million.[10] Officials resisted alcohol prohibition measures, as revenues from taxing spirits enabled the colonies to be self-sustaining rather than financially dependent on colonial powers.[11] Instead,

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[7] Great Britain, Parliament, Command Papers, *Papers Relative to the Liquor Trade in West Africa*, Sess. 1897. C. 8480. Cambridge, U.K.: Chadwyck-Healey, 2005: 17.

[8] Ibid, 18.

[9] Roderick Phillips. "Alcohol and Native Peoples 1800-1930," *Alcohol: A History*, University of North Carolina Press (2014): 220.

[10] Chima Korieh, "Alcohol and Empire: 'Illicit' Gin Prohibition and Control in Colonial Eastern Nigeria," African Economic History, no. 31 (2003): 116-7.

[11] Phillips, "Alcohol and Native People," 222.

they deliberately raised taxes and duties on liquor to boost revenue and provide substantial funding for their colonies. British Journalist and member of the West African Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Edmund D. Morel, describes why this calculated act was so crucial to colonial revenues, stating, "from 45 percent to 75 percent of the revenue of their Colonies is derived from this (liquor) traffic."[12] Prohibiting the consumption and distribution of alcohol would be economically crippling for British colonies. Officials relied on these revenues to demonstrate financial competency in governing a distant part of the homeland. For example, Sir Robert Henry Meade, Head of the British Colonial Office, describes in his letter to the Chambers of Commerce of London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow that, "…the Gold Coast and Lagos derive 60 per cent. and the Niger Coast Protectorate about 80 per cent., of their total revenue from the liquor traffic."[13] Administrators had no intention of stopping the flow of liquor, since alcohol duties were the top source of revenue for the colonies.[14] Rather than limiting access to or outright banning spirits, officials sought to maximize state revenues by introducing local provisions to control the availability and allocation of alcohol in colonial territories. In particular, authorities implemented policies to control the sale, importation, and distribution of imported spirits.[15] Instead of prohibiting alcohol altogether, colonial controls safeguarded these lucrative revenues, ensuring financial stability.

Although colonial authorities valued alcohol revenues as an essential source of stability for financing British colonies, industries relied on alcohol to recruit, motivate, and compensate workers. The rise and expansion of industries, such as gold and diamond mining, were closely

[12] E. D. Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*. London; W. Heinemann, 1902: 234.

[13] Great Britain, Parliament, Command Papers, *Papers Relative to the Liquor Trade in West Africa*: 4.

[14] Schrad, "Black Man's Burden," 172.

[15] Korieh, "Alcohol and Empire," 113.

linked to the use of alcohol as a recruiting tool to preserve native labor forces. This was important because the consumption of alcohol was traditionally exclusively reserved for African elders, as men were prohibited from indulging in spirits until they were married and had children.[16] Capitalizing on the desires of African youth to escape the yoke of their elders, such as being able to drink alcohol, employers used the availability of liquor as an incentive to attract and retain a young labor workforce.[17] Mining industries often incentivized African labor recruits by immediately providing them with local and imported alcohol. Like the agricultural "dop" or "tot" system (the practice of giving wine to male farm workers at regular intervals during the working day),[18] alcohol was utilized as a tool to retain young African workers. Miners amassed large debts for booze as mine owners supplied them with spirits while they worked in the mines, thereby extending their employment to pay off their obligations.[19] Mine owners retained a labor force through the manipulation of young African mine workers by keeping them in a state of indebtedness and extended servitude. In addition to alcohol debts, employers strategically retained their African employees by flooding mining camps and towns with distilled spirits, which were approximately 10 times stronger in potency than native produced alcohols. Benefiting from the stronger alcohol content, African workers were kept in a state of subordination, as spirits provided energy while also numbing the impact of their working and living conditions.[20] Industries exploited the alcoholic addictions of African laborers as a form of

[16] Charles H. Ambler, "Drunks, Brewers, and Chiefs, Alcohol Regulation," 166.

[17] Ibid, 174.

[18] Gavin Williams, "Slaves, Workers, and Wine: The 'Dop System' in the History of the Cape Wine Industry, 1658–1894," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 5 (2016): 893.

[19] Schrad, "Black Man's Burden," 173-4.

[20] Phillips, "Alcohol and Native People," 223.

submission to maintain production. In turn, inebriated African workers escaped the despair caused by the expansion of new and old industries, the growth of urban centers, and the consolidation of foreign rule by consuming highly potent imported liquor. Profiting from the labor of a stable workforce, mine owners capitalized on the alcohol addiction and indebtedness of African workers for monetary gain.

The use of alcohol as a form of currency challenged colonial prohibition measures by making enforcement nearly impossible. In various settler territories, the British government used alcohol to supplant printed money as a new form of currency, or, as Nigerian natives called it, a "gin currency," because it was a tangible asset with a visible exchange value.[21] Gin was a suitable alternative to colonial currency because it was relatively inexpensive, widely available, and incredibly popular among African drinkers. While carrying out his missionary work in Onitsha, Archdeacon Dennis recounted his encounter with gin currency, on the African West Coast, "…when they went to market, it was impossible to buy what they wanted without gin to give in exchange…people could certainly always procure far better bargains with gin than in any other way…Even now, after cash had been introduced, gin was still used as a currency."[22] Much like merchants, major industries also turned to alcohol to recruit and pay native workers. Industries exploited alcohol as a payroll system, compensating African employees with liquor instead of monetary wages for their labor. For example, in British South Africa, alcohol was used not only to pay mine workers, but "the provision of alcohol to South African workers was a well-entrenched practice."[23] Providing alcohol in exchange for employee labor significantly stifled

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[21] Ibid., 221.

[22] Thomas John Dennis, "Pawning Children," The African Times and Orient Review, Vol. 1, (1912): 32.

[23] Phillips, "Alcohol and Native People, 227.

alcohol restrictions in British South Africa. Alcohol was so widely accepted as a form of currency in Nigeria that some courts instituted exchange systems allowing people convicted of offenses to trade liquor for cash to pay their fines.[24] For instance, Hansard Parliamentary member, Sir James Parker, representing Halifax County, England, in the House of Commons debates on the salaries and expenses of the Department of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, regarding Southern Nigeria, he states, "…as in Nigeria, they use as currency and which they use to pay fines in their courts…Fines are paid in courts of Nigeria in gin."[25] Liquor was so deeply embedded in the colonial economy that it carried the same value and authenticity as paper currency. The exploitation of alcohol as a currency, an industry payroll system, and a means for paying magistrate fines undermined British prohibition regulations, hindering their enforcement.

Alcohol prohibition aimed not only to regulate the consumption and distribution of alcohol, but also to socially control and economically exploit African populations. British prohibition measures within the colonies were often masked strictly as a means to regulate the consumption and distribution of alcohol, but, in practice, these procedures were put into place to sanction and dominate colonized populations. For instance, in his proclamation regulating the sale of liquor in the Cape of Good Hope and Transkeian Territories of South Africa, Governor Hercules Robinson decrees, "no spirits shall be sold under any such license to any Native not being a Chief, Petty Chief, or Councillor, unless he shall produce a permit signed by a

[24] Ibid, 221.

[25] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 20 July 1911, James Parker, Col 1287-1356.

magistrate, justice of the peace, or filed cornet."[26] Not only were regulations put into place to control the distribution of spirits within British colonies, but stiff penalties were enforced on natives who failed to abide by established liquor rules. Governor Hercules Robinson further states under bullet point 10 of his proclamation, "…upon conviction, before the Magistrate of the district in which the offence (unauthorized liquor sales) is committed, to a penalty not exceeding £20, or in default of payment to imprisonment with or without hard labour, for a period not exceeding three months."[27] These restrictive measures enabled colonial governments to safeguard their revenues and civilize native subjects.

Colonial officials enacted prohibition measures and temperance bans to regulate alcohol consumption and prevent African people from distilling liquor. For example, the 1890 Brussels Act prohibited "intoxicating liquor" in African areas where spirits did not exist and placed minimum duty rates on alcohol imports; In 1893 and 1895, British East Africa Company officials and Protectorate administrators banned imported alcohol, beer, and wines for African consumption; In 1919, the Treaty of Sèvres prohibited all African consumption of spirits.[28] British administrators employed restrictive mechanisms to control native peoples in newly formed colonies, including instituting levies and trade licenses, imposing outright bans, and direct taxation.[29] In 1879, British administrators paid a yearly stipend of rum and gin to several

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[26] Great Britain. Parliament. Command Papers. *Further Papers Regarding the Laws or Ordinances for Regulating the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in the Colonies and in Native Territories Under British Protection.* Sess. 1888, C.5563, Cambridge, U.K.: Chadwyck-Healey, 2005: 7.

[27] Ibid, 7.

[28] Justin Willis, "Demoralized Natives, Black-Coated Consumers, and Clean Spirit: European Liquor in East Africa, 1890-1955." Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 29, no. 3 (2001): 57-60.

[29] Samuel Amartey, "Colonial Liquor Regulation, Akpeteshie, and Smuggling along the Pra River, Shama Hinterland, Southern Ghana." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, (2025): 4.

African chiefs in exchange for their commitment to ban human sacrifice, slave dealings, murder, and smuggling in their lands of authority.[30] These types of vicious behaviors obstructed British progress from "civilizing" a modern African society. The yearly stipend was used as a powerful tool to ensure the core tenets of the British civilizing mission were upheld by African leaders under colonial rule.

By gaining the support of tribal chiefs, British leaders employed a top-down approach to control and civilize the African population. In addition to these more top-down approaches, control over alcohol was also used by British authorities to transform and supposedly "civilize" African beer drinking culture. For instance, the Natal Native Beer Act of 1908 gave rise to the "beer hall system," which outlawed traditional native alcohol brewing and allowed the colonized workforce to legally drink alcohol exclusively in beerhalls. The profits went to local colonial administrations, who used the revenues to build prison-like barracks for African workers, hire a white police force, and turn an immense profit.[31] Beer halls were implemented by British administrators to appear as a form of social control to regulate the consumption of alcohol by native subjects; in reality, they were employed as a form of economic control, enabling officials to accumulate substantial revenue from the collection of spirit duties. Alcohol revenues multiplied as administrators controlled the production and distribution of beer and other spirits, using various enforcement measures to maximize profits.

Prohibition measures were enacted to control and assimilate native subjects to British standards of civilization; however, these restrictions provoked resistance and rebellion among many African populations. To resist prohibitory measures enacted by colonial governments,

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[30] Dmitri van den Bersselaar, "Somebody Must Necessarily Go to Bring This Drink: Gin Smugglers, Chiefs and the State in Colonial Ghana." *Cultural and Social History* 11, no. 2 (2014): 247.

[31] Schrad, "Black Man's Burden," 176.

African drinkers, brewers, and distributors of beer, wines, and liquor took to underground networks to quench their thirst. Historically, smuggling was a livelihood where individuals or communities evaded political-economic structures such as taxes, prohibition laws, or legal restrictions for their own economic gain.[32] The unintended consequences of levies, tariffs, and prohibition restrictions on imported alcohol imposed by British administrators led many Africans to seek underground networks to supply their liquor requirements. As an act of resistance, native populations resorted to smuggling networks to fulfill their drinking desires. For instance, in the prohibition zone of Northern Nigeria, people were able to consume alcohol accumulated through smuggling operations of imported liquor or illicit spirit distillation.[33] Smuggling allowed native people to access and consume imported liquor without paying colonial taxes or duties on spirits. Additionally, it allowed the consumption of native distilled spirits, financially supporting various African communities.

Illicit liquor distribution directly impacted local merchants, diminishing their profits and shrinking margins of colonial economies. Smuggling was so rampant that retailers had no recourse but to seek help from British authorities. For instance, on the Cape Coast, local merchants lodged a formal complaint to Governor W. Brandford Griffith requesting colonial assistance, "We would urge upon your Excellency the expediency of stationing a District Commissioner, with a sufficient staff and force between New Town and the Tanoe River for the purpose of intercepting this illicit traffic."[34] Likewise, when officials were unable to provide

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[32] Amartey, "Colonial Liquor Regulation," 4.

[33] Simon Heap, "'We Think Prohibition Is a Farce': Drinking in the Alcohol-Prohibited Zone of Colonial Northern Nigeria." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31, no. 1 (1998): 24.

[34] Great Britain, Parliament, Command Papers, *Gold Coast. Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of the Gold Coast*, Sess. 1888, [C.5357, C. 5615], Cambridge, U.K: Chadwyck-Healey, 2005. 102.

assistance, vendors would appeal for financial relief by requesting a reduction in duties. Again, vendors complained to Governor W. Brandford Griffith, demanding, "If the Government is not in a position to stop the smuggling...we would respectfully request…the Government to remove the inducement to smuggle by reducing tariffs."[35]

The illegal trade of alcohol offered several options for African women to choose from, including small-scale operations of smugglers consisting of individuals looking to make some extra money and professional smugglers who were recruited and funded by a large group of wealthy individuals, including tribal chiefs.[36] Smuggling was a lucrative underground enterprise, offering financial opportunities for those willing to risk arrest in exchange for substantial monetary gain. Smuggling also provided accessibility to alcohol supplies for African people where restrictive measures were implemented, and liquor was banned. Smugglers capitalized on natural terrains, which concealed illicit contraband and limited liquor enforcement by colonial authorities. In Southwestern Ghana, for example, smugglers found the small town of Wawase ideal for trafficking as it sat on the edge of the Pra River, surrounded by swamps and ravines on all sides, making it difficult for authorities to enforce liquor regulations.[37] The isolation of small towns and terrains made it difficult for prohibition forces to navigate undetected by smuggling rings. Smugglers used waterways to conceal liquor transport, either by strapping large bottles and small kegs beneath the keel of boats, keeping them hidden from the view of colonial police when stopped, or by retrieving illicit gin upriver after Customs officers inspected them.[38] For instance,

[35] Ibid, 102.

[36] Bersselaar, "Somebody Must Necessarily Go to Bring This Drink," 249.

[37] Amartey, "Colonial Liquor Regulations," 6.

[38] Heap, "We Think Prohibition Is a Farce," 42.

in a letter to Governor W. Bradford Griffith, local retailers report the illegal actions of smugglers importing liquor into Cape Coast, “The goods purchased at the French ports are carried up the Assinee River, the Abey and Eyhi lagoons, and the Tanoe River, are landed at the back of New Town, carried overland to the Ankobrah and thence to Essaman, Prestea, and Tacquah, for sale.”[39] Smugglers employed inventive tactics to maximize waterway usage in transporting illegal liquor. Smuggling provided a resourceful and clever way for African people to evade prohibition measures to continue consuming alcohol.

Colonial officials viewed smuggling as a criminal activity, depriving the government of revenue, diminishing the state’s ability to govern, institute justice, and develop infrastructure, while also being seen as an act of wrongdoing against African communities.[40] British colonies were significantly impacted by the illegal underground trade of alcohol, which weakened their civilizing controls and resulted in a drastic loss of revenue from imported liquor. For example, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, Gold Coast officials reported a 91.4 percent drop in gin imports and an 82.4 percent drop in revenue collected from spirit licenses, but an increase in smuggling convictions of akpeteshie or illicit gin from 11 people in 1930-1931 to 603 people in 1933-1934.[41] Smuggling operations thrived during the Great Depression because of British alcohol controls and the high cost of imported liquor. As an act of resistance to prohibition laws and assimilation ideals, the African people sought creative solutions, like smuggling, to access liquor for personal indulgence.

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[39] Great Britain, Parliament, Command Papers, *Gold Coast. Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of the Gold Coast*, 102.

[40] Bersselaar, “Somebody Must Necessarily Go to Bring This Drink,” 254.

[41] Emmanuel Akyeampong. “What’s in a Drink? Class Struggle, Popular Culture and the Politics of Akpeteshie (Local Gin) in Ghana, 1930–67.” *Journal of African History* 37, no. 2 (1996): 215–36.

Although underground smuggling operations offered access to alcohol, it was the illicit distillation networks that provided the liquor African people sought. As colonial officials intensified restrictive measures on local alcohol manufacturing, producers concentrated their efforts on circumventing prohibition laws, such as illegally distilling spirits in forests and homes to meet the demand for alcoholic drinks.[42] In his letter to the Editor of the Times regarding "Alcohol in West Africa," the Late Deputy Comptroller of Customs for the Gold Coast, R. Killingly Gibbons references a section of *The Trade Report of the Gold Coast for 1931*, alluding to the problem of illicit distillation in British African colonies, stating, "Illicit distillation of spirits is a simple and cheap process, and, owing to the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of its prevention and detection, is spreading in the Colony and Ashanti."[43] As Illegal distillation manufacturers produced cheap, affordable liquor for local populations to consume, undermining colonial efforts to control and eliminate alcohol. Prohibition measures opened a gateway for an underground distillation network, providing opportunities for alcohol producers to make sizeable profits. For instance, in Nigeria, the cost of illegally distilling four bottles of spirits was approximately 5 shillings; each bottle sold for 5 shillings, yielding a 300 percent profit for the producer.[44] Illicit Nigerian distillers profited substantially from producing liquor illegally, undermining colonial revenues collected through duties and taxes on imported spirits.

Manufacturing alcohol was relatively cheap, as the equipment needed to produce liquor consisted of a kerosene tin, a water pot, and a couple of lengths of metal piping.[45] Most distilling

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[42] Korieh, "Alcohol and Empire," 125.

[43] R. Killingly Gibbons, "Alcohol in West Africa," *The Times*, March 22, 1934, 10.

[44] Heap, "We Think Prohibition Is a Farce," 48.

[45] Ibid, 48.

equipment materials were inconspicuous, readily accessible, and easy to obtain; however, some items, such as metal piping, required more ingenuity to acquire, raising alarm amongst colonial officials. For instance, authorities reported an epidemic of stolen feed pipes from launches and cars in Calabar Province, Southern Nigeria.[46] Producers gathered whatever materials they could find to outfit their underground stills, whether purchased or stolen. Criminal activity associated with the illegal distillation of alcohol, such as stealing feed pipes, raised concern amongst colonial officials that some African people were blatantly resisting prohibition measures. No longer able to ignore the open contempt of prohibition laws, officials cracked down on illegal liquor production. Although suppression of illicit distillation increased, administrators quickly discovered that the consequences of prohibition, court trials, and imprisonment did not curtail illegal production but only drove the industry further underground, where manufacturing continued unabated.[47] Legislator Henry Snell argued before the House of Commons that grog sellers intentionally undermined British trade. He contended that substantial profits and inconsistent enforcement of relatively small fines only encouraged underground networks and deprived law-abiding merchants of rightful revenue.[48] Instead of discouraging illegal alcohol production, the threat of penalty only compelled distributors to divert to alternative covert operations rather than relinquish production. Illegal alcohol producers did not fear penalty, punishment, or imprisonment from colonial authorities, as substantial profits derived from illegally manufacturing alcohol were too valuable to surrender.

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[46] Akyeampong, “What’s In a Drink,” 220.

[47] Korieh, “Alcohol and Empire,” 125.

[48] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 30 April 1929, Henry Snell, Col 1432.

Illicit alcohol thrived on limited opportunities, offering African women a space to become financially independent, contribute to their families' financial welfare, and fulfill a meaningful role providing spirits to native people. As the Great Depression crippled rural and urban economies, urban women turned to underground networks to sell illicit gin and make money.[49] Moreover, African women capitalized on the illegal alcohol economy as a means of supporting themselves and their families. Many urban women sold illegal spirits to supplement the inadequate wages of their husbands.[50] In British colonies, native women had little to no opportunity to earn compensation through work-related employment because wage-paying jobs were exclusively reserved for men. Traditional employment opportunities for women were largely confined to domestic servitude roles, consisting of long hours, exhausting work, time away from family, and sub-poverty wages, as well as being subjected to sexually exploitive behaviors by their male employers. In an article written for the African National Party, South African political activist and editor, Jameson G. Coka describes working conditions for women and girls in South Africa:

> It is easy for African Women to get into employment. It is hard for them to get a living wage…Women usually get into domestic service for Europeans, where they are employed in various capacities… This is fairly easy because every European, no matter how poor, requires a black servant…Women employed in domestic service sometimes live in their employer's premises… they are not encouraged to have visitors. Sometimes husbands are prohibited from seeing their wives…Single girls living in that way are constantly exposed to the ravishes of omprincipled (unprincipled) young and old men who are slaves to their beastly lusts…In many instances, degraded and lascivious Europeans molest them…They have neither regular working hours nor a standard wage… The average wage of a domestic servant is $6 per month.[51]

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[49] Akyeampong, "What's In a Drink," 221.

[50] Akyeampong, "What's In a Drink," 224.

[51] Jameson G. Coka, *How African Women Earn Their Living*, "South Africa in Associated Negro Press News Releases." *Claude A. Barnett Papers, 1918-1967, Series 2: Africa and Other Foreign Interests, 1925-1966; Subseries 2: Topical Files Grouped Geographically by Continent and Nation 1925,* 5-6.

On the other hand, illicit liquor trafficking gave women an escape from the humiliation and hardship associated with traditional jobs, providing them an opportunity to earn substantial profits as well as being able to contribute meaningfully to their family's income. According to Jameson G. Coka, "native women, moving from rural areas to urban towns, were enthusiastically drawn to the underground liquor trade because it offered them financial prosperity."[52] The role of many African women changed as they took advantage of these underground opportunities. For instance, in the British colony of Ghana, urban women produced akpeteshie gin, earning and controlling revenues, thus homogenizing alcohol consumption among urban populations.[53] Seizing a space in the illegal alcohol trade, women not only distributed but also produced illicit alcohol for native communities to consume.

Understanding the risks of illegally distilling alcohol, female producers relied on the natural terrain to camouflage their illegal brewing operations. For instance, in the British East African colony of Kibera, Kenya, African women worked discreetly to construct private breweries in places like the forest, where oil drums were dug into the ground and placed near rivers for the large quantities of water needed, to avoid police detection.[54] Concealment played a significant role in the illicit production and unlawful consumption of spirits by native people. Once women finished brewing illicit spirits, they opened their homes as a place for consumption. Nubi women in Kibera provided new drinking spaces for native subjects to come into their

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[52] Jameson G. Coka, *"Location Life" And Its Effects Upon Africans*, "South Africa in Associated Negro Press News Releases." *Claude A. Barnett Papers, 1918-1967, Series 2: Africa and Other Foreign Interests, 1925-1966; Subseries 2: Topical Files Grouped Geographically by Continent and Nation 1925,* 4.

[53] Emmanuel Akyeampong. "What's in a Drink," 222.

[54] Johan de Smedt, "'Kill Me Quick:' A History of Nubian Gin in Kibera," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42, no. 2 (2009): 209.

homes to drink, or they would quickly serve drinks through compound fences, kitchen windows, and under bushes to avoid police scrutiny.[55] No matter how cautious women distillers were in keeping their illicit trade discreet, distilleries and underground bars were still discovered by law enforcement agencies, and many women were arrested and fined. Although female brewers were fined and imprisoned, they continued to "conduct their business with blatant disregard for the law."[56] Historian Chima J. Korieh alludes to this fact, stating, "Prohibitions, trials, and imprisonments only drove the industry underground and forced the distillers to seek ever more remote locations to practice their art."[57] Brought on by British prohibition laws and the Great Depression, many married African women were drawn into the unlawful alcohol trade as a means to financially support their families. Native women were instrumental in selling, brewing, and distributing illicit alcohol during the British colonial era in Africa. This new role for women was in direct contradiction to native gender norms. For example, in the British South African province of Lesotho, a woman's role was to labor in agricultural production and perform household duties, where her only means of production was controlled by their relationship to the men in her life, and in the British colony of Kenya, customary law in the preparation and consumption of beer, in some areas, women were excluded from any involvement in the preparation of beer.[58]

The prohibition of alcohol played a vital role in reshaping and reforming African culture and identity. In lieu of sitting idly by and allowing foreign governments to impose their authority,

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[55] Ibid, 210.

[56] Tshidiso Maloka, "Khomo Lia Oela: Canteens, Brothels and Labour Migrancy in Colonial Lesotho, 1900-40," *Journal of African History*, 38, (1997): 101-122

[57] Chima Korieh, "Alcohol and Empire," 125.

[58] Tshidiso Maloka, "Khomo Lia Oela," 102-103; Charles Ambler, "Drunks, Brewers, and Chiefs," 166.

African people actively resisted the suppression of alcohol in an effort to dismantle British dominance spreading throughout their homeland. British governments framed prohibition as a humanitarian effort to civilize native subjects and to reform their moral decline. In reality, British administrators exploited prohibition to monopolize the liquor trade, sustain their economies, and reinforce their imperial control. Prohibition measures, therefore, became a contested issue between British Administrators and African populations as native subjects perceived alcohol restrictions as another form of colonial oppression. By resisting British authority and by actively defying prohibition measures, African people demonstrated their ability to fight back. Covert liquor networks motivated native subjects to build and develop infrastructures, economies, and social systems that represented their culture and were unique to their heritage. Women challenged patriarchal European norms by liberating themselves from servile roles into entrepreneurial positions, catapulting them into spots of authority. By engineering substitute industries in liquor production and trade, native people developed invaluable skills in establishing a self-sustaining economy. Ultimately, prohibition was a driving force in African spirit and resilience in reestablishing their autonomy and regaining control of their own hegemony. By breaking the rules, one drink at a time, African defiance of British prohibition began setting the stage for decolonization.

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“We are Prisoners in a Jail of Ice and Snow”: Dogs, Labor, and Loyalty, 1880-1930

by Noe Rangel

Figure 1: Map of Alaska and Yukon Territory showing key locations during the Klondike Gold Rush and early sled dog routes.[1]

Introduction

With the piercing sounds of ice cracking and the wind screaming across Norton Sound on the Bering Sea in western Alaska, Leonhard Seppala and his sled dog team ventured onto the frigid inlet as layers of sea ice fractured and webs of cracks appeared under their snow-beaten boots and paws. Canine and man alike fought to stay upright among inhospitable conditions and

[1] Berton, Pierre. *Klondike; the Last Great Gold Rush, 1896-1899.* Rev. ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

inclement weather. The shortcut they had taken was now breaking apart beneath them. Suddenly, the ice beneath them broke away, marooning the team as they drifted towards the sea, the shoreline vanishing in the distance. Seppala turned to Togo, his unwavering lead dog. Without hesitation, Togo leaped toward the shore, across unstable ice. When he reached solid ground, Seppala urgently prompted Togo to pull. Togo pulled and pulled, not just the rope, but the weight of the sled, the dogs, and Seppala himself.[2] Against all odds, the line held, and Togo's strength pulled the team safely back to solid ground, saving the entire relay from inevitable failure.[3] Stories like this reveal the roles and significance of sled dogs in the Alaskan wilderness and Arctic frontier between 1850 and 1930. Across this period, sled dogs, among them Indigenous-developed Alaskan Husky types, Malamutes, and later Siberian imports, fulfilled the physical demands of frontier labor even as they became emotional companions and communicative partners who mediated human experiences of isolation, danger, and endurance. This mutual dependence reveals a dynamic partnership forged under extreme conditions.

Scholarship on this topic often emphasizes the economic utility of sled dogs, focusing on their role in the logistics of the gold rush migration and polar exploration.[4] As seen in Figure 1, the expansion of human settlement and extractive enterprise across the Yukon and Alaskan frontiers was inseparable from the movement of sled dogs. Freight routes, postal trails, and informal supply lines depended on dog movement to connect goldfields, trading posts, and

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[2] This dramatized summary is based on a scene from *Togo*, directed by Ericson Core (2019), which fictionalizes events from the 1925 serum run.

[3] This story of Seppala, Togo, and their team of loyal sled dogs took place during the legendary 674-mile 1925 Serum to Nome, a sled relay across the US territory of Alaska to deliver diphtheria antitoxin, which was dramatized in the 2019 film *Togo.*

[4] Mary R. Tahan, *Roald Amundsen's Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole*, 1st ed. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019).

remote communities. Yet, despite their logistical significance, dogs have frequently appeared as secondary figures in the historiography of frontier expansion, seen mainly as instruments of human mobility. Scholars in animal studies, such as Donna Haraway, Harriet Ritvo, and Susan McHugh,[5] have critiqued such interpretations and argued that mutual influence, emotional bonds, and shared survival are central to the human-animal relationship. For example, Ritvo observed that "the animal kingdom mirrored the human hierarchy, reproducing in miniature the classes and distinctions that Victorians perceived among themselves," showing how cultural ideas reflected and reinforced social structures.[6] Building on these perspectives, this paper extends animal studies frameworks into the Arctic frontier, arguing that sled dogs were not just tools of transportation but emotional companions and communicative partners whose shared endurance with humans shows how survival itself becomes a form of relationship. Examining these partnerships within the imperial context of northern exploration and settlement highlights how the human–canine bond underpinned colonial mobility, territorial expansion, and narratives of endurance that defined the Arctic as both a space of conquest and co-dependence. It also emphasizes the economic, logistical, and affective roles sled dogs played in facilitating movement, presence, and administration across these frozen frontiers.

Hudson Stuck, a British archdeacon and missionary in Alaska during the early 20th century, relied on sled dog travel to extend both religious and imperial presence across remote northern settlements. Figure 2, which traces Hudson Stuck's journey by sled dog across central

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[5] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[6] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 2.

and western Alaska, illustrates how the human-canine partnership functioned as a vehicle of mobility, communication, and administration in the northern territories. These mapped routes chart not just the vast distances these expeditions covered, but the bonds of labor and trust between musher and dog that made such journeys possible. Drawing on travel narratives and firsthand accounts of frontierswomen and Arctic explorers, this essay explores the emotional and ethical dimensions of human–canine bonds, recasting dogs as both workers, trusted companions, and moral co-survivors and, within imperial contexts, as agents and instruments of empire whose labor and loyalty sustained colonial expansion across the North. By shifting focus to the multidimensional and often overlooked roles of individual and entire packs of highly trained and seasoned sled dogs, this paper demonstrates how their strength, durability, and unwavering loyalty were conscripted into the broader settler and imperial projects that sought to map, extract, and control the northern frontiers of both the United States and Canada.

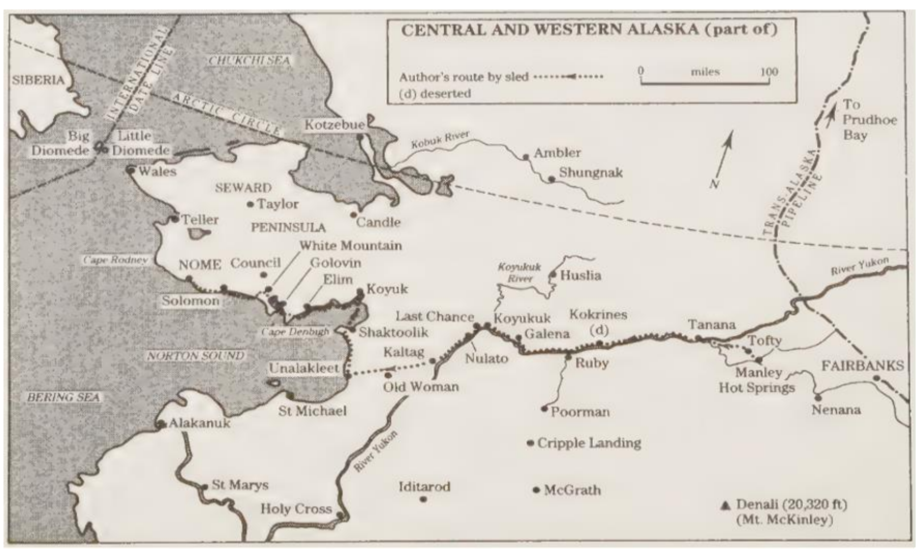

Figure 2: Map of central and western Alaska tracing Hudson Stuck's journey, as detailed in his 1914 book Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled.[7]

[7] Berton, *Klondike*, 7.

“No Roads Lead to Nome”-1898: Economic Utility and Movement of Sled Dogs

In the final years of the 19th century, the discovery of gold in the Klondike region of the Yukon Territory prompted one of the most famous and feverish migrations in North American history. By 1897, the rush was in full swing, drawing tens of thousands of hopeful miners, adventurers, and entrepreneurs northward, all willing to brave the treacherous conditions in pursuit of wealth.[8] For many, it was not just a gamble but a desperate bid to escape economic hardship and social stagnation in the rapidly industrializing cities of the United States and Canada. Men left their jobs suddenly, abandoning their homes, families, and stable employment for the promise of wealth in a land they had never seen.[9] There were no roads to the goldfields, and towns like Nome and Dawson City sat at the edge of isolated mountain passes, rivers, and deep snow. The landscape was brutal and largely inaccessible, shaped by nature and wilderness, and the absence of human infrastructure. This section contends that dog labor made this migration physically possible and, in doing so, transformed the Arctic frontier’s landscape into a traversable space.

Sled dogs carried essential goods and mail, sustaining remote settlements where other forms of transport were impossible,[10] extending the reach of empire across the Chilkoot and White passes (see Figure 3). Single-file trails along a narrow ridgeline of snow (see Figure 5

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[8] Leo R. Healy, *Diary, March–September 1898*, Alaska State Library, accessed October 2, 2025, https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg21/id/22924/

[9] Tappan Adney, *The Klondike Stampede* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), 5–6.

[10] “Dave Scott, U.S. Mail Dog Team Carrier, Upper Tanana Division,” ca. 1920s, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks, accessed September 19, 2025, https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg11/id/44272/

below)[11] were the most common in the early years of the rush. The appeal of striking it rich dwarfed the reality that few would succeed, and even those who managed to reach the goldfields would face immense hardships.

People often imagine lone miners pushing through the snow with grit and determination,[12] but survival in the North depended on systems already in place long before the gold rush began. Settlers relied heavily on Indigenous knowledge to survive and navigate the northern environment, particularly regarding sled dogs, sled construction, and seasonal travel routes. Long before Euro-American expansion into Alaska and the Yukon, Indigenous communities had developed sophisticated systems of dog breeding, harnessing, and trail navigation adapted to Arctic and subarctic conditions. Euro-American travelers did not introduce dog-powered mobility to the North; rather, they appropriated and redeployed existing Indigenous modes of animal husbandry and movement, adapting them to serve extractive economies, long-distance freight hauling, and imperial administration, enabling conquest, settlement, and governance while often obscuring the Indigenous origins of these systems.[13]

The frenzied departure from cities across North America was described in newspaper headlines promising untold riches in the Klondike, often exaggerating the ease of striking it rich.

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[11] *Climbers on the Chilkoot Pass*, photograph, ca. 1898, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-19576, https://www.loc.gov/item/2006677478/

[12] See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (New York: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), on frontier myth and individualism.

[13] On the Indigenous origins of sled-dog breeding, sled technology, and dog-powered mobility in Alaska and the Arctic, see Robert J. Losey, Robert P. Wishart, and Jan Peter Laurens Loovers, eds., *Dogs in the North: Stories of Cooperation and Co-Domestication* (London: Routledge, 2018); *The Inuit Dog: Its Provenance, Environment, and History* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1995); and *Specialized sledge dogs accompanied Inuit dispersal across the North American Arctic*, *Journal of Archaeological Science* (open access).

In bustling port cities like Seattle and San Francisco, every street corner buzzed with men debating their chances, purchasing supplies, and making hasty travel arrangements. Bankers, schoolteachers, and clerks, many with no experience in prospecting or surviving the northern wilderness, shared the same steadfast belief that they would return wealthy beyond imagination.[14] Lured by dreams of fortune, they boarded steamships bound for Alaska's coastal towns of Skagway and Dyea, only to confront the brutal realities of the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails (see Figure 5). These grueling routes demanded extraordinary endurance and soon became both treacherous paths to the goldfields and vital arteries of economic expansion. A vast support system soon emerged: freight haulers, outfitters, supply depots, and, especially, dog breeders and trainers profited from the constant movement of people and goods. This expanding infrastructure did not eliminate danger. It altered the terms of survival. The journey became a business, and mobility itself became commodified as survival increasingly depended on access to services, animals, and expertise rather than individual self-sufficiency alone. As the *Skagway Bulletin* bluntly advised in 1897, "Every man must carry with him at least one team of sled dogs if he expects to survive the winter trail." The ascent over the Chilkoot Pass often resembled a human conveyor belt, with a line of burdened men stretching endlessly up the icy slope, each required to carry a ton of supplies, sometimes making dozens of trips. (see Figure 5).[15]

Canadian authorities required every prospector to carry a year's worth of supplies. This was equivalent to a ton of goods, which had to be hauled in repeated trips. This incredible burden made the journey slow and exhausting, leaving many stranded before reaching the Klondike. The

[14] Adney, *The Klondike Stampede*, 2–5.

[15] William Haskell, *Two Years in the Klondike and Alaskan Gold-Fields* (Hartford: Hartford Publishing Company, 1898), 109–112.

cold was so intense that many men froze in their tracks, their bodies later found lifeless, holding on to their dreams of gold.[16] Exhaustion and malnutrition took their toll, compelling some to turn back. Men broke under the weight of their ambition yet refused to abandon their quest.[17] Many who made it over the pass were in dire straits, either sick or without the funds to continue. Men who had once been successful businessmen or skilled tradesmen had been reduced to begging for scraps in makeshift camps along the trails. Their fine clothes had turned to rags, their confidence to despair, yet they still lingered, unwilling to admit defeat.[18] The infrastructure quickly developed to accommodate the flood of fortune seekers. Saloons, trading posts, and supply depots sprang up almost overnight along the trails, each promising relief to the weary and a chance to spend what little money they had left before reaching the goldfields.[19] Skagway, a coastal port town in southeastern Alaska, roughly forty miles from the Chilkoot and White Passes leading inland toward the Yukon goldfields, became the primary gateway to the Klondike. It was here that newly arrived prospectors scrambled to purchase supplies, negotiate transport, and form alliances with fellow travelers. Skagway transformed rapidly into a boomtown, a place where dreams could be acquired as easily as provisions, but both could vanish just as quickly once travelers began their ascent into the Coast Mountains beyond town.[20] The makeshift settlements that formed along the route were often chaotic and lawless, teeming with opportunists who sought to profit from the rush. Newly arrived prospectors, unprepared for

[16] Laura Beatrice Berton, *I Married the Klondike* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982), 194–195.

[17] Haskell, *Two Years in the Klondike and Alaskan Gold-Fields*, 145–147.

[18] Haskell, *Two Years in the Klondike and Alaskan Gold-Fields*, 210–212.

[19] Adney, *The Klondike Stampede*, 180–182.

[20] Colin Campbell, *White Pass & Yukon Route to the Golden North* (Seattle: Press of the Trade Register, 1901), 134–136.

the harsh climate and rugged terrain, usually fell victim to scams, losing what little money they had before ever setting foot on a gold claim.

In her memoir, Laura Beatrice Berton, who traveled in search of gold and witnessed these events firsthand, claimed that more fortunes were lost[21] due to the predatory nature of many who sought to exploit the rush. For those who made it to Dawson City, the journey from Skagway required crossing the Chilkoot or White Pass. These mountain routes cut through the coastal range and connect southeastern Alaska to the Yukon interior. After crossing these passes, prospectors followed overland trails towards Dawson City. Once arrived, they found a landscape transformed by the rush of gold seekers. What was once a remote outpost had become a bustling town, illuminated by gas lamps, filled with saloons and dance halls, and swarming with miners who had struck it rich or were on the edge of ruin. It was described simultaneously as a land of boundless opportunity and of stark despair. Fortunes had been made and lost, and what remained was a town that held on to the memories of its prosperous past.[22] Towns that had flourished during the boom either faded or adapted to new industries, but the legacy of the rush remained.

The Klondike was not just a story of gold but of movement, adaptation, and survival, where people worked with the land and the tools already developed by Indigenous communities. Journalist Tappan Adney, who traveled with fortune seekers and chronicled their journey, wrote, “No road, no signboard, only snow and uncertainty.”[23] The dog knew the way, and the high demand for sled dogs underscores their economic and symbolic importance. The United States

[21] Berton, *I Married the Klondike*, 170.

[22] Berton, *I Married the Klondike*, 224.

[23] Tappan Adney, *The Klondike Stampede* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900), 17.

government recognized this value as well. In an 1898 report by the U.S. Post Office, it was noted, "Without them (dogs), mail service would halt in the winter."[24] A February 1898 article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* stated, "A good dog team is worth more than gold in these parts…men will trade their last dollar for a strong lead dog."[25] Such statements revealed how northern economies, and indeed the state, were tethered to canines: equating a dog with gold, strength, and endurance made them a form of economic value in their own right, turning sled dogs into a living form of currency whose worth was constantly tested.

Figure 3: Photograph of a dog team hauling freight through a frontier town during the Klondike Gold Rush, c. 1898.

[24] United States Post Office Department, *Annual Reports of the Post-Office Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 663.

[25] *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Klondike Fever Grips the Northwest," February 3, 1898, accessed via Library of Congress Chronicling America archive.

Figure 4: Pack dog, equipped with tin cookware and supplies during the Klondike Gold Rush era, c. 1890s–1900s.

Murphy, as seen in figure 4, might appear burdened, especially in modern standards of animal treatment, but this image tells volumes about life on the Arctic frontier. Murphy is outfitted as a pack dog, not a sled dog, but carrying what appear to be travelers' essentials: a tin cup, a mess kit consisting of a frying pan and a water kettle, a folded blanket or a tarp, and a leather bag, all together probably weighing between 20 and 30 pounds. For a human already laden by heavy winter clothing, boots, and mining equipment, this additional load would have been substantial if not untenable when going through snow and uneven terrain. For a seasoned pack dog, however, this burden was manageable.[26]

[26] Hudson Stuck, *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 29–31.

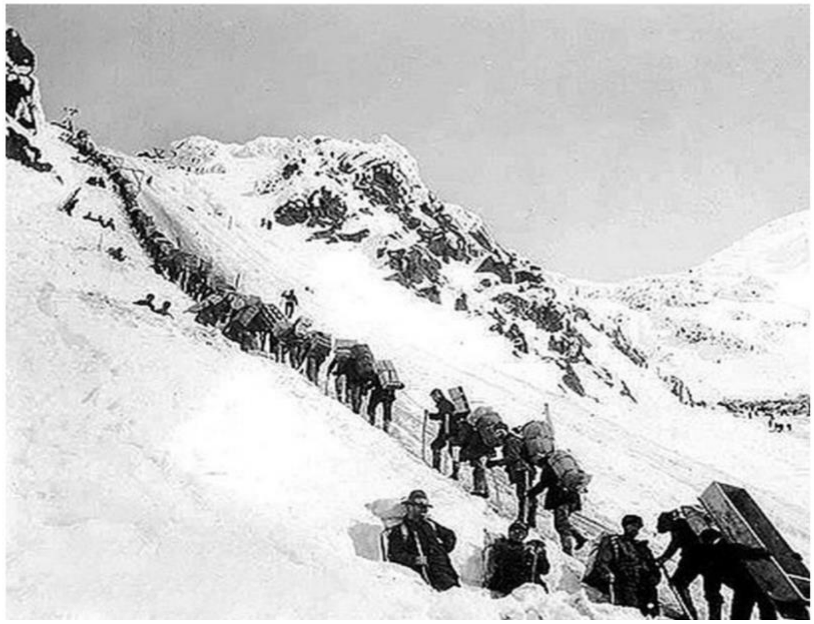

Figure 5: Prospectors ascending the Chilkoot Pass during the Klondike Gold Rush, c. 1897–1898.

Sled dogs were not only a source of power but also a source of trust and stability, sensing danger and sustaining people through isolation. Figure 5 illustrates the direct physical burden placed on dogs and the degree to which they were integrated into daily survival tasks. However, labor was not the only burden dogs carried. Beyond the weight of cargo and the demands of travel, these animals also bore emotional significance for the people who depended on them. To fully understand the bond between humans and canines, we must explore the quieter, more intimate moments of companionship, care, and loss. These experiences are often absent from official reports. One traveler who came to embody this dog-dependent life was Josephine DeMott Robinson, a frontierswoman who followed her husband into the interior. Her travel narrative, written retrospectively about her Klondike experiences and published in *McCall's Magazine between 1927 and 1928,* reflects on events that had taken place several decades earlier and offers readers insight into the emotional labor shared between humans and dogs. Through these accounts, dogs emerge as a source of meaning and stability amid isolation.

"In a Land Where the Snow Speaks"- A Woman's Story: Emotional Labor and Human-Canine Bonds

Josephine DeMott Robinson was not a typical frontierswoman. Born in Queens, New York, in 1868, she came from an urban environment far removed from the icy wilderness of Alaska, yet she navigated one of the harshest landscapes on the continent during the height of the Klondike Gold Rush. Robinson chose to join her husband in the Klondike in 1897, leaving behind life in Cincinnati and entering gold country, an undertaking that was uncommon for women and marked by shared determination and hardship.[27] This section interprets Robinson's memoir to explore how dogs served as emotional co-survivors, providing comfort, protection, and meaning in a world defined by isolation and uncertainty. Figure 6, an Illustration, shows two figures standing together in heavy parkas facing one another amid a white, featureless landscape. There are no visible trails or structures, and the whiteout conditions are disorienting, making it unclear whether it is night or day. The purpose of the illustrations is to capture the isolation and mutual reliance that defined frontier life for the reader, especially for women who endured the North alongside their partners. Her days were structured around the needs and capacities of her dogs, whose strength determined the pace and possibility of travel.

[27] Josephine DeMott Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, 1927, 42.

Figure 6: Illustration from Josephine DeMott Robinson's A Woman's Gold Rush Story, depicting a moment of resolve and partnership between Josephine and her husband amid the frozen Alaskan wilderness.

An average day for Robinson was shaped by a cycle of labor, care, and constant vigilance. Her mornings began before sunrise as she woke to frigid temperatures in a tent or makeshift shelter in the Alaskan wilderness. Her first responsibility was always the sled dogs. "Before I tended to the fire or the gear or even the coffee," she wrote, "I say to the dogs, always the dogs first."[28] She prepared for the day's journey by feeding and tending to the dogs, checking their paws for injuries from the previous day, ensuring their harnesses were secure, and packing the sled. Only after these tasks did she begin her own preparations for travel across the unpredictable landscape. Once on the trail, Robinson's attention remained fixed on the dogs. She watched for signs of fatigue, injury, or unease. Her dogs often sensed changes in weather or terrain before she could, "I trusted their instincts more than my own," she wrote. On the trail, trust extended beyond people to the relationship between musher and dog. Time and again, sled dogs sensed dangers long before their handlers did. Robinson wrote, "They knew when the wind

[28] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, December 1927, 42.

would shift, or the snow would hide a fissure."[29] Travel was grueling, with sled runners catching on hidden rocks and snowdrifts covering gaps and ice. Robinson does not record precise distances or the number of days between stopping points. Through her memoir, we know that travel was an extended, often continuous ordeal shaped by weather, terrain, and fatigue rather than by fixed schedules.

To ease the dogs' burden, Robinson often walked alongside the sled to lighten the load, trudging through snow that could reach her knees. Periodic rest stops offered brief moments to melt snow for water, build a fire, or catch her breath, yet she was never truly idle during these pauses. After the day's journey, her care continued into the evening, feeding the dogs, checking their harnesses, tending to their wounds, and preparing meals.[30] Such routines echo those described by contemporaries such as Hudson Stuck, who emphasized that nights were typically spent in tents, cabins, or makeshift shelters where humans and dogs remained in close proximity for warmth and security.[31]

The warmth and steady breath of her dogs seemed to take priority over her own needs.[32] Her only comfort came from knowing that her dogs were cared for. Robinson repeatedly described how the companionship of her dogs helped ease the loneliness of remote life. They were not just workers, but family, even if she never used such words. That bond was never more

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[29] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, January 1928, 39.

[30] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, January 1928, 39.

[31] Hudson Stuck, *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 43–44.

[32] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, January 1928, 40.

evident than when one of her dogs[33] became sick with [34] Figure 7 offers a glimpse of this intimate relationship, showing Robinson on the ground outside a log cabin. Robinson cradles the large dog, holding him close in an embrace that suggests affection. The dog leaning into her, its tail relaxed and ears forward, suggests it is not aggressive but trusting and relaxed.

Figure 7: Mrs. Robinson and the Alaskan dogs she nursed through a severe case of distemper.

Distemper is a canine disease transmitted through contact with infected dogs. While there is no cure for distemper, chances of survival increase with supportive care. Robinson's account of nursing the dog with the same attention and care she might offer her husband or kin[35] exposes the power dynamics of an overtly imperialistic time. Robinson writes that she looked after the

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[33] Josephine's accounts referred to her dog, but no name was given. This paper will henceforth refer to the dog simply as "the dog "or "the dog she nursed."

[34] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, February 1928, 36.

[35] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, March 1928

dog, kept him warm and hydrated, and even adjusted her travel schedule to allow him time to recover, as the dog's recovery was vital to her success.

As Robinson spent more time caring for the dog, she became increasingly attached to him, making his sudden reclamation by an Indigenous man she encountered on the trail deeply distressing. Robinson explained that she had received the animal from this man when the dog was near death, and that once the dog had recovered, the man reasserted his ownership. From Robinson's perspective, the loss was devastating. She had nursed the dog through starvation and exhaustion, watched his body regain strength, and felt his spirit return. She acknowledged that she had no recognized proof of ownership or recourse and could not contest the claim.[36] Read within the context of the late 1920s, when Robinson's memoir was serialized for a popular magazine audience, the story is structured to invite readers to sympathize with Robinson's emotional labor while portraying the Indigenous man's assertion of ownership as abrupt and unfeeling. The dog becomes a contested figure through which competing systems of value are revealed. Robinson's account centers care and emotional investment as the basis for ownership, while rejecting alternative conceptions of possession, exchange, or communal claim that may have shaped the man's actions. This episode reveals how dogs served not only as emotional companions but also as symbolic sites where power, dispossession, and settler authority were narratively negotiated.

The void left by the dog's absence was enough that she wished she had let the dog die when it was weakest, rather than parting with it after forming such a close bond.[37] As the dog

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[36] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, March 1928, 28.

[37] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, March 1928

was pulled away, his eyes lingered on her as if pleading with her. That interaction stayed with Josephine, highlighting the emotional toll of frontier life and the complex relationships between ownership, survival, companionship, and love. [38] Her reaction underscores the mutual dependence she and the animal had developed, and how swiftly the boundaries between caregiver and companion could blur. From the earliest pages of her account, Robinson places the dogs at the heart of her survival.[39] The dogs' reactions to weather, terrain, and danger often influenced her decisions, their finely tuned instincts exceeding human judgment, especially in extreme conditions.[40] Far from an anomaly, such relationships were central to Arctic survival, with modern mushers attesting that dogs are not simply equipment but companions whose trust must be earned and maintained through care.[41]

Robinson's account sheds light on the ethical and emotional frameworks that enabled endurance on the frontier, while also revealing how such bonds enabled settler mobility in ways that made colonial expansion possible. The care she extended to her dogs and the trust she placed in their labor and instincts allowed her to move through, occupy, and consolidate Indigenous space. In this sense, sled dogs served as mediators between settlers, making their survival and authority possible through the relationships and attachments she describes.

The Cruelest Miles: Dogs, Survival, and Ethics in Arctic Expeditions

[38] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, March 1928.

[39] Robinson, *A Woman's Story of the Gold Rush*, *McCall's Magazine*, February 1928, 36.

[40] Hudson Stuck, *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 11, 43–44; Sheila Nickerson, *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in the Explorations of Antarctica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 108–110.

[41] Arnason, A., & Keltner, C. "Human–Sled Dog Relations: What Can We Learn from the Stories and Experiences of Mushers?" *Society & Animals* 15, no. 1 (2007): 79–95.

Figure 8: Musher with his Malamute team outside Nome, Alaska, early 20th century.

In stark contrast to Robinson's intimate frontier journey, this section examines Arctic expeditions between 1853 and 1909, where human-dog relationships were forged in conquest, endurance, and at times, fatal necessity. Figure 8 captures this ethos of unity and resilience, with a musher and his Malamute team posing outside Nome. The dogs are alert and taut, with several howling, perhaps communicating or responding to the musher's commands. The sled is lightly loaded, suggesting this may be a posed moment, but the snow-blanketed background reinforces the unforgiving environment they regularly navigated. Each dog is outfitted with a harness. The relationship between humans and dogs in these settings was not always tender, as seen most starkly in the Polaris expedition of 1871–1873. Led by Charles Francis Hall, the expedition was troubled from the start. Supplies ran low aboard the ice-bound ship, offering little promise of resupply or escape. Sheila Nickerson describes how the sled dogs, once proud and vigorous, grew thin and restless.[42]

With the temperature plummeting and no relief in sight, the men were forced to begin slaughtering the weakest of the dogs to feed the stronger ones and themselves. [43] Feeding the dogs was essential to maintaining their labor, as the animals remained the only means of hauling supplies, transportation, or launching rescue missions across the ice. As Sheila Nickerson writes, "The men wept as they killed the dogs. They had shared the same tent, the same food, the same songs, and now they were forced to destroy the very creatures who had carried them to safety."[44] In these accounts, the line between survival and cruelty blurs, revealing the moral cost of human endurance. Scholar Susan McHugh notes that stories of animal death "return us to the limits of our own humanity, exposing how deeply our lives are entangled with those we claim to command."[45] The sailors' grief reflects the cost of domination and the uneasy recognition that survival often requires the sacrifice of someone else. Some dogs were brought inside the ship during storms and huddled with the crew, offering warmth and companionship even as they starved. The decision to sacrifice them was not taken lightly, yet many men felt guilt and sorrow. This was echoed on later accounts, such as George W. De Long's Jeannette expedition, where

[42] Sheila Nickerson, *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in the Explorations of Antarctica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009),35–38.

[43] Sheila Nickerson, *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs In Service to American Explorers of the Arctic*, 1853-1909. 109.

[44] Sheila Nickerson, *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in the Explorations of Antarctica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 109.

[45] Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 15

the last remaining dog, Wolf, was slaughtered for food just days before the crew reached Siberia.[46]

This juxtaposition of reverence and sacrifice is particularly evident in Robert Peary's North Pole expeditions in 1908 and 1909.[47] Peary, a seasoned Arctic veteran, built his campaign around a sophisticated relay system powered by hundreds of Greenland dogs.[48] These expeditions were never just exploratory; they also functioned as imperial displays of power and territorial claims through acts of discovery. Flags were planted, land mapped, and new frontiers claimed, all made possible by sled labor.[49] He openly admitted that his food supply plan included sacrificing weaker dogs to feed stronger ones,[50] and it was these animals that carried him to the farthest reaches of the Earth any person had ventured to date.[51] When Peary's lead dog, Nalegaksoah, defeated an Indigenous man's lead dog in a fierce deck-side brawl aboard the return ship, he paraded before the team, victorious.[52] Matthew Henson reflected on the moment,

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[46] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 478.

[47] Robert E. Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910), 45–46.

[48] Robert E. Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910), 121-124.

[49] Robert E. Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910), 175.

[50] Robert E. Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910), 215-219.

[51] Hudson Stuck, *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 11, 43–44; Sheila Nickerson, *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in the Explorations of Antarctica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 108–110.

[52] Matthew A. Henson, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912), 168.

admiring the mix of pride, loyalty, and violence[53] that even Peary, known for his utilitarian approach, could not dismiss.[54]

Figure 9. An advanced team of an Arctic expedition resting with their sled dogs, early 20th century.

Dogs like Nalegaksoah were often tested under the most brutal conditions, pulling sleds across vast Arctic landscapes, enduring harsh temperatures, and subsisting on minimal rations. Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka's 1879–1880 expedition provides a sobering example. Figure 9 captures this endurance and discipline with a photograph of an advance team resting on the trail, a brief pause amid the relentless movement across frozen terrain. Of the 44 dogs that began the journey, more than 20 died of exhaustion and starvation. Schwatka mourned these losses both logistically and personally, observing that the dogs pressed forward with such resolve despite going days without food that their endurance moved him to deep mourning. In his account of the

[53] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 412.

[54] Robert E. Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1910), 222.

expedition, Schwatka noted the remarkable stamina of the sled dogs: “The dogs, though reduced to the last extremity for want of food, still performed their duties with a fidelity and endurance that excited our admiration.”[55] His companion, William H. Gilder, noted the dogs’ affectionate nature: “Even when half-starved, the dogs would wag their tails and lick the hands of the children, showing a touching gentleness.” [56]

Figure 10: Illustrations of traditional Inuit sled dog equipment. The top image shows an “Ano” or dog harness, and the bottom depicts a “Qamutiq” or sledge.

The emotional dynamics of these expeditions are not unique to state-sponsored Arctic adventures. They echo the narrative of frontierswoman Josephine DeMott Robinson, whose story

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[55] Frederick Schwatka, *The Search for Franklin: A Narrative of the American Expedition Under Lieutenant Schwatka, 1878 to 1880* (New York: Arno Press, 1976).

[56] William H. Gilder, *Schwatka’s Search: Sledging in the Arctic in Quest of the Franklin Records* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1881), 185.

reveals similar patterns of interdependence between people and animals. While the explorers emphasized efficiency and adaptation, both they and Robinson were grounded in Indigenous knowledge and tools developed by North American Arctic and subarctic peoples. This dependence on Indigenous knowledge is also illustrated in Figure 10, which depicts traditional Indigenous sled dog gear such as a harness and a Qamutiq (sled). These items highlight the essential technologies that contributed to Arctic survival and helped settlers adapt. The qamutiik represents years of improvement, designed for travel over snow and ice. It includes low runners, lash-together crosspieces, and runner modifications optimized for harsh terrain and weather.[57] Scholarship on these sleds stresses their cultural significance as much as their functional significance. The qamutiik is "not simply a tool of transport but a repository of communal knowledge, intergenerational skill, and environmental attunement."[58] The appearance of the harness and sled in Figure 10 signals more than a utilitarian tool. It signals a continuity of Indigenous technological agency and adaptation. Settler and expedition dog teams often borrowed or adapted these sled technologies, yet doing so also involved shifting them into different economic and imperial frameworks. While early, state-sponsored Arctic expeditions of the mid-nineteenth century often treated dogs as essential but expendable labor in pursuit of polar conquest, Robinson's account offers a contrasting perspective rooted in the everyday realities of the Klondike Gold Rush at the turn of the twentieth century.

In contrast to expedition hierarchies, Robinson's account foregrounds emotional labor and care. Unlike Arctic crews, whose losses were rationalized within an imperial apparatus that framed suffering as the cost of conquest, Robinson altered her travel plans to accommodate a

[57] See "Runners of Mud and Ice: The Historic Qamutiik," *Mushing.com*, March 1, 2010.

[58] HH Li, "An Ethnographic Look at Contemporary Inuit Dog Race in Nunavik," 2021.

dog's recovery, treating him not merely as a tool but as kin. This intimacy enables a more empathetic portrayal of dogs as emotional co-survivors rather than expendable means to an end. Robinson's story also exposes the limits of settler authority. The incident in which an Indigenous man reclaims the dog Robinson had nursed back to health complicates any straightforward narrative of possession or control. While Robinson's care forged a powerful emotional claim, she was ultimately unable to secure ownership, revealing that conquest over place did not automatically translate into uncontested control over animals or mobility. In this sense, the dog's repossession can be read not only as a personal loss but as a marker of the incompleteness of settler domination, where Indigenous systems of ownership and authority continued to assert themselves along the trail. At the same time, the similarities between the accounts are equally significant. Robinson and the explorers recognized the dogs' superior instincts and physical endurance, often trusting them over human judgment. Whether leading through whiteouts or standing guard against crevasses, the dogs functioned as physical guides. Their presence made survival possible through both labor and the bonds of companionship, trust, and love.

Conclusion

Sled dogs stood at the center of a power struggle, rooted in Indigenous systems of knowledge and ownership that settlers co-opted but could never fully subdue, even as those same dogs enabled colonial survival and expansion. Long before sled dogs became essential to gold rush logistics or imperial expeditions, they were central to Indigenous systems of mobility, survival, and knowledge in the Arctic and subarctic North. Technologies of dog breeding, harnessing, and sled travel were developed to sustain Indigenous life across snow, enabling movement, exchange, and continuity in environments often mischaracterized as inhospitable;

only later were these capacities appropriated into settler and imperial projects. From the Klondike goldfields to state-sponsored expeditions, sled dogs enabled the movement of people, goods, and ideas across terrain otherwise impassable, facilitating extraction, settlement, and claims of authority over Indigenous space. As laborers, they were indispensable; as companions, they offered warmth and loyalty; and as symbols, they reflected and reinforced the hierarchies, ambitions, and ideologies of empire. The human–dog relationship in Alaska and northern Canada between 1880 and 1930 was dynamic and multifaceted, shaped by necessity, affection, discipline, and domination. Figures like Josephine DeMott Robinson reveal the emotional depth of these bonds, while explorers such as Hudson Stuck and Robert Peary relied on dogs to survive environments that continually tested human limits, and to establish frontier infrastructure in the service of empire. Seen through the lens of Animal Studies, this history repositions sled dogs as integral to the making of empire while underscoring how animals elsewhere, whether in mines, battlefields, or city streets, have been bound up in human projects of labor, conquest, and survival.

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Race and the Philippine Question

By Matthew Kano

Introduction, 1521-1830

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a heated and protracted political debate over the "Philippine Question," which related to the Philippine islands, its people, and their political status as a Spanish-ruled, American-ruled, and independent polity. In this paper. I will be discussing the historical background, ideological justifications and racial foundations of colonization of the Philippines. Specifically, I will be first discussing the historical interactions between the various peoples of the Philippines and European colonizers. After this contextual discussion, I will go over be going over the racial and ideological foundations of American imperialism. Next, I will discuss the debate over American rule of the Philippines and the influence of racist beliefs in both sides of the debate. Lastly, I will discuss the process of Philippine independence on racist assumptions of civilizing the native populace and influences towards establishing institutions which were reflective of the imperialist rulers in order to grant the Philippines its freedom.

Inhabited since at least 3000 B.C.E., the various societies which developed on the islands often benefited from being situated on a trade route between India and China.[1] Because of this strategic location within a broader trading network, many Philippine island societies received significant cultural influence from China, India, and later, Arabia.[2] In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan tried to traverse the Visayan Islands in his attempt to circumnavigate the world. This was the first

[1] Truxillo, Charles A. 2012. *Crusaders in the Far East: The Moro Wars in the Philippines in the Context of the Ibero-Islamic World War*. Fremont, Calif.: Jain Pub. Company. 9-10.
[2] Trujillo, 9-10.

exposure to Europeans experienced by the local Visayans of the Philippine islands.[3] Over the following decades, Spanish influence grew in the Philippines with many kingdoms converting to Christianity and joining the Spanish in their conflicts against the Islamic kingdoms in the region. This influence and power led to the Spanish gaining more territory within the Philippines.[4] However, outsider forces such as the Ming Empire, Sultanate of Sulu and the Kingdom of the Netherlands also applied constant pressure to Spanish holdings.

After multiple failed expeditions in Southeast Asia and after the port of Manila was repeatedly raided by Dutch fleets, the Spanish shifted their efforts to solidifying their holdings on northern Philippine island of Luzon and withdrawing from the southern Philippine islands of Mindanao and Sulu. Spain was eventually able to conquer these islands and the Muslim Moro people by the middle of the 19th century. The situation in Europe had also significantly changed in the centuries which had followed the initial settlement and expansion of control over the Philippines. The Kingdom of France had been overthrown by revolutionaries in 1789, and Napoleon came to power as the new leader of France ten years later. This new French Empire invaded Spain in November 1807. The combined armies of the UK, Spain and Portugal were unable to prevent the French from taking over most of the country and installing the brother of Napoleon as the new king. Due to the loss of most of their home territories, various parts of the Spanish Empire In South America revolted during the period in which the Spanish king was living in exile. By 1814, the French Empire and its puppet Spanish government were forced out of the Iberian Peninsula. This did not stop the revolutionaries in New Spain however. During the period of exile from Spain, the various revolutionary groups in South America had set up their own constitutional governments. By the end of the 1820s, Spain had lost most of her empire at

[3] Trujillo, 9-10.
[4] Truxillo, 9-10.

that point due to mounting costs in trying to put down the several rebellions which were active at the time. The Spanish Empire was pushed to near collapse with its only major holdings being in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines still within their control.

An Expansion of Interests 1830-1898

During the early 19th century, the foundations in the necessity of colonization and imperialism were used to justify the subjugation of indigenous and native peoples around the world. By the middle of the 19th century, multiple European nations had been rushing to expand their empires such as the French, British and Russians in China. America had also decided to begin expanding her interests in Asia as well, ending the closed country policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate. She also received significant privileges, including the ability to refuel and resupply her ships along with a treaty of extraterritoriality. After the Civil War, these interests grew to China as well, participating in trade and investment within the city of Tianjin. The nature of the American interests in the Caribbean and Pacific were borne of the natural expansion of Manifest Destiny's domain and economic opportunity. After the North American continent was claimed by all those whom the Americans recognized as, if not equal, a diplomatic entity in the region, the next steps were directed abroad. The United States had already laid claim to the Western Hemisphere as its sphere of influence with the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. President James Monroe had announced this policy during an annual speech to Congress while in discussions with diplomats of the Russian Empire. Specifically stating that "In the discussions to which this interest has given rise, and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power."[5] Entering the last decade of the 19th century, the United States had the military power to enforce this doctrine. The United States' naval expansion was the backbone of this increase in military force. The military was the preeminent form of Manifest Destiny. Its use to expel the natives of America and suppress any attempts to resist paved the way for the development of American expansion through military conquest. Because of its position in American foreign policy, the primacy of its development was necessary for America to expand her interests towards those who she believed needed to be civilized.

In the later half of the 19th century, Congress started funding a naval modernization and expansion effort in response to the rapidly modernizing of naval forces in Europe to expand the reach of their imperial influence and power. In addition to this power, the United States became more diplomatically active on the international stage, beginning in 1893 with the recognition of the newly founded Republic of Hawaii which was made up of business interests in the Hawaiian Islands.[6] In response to the successful coup, the United States used its newly created naval and diplomatic influence to annex the new republic before any other state could intervene. This process of using economic entities and protection of their property, assets and other interests was often used by the US to justify military action against indigenous tribes and as a form of

[5] Congress.gov. "President's Annual Message - Page Headings - Annals of Congress." February 18, 2026. https://www.congress.gov/annals-of-congress/page-headings/18th-congress/president-s-annual-message/45799.

[6] "U.S. Industrialization and Naval Technology before the Spanish-American War." n.d. The Sextant. https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/Recent/Article-View/Article/3425958/us-industrialization-and-naval-technology-before-the-spanish-american-war/.

expansion through the settlement of land related to the parceling out of land that was now under the control of the US' Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Philippines had been used by the Spanish colonial authorities as a land with which to grow agricultural goods which were to be processed on the islands and shipped either back to Spain or the wider global markets. These goods were often procured by the Encomienda system.[7] This system provided a form of political and economic control over the majority of the Philippines through the power which was held by the Spanish crown.[8] Many of the political elites in the country were attached to those who had been able to gain land holding rights. This system of using the native Filipino population to administer the system which drew out these goods without providing for the population of the Philippines beyond basic subsistence led to significant issues within the populace due to abuse at the hand of officials from both local and Spanish authorities. The Spanish government and crown knew of the various abuses which had been growing under the colonial authorities' watch during their administration of the Philippines.[9] These abuses became a growing issue which drove discontent with Spanish colonial rule.

Two years later, in 1895, the British and Venezuelans disputed the border region of Esequibo. The border region was not properly surveyed at the time when the original borders between Venezuela and British Guyana were set, creating an issue related to the actual territorial holdings of each state. As neither side accepted the other's interpretation on the matter, there was

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[7] Anderson, Eric. 1976. "THE ENCOMIENDA in EARLY PHILIPPINE COLONIAL HISTORY." https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-14-2-1976/anderson-encomienda-philippine-history.pdf. : 27

[8] Anderson, 27.

[9] Anderson, 30-31.

a significant diplomatic incident over the disputed territory. The American government intervened in the affairs of South America again, this time under a new interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine promulgated by Secretary of State Richard Olney. Olney argued that the Monroe Doctrine did not just apply to further colonial aspirations of other powers outside of the Western Hemisphere. It also applied to any disputes that arose between states which resided inside of the Western Hemisphere and states which resided outside of the Western Hemisphere. From this interpretation, Olney argued that the United States should intervene as a neutral negotiator in the territorial dispute and force both parties to negotiate.[10] The United States now had a reason to intervene in any dispute or conflict in the Western Hemisphere between a party located in the Western Hemisphere and a European party. This became one of the main arguments that the US used to justify its intervention in Cuba three years later.

To Hell with Spain, 1898

The United States positioned itself as the paternalistic protector of the New World from European powers. At the same time, it also believed it had the right to use force to protect those who were deemed to be under threat by European empires. The same year that the British and Venezuela started feuding over Esequibo, another dispute that had been brewing for decades turned to violence for its conclusion. Cuban elites, freedmen, middle-class workers, farmers and others took up arms against the Spanish authorities for the third time in as many decades to fight for their independence. This uprising was more methodical in nature, able to defeat superior Spanish numbers in a war of attrition upon which colonial authorities resorted to harsh repression to counter. The news of these policies were reaching American newspapers daily, driving public

[10] Young, George B. "Intervention Under the Monroe Doctrine: The Olney Corollary." *Political Science Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1942): 247–80. https://doi.org/10.2307/2143553.

desires to intervene. As the repression grew in Cuba, the US was forced to respond. The armored cruiser USS Maine, a product of the American naval expansion, was deployed to Havana to evacuate Americans and protect their property due to civil unrest in Havana. When the Maine exploded in harbor, those who saw an opportunity to help Cuba pressed society to demand war. The United States was going to fight.

As the revolution in Cuba was occurring, a similar revolution was taking place in the Philippines with similar grievances from the revolutionaries and similar repression tactics by Spanish authorities. However, this conflict was not as widely covered in America and therefore, was not of major interest to the American public. By the end of 1897, the revolution was put down by colonial authorities. Its leaders were forced into exile as a result of negotiations. However, American involvement in Cuba also promoted the cause of the revolutionaries. Before the war broke out, the US Navy's Pacific Squadron was forward deployed to Hong Kong in preparation for hostilities. Within a week of hostilities beginning, the Spanish forces in the Philippines were without a navy as Commodore George Dewey decisively ambushed the Spanish Pacific fleet in Manila Bay. Philippine revolutionaries took advantage of this and began a second uprising against the Spanish colonial authorities. This second uprising was more successful with American cooperation. Within a year, Spanish authorities surrendered and with the success of American forces in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Spain was forced to surrender. The final Treaty of Paris granted Cuban independence on paper, in practice the nation was under American supervision. The treaty also granted America the Spanish West Indies, Guam and the Philippines in exchange for a one-time payment of $20 million to Spain. Despite being affected by the treaty, the Philippine delegation was denied the ability to participate.

Rawlein Soberano, a Filipino historian, found that in the wake of the Spanish surrender, the American interest in occupation or full annexation of the Philippines was multifaceted.[11] For many diplomats, the potential of a Filipino member of their sphere of influence in Asia was too good to pass on. Japan, Russia and the United Kingdom had all declared various levels of interest in controlling the Philippines.[12] Some officials in the Philippines also wished to be protected from non-American foreign influence and potential annexation.[13] Soberano noted that one of the most important reasons to hold the Philippines as a territory of the United States was providing it with the access to the largest markets in the world of China, Japan and India. As this potential use of the Philippine Islands gained attention within the business community, the opinions of it changed from one of pacifism to one of annexation. The opportunity for trade and profit was much too large to pass up for the business sector and the Philippines was positioned in the right spot for it.[14]

The Imperial Question, 1899-1900

An American administration of the Philippines was extremely controversial due to debates over the necessity of American colonies in Asia. Supporters against American presence in the Philippines were vocal in the need for an independent Filipino state. Supporters of American rule over the Philippines argued for the need of American paternalistic protection and racially-influenced education for the indigenous people of the Philippines. Filipino self-

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[11] Soberano, Rawlein. "The American debate on Philippine annexation at the turn of the century, 1898–1900." *Asian Stud J Crit Perspect Asia* 12, no. 1 (1974): 39-51.
[12] Soberano, 40.

[13] Soberano, 41.

[14] Soberano, 42.

determination was a very important consideration as a part of negotiations in the wake of the Treaty of Paris. Some of those who argued for immediate independence argued on the basis of the various powers upon which were granted to the federal government. Others argued that the US was not meant to become an imperial power similar to the European powers who were increasing their empires and often clashing with each other. Some however viewed the situation as an opportunity to further civilize not only the newly gained territories but also America itself. These discussions were held on the notion that the future of the Philippines was to be decided on the basis of American interests and decisions, rather than on the actual desires and wishes of a prospective Philippine government.

An argument which was raised by Senator Willian G. Brantley in a speech made to the House of Representatives on Feb. 22, 1900 was on the Constitution. More specifically, he raised the issues of the powers granted to the American government with regards to forming colonies outside of the territory of the United States. The government did not have the power in the Constitution to form colonies or grant the charter for a colony. As the United States grew to become an imperial power of her own, the desire to further subjugate grew as well. The expansion of the United States created a path in which it starts becoming a tyrannical ruler no different to the British. She had no reason to expand her interests into the Pacific.[15]

Another issue Sen. Brantley raised was the ideological conflict which was raised with starting a colonial affair. The United States was founded as a union of former colonies. It also was dedicated in its ideological foundations to be a force for freedom and civilization around the world. The subordination of another people to exploitation not too dissimilar to what the Americans faced in the run up to 1776 gave some a bad taste in their mouths. Another was the

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[15] Brantley, William G, and Congressional Speech Collection. What is to be done with the Philippines?. [Washington.: Govt. print. off, 1900] Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/01004550/.

nature of the subordination. The Spanish-American War was fought in part as an intervention on behalf of the Cubans who were fighting for their independence. Subjugating another people who were fighting for their independence rendered the war ideologically contentious.[16]

Another issue was the logistics of ruling the Philippines. The Pacific Ocean imparted a Tyranny of Distance upon any endeavor to administer the Philippines. Any resources be dedicated to such an endeavor automatically required resources from other efforts, such as naval expansion, to be dedicated to the colonial administration. This compromise was one which Sen. Brantley brought up as a potential problem for any efforts to establish American rule in the Philippines. No official strategy or policy with regards to the administration of the Philippines had been published by the McKinley administration up to this point. The more pressing matter was the still-raging Philippine insurgency which made any form of governance or stabilization impossible. This violence continued to drag America further towards becoming an imperialist state.[17]

The Philippine insurgency had existed for multiple years before the Americans had been ceded the territory of the Philippines and the Moro people. As American administration came into effect and the possibility of independence became null, the insurgency began going after American forces and local allies of the Americans. The insurgency was ineffective at fighting in open battles against the American forces and started to resort to guerilla tactics. The lack of an overt policy or strategy by the McKinley administration made many of his critics wary of a prolonged war in the Philippines for no official purpose. Sen. Brantley demanded that the McKinley administration make an official statement on the nation's interests and objectives

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[16] Brantley, 7.

[17] Brantley, 8.

going forward with regards to the potential administration of the Philippines. More specifically, he states that the United States must keep the Philippines independent in the same way that the United States had guaranteed the independence of Cuba.

A couple days before Sen. Brantley's speech, Senator Champ Clark made a speech also on the issues related to the potential future of the Philippines under American administration. However, he brings up some issues that Sen. Brantley does not mention in his speech. Sen. Clark argues that the longer the insurgency in the Philippines lasts, the more power the President gains. Congress is losing more and more of its authority as the fighting continues without Congressional approval and on the specific request of President McKinley. If the war continues, it will create a precedent for future presidents to deploy military forces abroad and declare war on foreign nations without the approval of Congress. The other argument Sen. Clark focuses on is the issues of Filipino integration into the US.[18]

To frame this as an introspective moment in American history is a mistaken effort however. These objections were often made upon the concept that the US had to eventually grant American citizenship to all those who lived in the Philippines. At the time, most people in the United States disagreed with the potential admission of the Philippines into the union as a state on racial grounds. The Filipinos must also be "civilized" if the United States is to be successful in the Philippines. The Philippine government was also to be created as a copy of the American government, representing the newly civilized Filipinos. Later on in the speech, Sen. Brantley makes the argument that the only way that American administration of the Philippines could occur is if at some point in the future, the Filipinos were to be granted American citizenship. The Filipino was not be able to assimilate into America as an equal due to their racial and cultural

[18] Clark, Champ, and Congressional Speech Collection. The Philippine problem. [Washington.: Govt. print. off, 1900] Image. https://www.loc.gov/item/01004864/.

characteristics. In the best interests of the Filipinos and Americans, the Philippines needed to remain independent.[19] Sen. Clark made more practical arguments against American rule of the Philippines, stating that the life of one white man was not worth the lives of all the Filipinos combined. The war needed to end in order to prevent the further ending of white lives. As resources are being dedicated to suppressing the Philippine insurgency, those resources are not being dedicated to his constituents. The growing imperialism of the United States will grow the resource sink upon which the future of America will be spent. To prevent this, the United States must withdraw from the Philippines as soon as is feasible.[20]

The problems of injustices in the South with lynchings and unrest in the North between religious groups which were occurring at the time are more pressing issues than the potential of an imperialist venture in the Philippines. To emphasize the resources needed on the venture, Sen. Clark deliberated on the amount of money needed to pacify the Philippines so far and how much more money needed to be dedicated in order to put down the insurgency. The actions which were being performed in the pursuit of imperialism is anathema in Sen. Clark's opinion to the American values of civilization that Sen. Clark was arguing needed to be protected. [21] These values of freedom and liberty were to come under attack if the Philippines was to be admitted to the United States as a state in a similar manner to many of the other states which had joined the union after independence. The Filipinos were an inherent danger to the American, whether colored, Indian or white, in their population of nearly twelve million. The Filipinos work at a

[19] Brantley, 17.

[20] Clark, 1.

[21] Clark, 7.

lower wage. Their employment will drive all of America into poverty as they drove Americans out of labor. The culture of the Filipino turns America into a savage land.[22]

Some in Congress supported the measure of Philippine annexation, however. Representative George White, the last black representative elected in North Carolina until 1992, pushed for annexation of the Philippines on the basis of social equality and the need to protect the values of the United States.[23] Rep. Smith went as far in his speech as to say that to not annex the Philippines was an injustice to the Filipino people. In response to messages for the immediate relinquishing of governance, Smith argues that the Army needs to be expanded to fight the insurgency in the Philippines and be prepared for another crisis if it develops. Rep. Smith had supported the previous bills for expansion of the military and voted for a declaration of war on Spain in the wake of the USS Maine disaster. [24] He also touches upon the active oppression of blacks in America during his speech, pointing out the various hypocrisies of white Southern representatives who are advocating for Philippine independence while actively disenfranchising black voters in their districts and passing laws which restrict the freedom of black people. Openly calling for these laws to be dispensed for their unconstitutionality, he argues that when the blacks are given a fair shot in American society, they will be just as smart and wealthy as whites.[25] He then points to the issues in society which are exacerbated by the lack of action by the government and that he believes America can solve these issues. The push for the

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[22] Clark, 2.

[23] White, George H, and Daniel Murray Pamphlet Collection. Army reorganization: speech of Hon. George H. White, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives, Thursday. [Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1899] Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/91898498/.

[24] White, 3.

[25] White, 7-9.

government to allow all those who are citizens of the United States to exercise their freedoms as Americans is a beneficial part of civilization.[26]

Rep. Smith finishes his speech by pushing for equal rights for all in America and the expansion of America to spread her values and civilization. The United States must defeat all injustice where it may exist and protect those who are oppressed. This push of equality for all in conjunction with a demand for the imperial expansion of the United States is something that is common through American justifications of their foreign policy. In the leadup to the USS Maine disaster, the American public demanded that President McKinley intervene in Cuba's revolution in order to protect the Cubans from Spanish oppression. Rep. Smith is expanding this justification beyond the Cubans and applying it to all those that America deems oppressed.[27]

A Process of Preparation 1900-1934

The period of American rule over the Philippines came with significant changes to the Filipino people. These changes were made specifically to create a Filipino society which was a copy of American society, imprinting various beliefs and notions of a functioning society which were order specifically to prove that the Philippines had become "civilized" enough to justify their independence to their colonial masters. Many racial influences affected the consideration of the potential independent Filipino state, with many in the United States pressing for Philippine independence in fear of Filipino presence in the United States and the potential of competition in the workforce from Filipino labor. The military rule of the Philippines by a military governor ended in 1902 with the passage of the Philippine Organic Act, while the insurgency lasted until

[26] White, 10.

[27] White, 12-15.

1904. However, before the Philippines could receive its own government, President McKinley wanted to understand what the situation was in the Philippines. As the conflict in the Philippines was winding down, he dispatched a five-man commission to the Philippines to investigate the conditions of people and make recommendations as to what a Philippine government looked like. The First Philippine Commission found that a switch to a civilian government as soon as could be arranged was preferable with a bicameral legislature. In practice, this government followed the findings of the First Philippine Commission and established a civilian government but with significant American oversight. The government which was formed originally contained only five Americans who were chosen by the president to lead the Commission as its upper house and held elections in 1907 for the Philippine Assembly. The executive was headed by an American chosen by the President to serve as Governor-General. Later on, the Commission gained Filipino members. The lower and upper house shared its powers but the Commission reserved the powers to make legislation which applied to those who were non-Christian.

In 1913, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill which handed over complete administration of Filipino affairs to a native government, removing the Philippine Commission. The bill sat in the Senate for two years and in the early days of 1916, the Jones Act was passed by the Senate. On August 29, President Wilson signed the bill into law, granting the ability of the Filipinos to elect both houses of their congress. However, the American Governor-General still had the final say as to what specifically they believed was in the best interest of the American and Filipino people. In 1919, the Philippine Assembly officially sent a diplomatic mission led by Manuel Quezon to the United States. Its goal was to argue for the independence of the Philippines. The diplomatic mission traveled to Washington D.C. and was received by the American government and a hearing by Congress on the matter. During the hearings, Quezon was pressed by various members of Congress as to the willingness of the Filipinos to govern themselves in the absence of American leadership and protection. Historian Honesto Villanueva argues that Quezon presented various bills of legislation which affirmed the desire of the FIlipino people to govern themselves and responded in a satisfactory manner to assuage fears of a potential hostile takeover or collapse of order upon independence. [28] However, in 1920, the Democrat candidate James Cox lost the presidential election to the Republican Warren Harding. One of the major issues between the Democratic Party and Republican Party since President McKinley was the Philippine Problem. The Democratic Party had pushed for independence while the Republican Party argued first for annexation and then later for continued governance.[29] As a result of his victory, President Harding issued a new commission to investigate whether or not the Philippines was capable of self-government.

The Wood-Forbes Mission, headed by Cameron Forbes and Leonard Wood, investigated the conditions of the local government and its abilities to operate in the event of independence. Their findings were issued in October 1921 to the disdain of the Filipino government. Their findings found that the people of the Philippines were content and aware of benefits held under American rule and they were also prosperous.[30] The supporters of independence in the Philippines did not understand the current situation of Filipino independence without American protection or supervision. Those who did support independence were typically Christian and

[28] Villanueva, Honesto. n.d. "THE INDEPENDENCE MISSION 1919: INDEPENDENCE LIES AHEAD." https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-09-03-1971/villanueva-independence%20mission%201919%20.pdf.

[29] Villanueva, 306.

[30] United States Special Mission Of Investigation To The Philippine Islands, and Leonard Wood. Report of the Special mission on investigation to the Philippine Islands to the secretary of war. Washington, Govt. print. off, 1921. Pdf. https://www.loc.gov/item/21027544/.

those who did not support independence were either non-Christian or Americans. The civil service of the Philippines is competent but lack of oversight and experience makes it inefficient. The report also mentioned that this was not due to an inherent inferiority of the Filipino but rather a lack of experience. Because of the lack of experience and oversight, the Filipinos were not ready for independence.[31]

The report's recommendations suggested in the event of a deadlock between the Governor-General and Senate, the President should have the final say, the Jones Act should be repealed and that the American government should hold ultimate authority in affairs of the Philippines until they are ready to be granted independence.[32] The findings of the report were convenient for President Harding, as he did not desire to grant further autonomy to the Philippines, let alone grant them independence.[33] His successors, Presidents Coolidge and Hoover, attempted to prevent the independence of the Philippines. In one event, President Hoover vetoed the Hare Act in an attempt to prevent the Senate from allowing the Philippines to begin the transition to an independent state.

Many groups over the next decade pushed for Filipino independence, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL). According to historian James Lawrence, the AFL was first interested in the Philippine Question due to the lack of unions and safe working conditions in the Philippines along with the competition that Filipino labor created.[34] As a response to the lower cost of Filipino goods, the AFL began lobbying for import tariffs on Filipino goods and Filipino

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[31] United States, 45.

[32] United States, 46.

[33] Villanueva, 306.

[34] James R. Lawrence (1966) The American federation of labor and the Philippine independence question, 1920–1935, *Labor History*, 7:1, 63-69.

independence, not out of desire to liberate Filipinos but rather due to competition they represent.[35] By 1929, Filipinos were arriving in the United States on the West Coast for jobs related to agricultural labor. West Coast representatives began lobbying for the AFL to push for Filipino exclusion from the United States. This measure is not completely popular with the entirety of the AFL but independence is still supported. If independence were to be granted, lobbying began for Filipino exclusion and the shortest possible time as possible until the Philippines became independent to prevent as many Filipinos from coming to the US as possible.[36] However, by 1932, the AFL had recognized that the Philippines was going to become independent eventually. As this occurred, the AFL dropped all lobbying efforts on the Philippine Question.[37] The competition between laborers of the Philippines and America was based on a fear of a loss of work and a loss of cultural homogeneity. Despite the fears not being founded, they were able to push the largest association of unions in the United States to pressure the government to sever all ties with the Philippines as soon as it could. Despite the pushes of many in the Philippines and United States to show the Filipino people as capable of government, prejudice and fear surrounding them existed well past the end of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1946.

Conclusions and Findings

The imperial project of the United States in the Philippines was one of racial supremacy, forcing those who they subjugated to achieve an arbitrary standard upon which they granted the

[35]Lawrence, 64.

[36] Lawrence, 67-68.

[37] Lawrence, 69.

status of civilized and of economic competition. The Philippines is still dealing with these effects 79 years later. Despite the best attempts by many groups in the United States, Filipino Americans now comprise a significant minority within the workforce of the US. They are also considered one of the wealthiest groups in the United States by household income per year.

The expansion of powers that was given to President McKinley during this period of time, granted due to the odd nature of the insurgency in the Philippines, became very controversial even after his assassination and the swearing in of President Theodore Roosevelt. Under Theodore Roosevelt's administration, he used the military to acquire further territory for the growing American empire, through invasion of Colombia in order to get land for the building of the Panama Canal. Due to the influence that the US held over Cuba, they invaded the country again in 1906 in another operation to stabilize the country. This operation, similar to the deployments in the Philippines during their insurgency, was not signed off by Congress and instead made upon the sole order of the President. This form of military intervention became a major part of American foreign policy up to today. These powers are significant to the modern form of American foreign policy. Many military operations that the United States embarked upon in the following century were based upon this power that President McKinley first exercised in suppressing the independence movements in the Philippines. On multiple occasions, the United States used military forces to protect and/or enforce American interests. This policy was invoked during periods of civil conflict in Mexico, when American forces fought bandits or Mexican forces by violating Mexican territorial borders and deploy in Mexican territory. In Haiti and the Dominican Republic, American forces were used to stabilize the civil situation in pursuit of American interests. During the Cold War, this policy was expanded, most well known in Vietnam prior to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution when military advisors and covert forces were sent without Congressional approval to South Vietnam, Thailand and other countries in the region who were considered anti-Communist.

The effects of American colonization in the Philippines can still be seen in the various cultural and political institutions which are prevalent within Filipino society. English proficiency, the justice system and significant connections with Filipinos in America, often with permanent residence or citizenship and employment. With these successes, Filipinos still face significant problems both in the United States and the Philippines. Political instability and violence threaten Filipino communities inside the Philippines and the United States, especially those who are impoverished and/or undocumented. Increasing hostility towards both foreigners and those who aren't white within also endanger Filipinos who are living and working in the United States. Increased deportations in recent months also threaten these communities and endanger those who are most vulnerable. Further crackdowns on the undocumented are a significant issue in the immediate future within communities of those who either reside in the United States or are Americans of Filipino heritage.

The Church of England's Effect on American Colonies

By Joseph Cruz

North America has a long history of being a continent of immigrants, starting with the establishment of the first English Colony, Jamestown in colonial Virginia, in 1607. Beginning with the founding of this colony and continuing in the ensuing centuries, there was a steady flow of immigrants into the North American region. The Thirteen Colonies witnessed and experienced the rapid expansion of different religions, cultures, and practices throughout the continent. Amongst all the religious ideologies present in America at this time, England's official religion, the Church of England, was one of them. England gave preferential treatment to the Church of England over other religions present in the colonies, despite the Church of England's establishment merely 73 years before the founding of Jamestown. The Church of England's influence over the English colonies in America is evident in the impact it had on legal and social doctrines that were present in both the colonies of Virginia and Maryland. Previous scholarly works related to this topic primarily focus on the Anglican (the modern term for Church of England) influence over Anglican-dominated colonies when examining their direct involvement with the American War of Independence.[1] However, the scope of this paper will focus on the Anglican influence present during the existence of the colonies of both Maryland and Virginia. Virginia was the first colony to have a presence of Anglicanism in North America, where Anglicanism quickly became the dominant religion. While the Colony of Maryland also had a strong Anglican presence, Maryland would differ from the Colony of Virginia as it was a much

[1] Nelson Rightmyer, "The Anglican Church in Maryland: Factors Contributory to the American Revolution." *Church History* 19, no. 3 (1950): 187–98. https://doi.org/10.2307/3161293.

more religiously tolerant colony.[2] Nonetheless, this paper will focus on the following themes during the American colonial period: Anglican control over legal acts established in the colonies, Anglican influence over social norms, gatherings, and interactions, and how Anglican influence was not absolute even in the colonies with a strong presence. As such, this paper will argue that the Church of England had established its authority in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia through promoting laws that were in favor of the Anglican faith and dictating social matters.

Background on the Founding of Maryland and Virginia

The Church of England was established in England in 1534 under questionable circumstances. King Henry VIII established the Church of England after his relationship with the Pope became strenuous, specifically after the Pope refused to annul the marriage between King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon.[3] King Henry VIII argued that his marriage with Catherine of Aragon was invalid and needed to be annulled. To support the annulment King Henry VIII would claim religious reasons behind the annulment citing Leviticus 20:21 as it stated "... if a man shall take his brother's wife … they shall be childless."[4] This was a facade, as the real reason that King Henry VIII wanted a divorce was so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. To further justify his reason for establishing the Church of England to the people of England, King Henry VIII argued that he must remarry to produce a male heir for the Realm of England and,

[2] "Maryland Toleration Act; September 21, 1649," American Battlefield Trust, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/maryland-toleration-act-september-21-1649.
[3] D. G. Newcombe, "The Break with Rome," in Henry VIII and the English Reformation (London: Routledge, 1995), 50–65, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203130407-6.

[4] "Leviticus 20:21 The Message (MSG)," YouVersion | The Bible App | Bible.com, March 2, 2025, https://www.bible.com/bible/compare/LEV.20.21.

more notably, King Henry VIII viewed the Pope's rule over the churches in England as an unwelcomed tyrannical takeover.[5] The irony of King Henry VIII's statement about the Pope having a tyrannical rule over churches in England cannot be overstated, as King Henry VIII would evolve into a tyrant himself, acting in cruel ways to those in his realm. During the course of his life, King Henry VIII would suffer numerous head injuries, however, the most severe of these head injuries would occur on the 24th of January 1536.[6] This head injury would have effects on King Henry VIII that lasted until his death, such as developing a quick temper when provoked, constant anxiety, and severe amnesia that would lead King Henry VIII to give contradictory statements as a result of this absentmindedness.[7] As a result of these effects on King Henry VIII, he would experience a dramatic personality change that caused him to be the tyrannical ruler he is accredited as. Such actions during his reign that have cemented his legacy of tyrannical ruler was King Henry VIII beheading two of his former wives Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard as well as executing one of his most faithful servants Thomas Cromwell.[8] Nonetheless, King Henry VIII's tyrannical reign over England eventually came to an end with his death in 1547.[9]

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[5] Newcombe, "Break with Rome," 50-65.

[6] MQ Ikram, FH Sajjad, and A Salardini, "The Head That Wears the Crown: Henry VIII and Traumatic Brain Injury," Journal of Clinical Neuroscience 28 (June 2016): 16–19, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocn.2015.10.035.

[7] Ikram, Sajjad, and Salardini, "The Head That Wears the Crown," 16-19.

[8] "'To Be Abhorred Amongst All Good Subjects': Act of Attainder of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex," Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, July 27, 2015, https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/article/be-abhorred-amongst-all-good-subjects-act-attainder-thomas-cromwell-earl-essex.

[9] Ikram, Sajjad, and Salardini, "The Head That Wears the Crown," 16-19.

Beginning with the reign of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's daughter Queen Elizabeth I, England supported the colonization of the New World. During Queen Elizabeth I's reign over England she would attempt to create a colony on Roanoke Island.[10] However, this colonial venture would be pushed to the wayside during the Anglo-Spanish War, resulting in a major colonial failure.[11] The governor of the colony, John White would attempt to voyage back to his colony, however, he was never able to find his colony. This disastrous attempt at forming a North American colony would result in Queen Elizabeth not pursuing any more colonial efforts during her reign. Despite this failure, Queen Elizabeth's colonial effort allowed for a groundwork that enabled future English colonies. Under the reign of King James IV and I, the First Charter of Virginia in 1606 granted the Virginia Company of London the ability to settle the New World, allowing for Anglicanism to enter America.[12] This charter would allow for the first colony of Jamestown to be established in 1607.[13] In parallel with the establishment of Jamestown, the first Anglican control in Virginia was established through the parishes present in Virginia following 1607.[14] With the establishment of Jamestown in 1607, this marked the beginning of the influence of the Church of England in America.

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[10] "Queen Elizabeth," National Parks Service, March 22, 2005, https://www.nps.gov/people/queenelizabeth.htm.

[11] "Queen Elizabeth," National Parks Service

[12] The English Crown, "First Charter of Virginia (1606)," Encyclopedia Virginia, December 7, 2020, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/primary-documents/first-charter-of-virginia-1606/.

[13] "A Short History of Jamestown," National Parks Service, https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/a-short-history-of-jamestown.htm.

[14] "History of the Church in America," United Episcopal Church of North America, July 4, 2024, https://unitedepiscopal.org/history/history-of-the-church-in-america/.

The Church of England's presence in America was not only limited to Jamestown, nor the wider Virginia Colony, as it was quickly present along the Eastern coast of America. Most notably, Anglicanism developed in the Colony of Maryland. In a similar fashion to Jamestown, Maryland was also established through a Royal Charter. In 1632, the Charter of Maryland was granted by King Charles I. Maryland acted as a home to numerous Catholic people; however, despite acting as a refuge, Maryland held an assembly in 1638 concerning the governing of Maryland that had ended in the then-governor, Cecilius Calvert, being forced to govern Maryland in accordance to English laws.[15] However, Maryland as a whole differed from Jamestown as the first permanent Anglican ministry at St. George's was not established until 1650, nearly 4 decades after the first Anglican ministry was established in Jamestown.[16]

Overview and Exploration of Additional Scholarly Literature

Extant historical scholarship was focused heavily on the relationship between the Anglican Church and its role during the American Revolution. Historian Nelson Rightmyer, for example, argues that the Church of England in Maryland was deeply involved with both the political and social aspects of the colony, exploring how this intertwining became a reason for tension in the colony as the revolutionary sentiment in the colony began to grow.[17] This idea is exemplified in how the Church of England received and maintained a privileged status from the

[15] "Maryland's History," Secretary of State Kids Pages, https://sos.maryland.gov/mdkids/Pages/Maryland's-History.aspx.

[16] Kingsley Smith, "History of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland ," The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland , 2016, https://episcopalmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/04/History-of-the-Episcopal-Diocese-of-Maryland-2016.pdf.

[17] Rightmyer, "The Anglican Church in Maryland," 187–98.

English overlords in colonial Maryland law of the time. This privilege was seen in how, under the Maryland Charter and the Church of England, the Proprietor, Governor, and Protestant clergy members had the law on their side for legal matters in the colony; this legal privilege acted as a driving force of friction which caused the American War of Independence.[18] Additionally, this legal privilege granted to the Church of England was significant as the church acted almost as its own political entity in Maryland, comparable to that of the government. Overall, Rightmyer emphasizes how the American Revolution was not only an economic and political affair in America, it was also deeply tied with religion during the time in colonial Maryland.

Exploring additional secondary literature, the temporary religious toleration in the Colony of Maryland is illustrated in *"The Miracle of This Age": Maryland's Experiment in Religious Toleration, 1649-1689* by David Jordan.[19] In this work, Jordan presents Maryland as an extremely unique case in colonial America, where through the mixing of political and religious diversity, the Toleration Act of 1649 was allowed to form. However, despite being able to form, the act was far from absolute or stable in the colony as it began to be challenged from within. As revealed in this article, religious toleration functions more as a compromise than acting as a deep-rooted want for religious toleration. Jordan explains that some people described Maryland as a religiously "peaceable kingdom"; this was merely an exaggeration. Overall, this work was extremely impactful for answering the research question posed in this paper. Through Jordan's in-depth exploration of religious toleration in Maryland, he revealed how Anglican influence persisted in the religious toleration period. Anglican influence was in part able to

[18] Rightmyer, "The Anglican Church in Maryland," 187–98.

[19] David W. Jordan, "'The Miracle of This Age': Maryland's Experiment in Religious Toleration, 1649-1689." *The Historian 47*, no. 3 (1985): 338–59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24445726.

persist during this toleration period because of Calvert aiding Anglican clergy and instructing officials to welcome the clergymen; despite this, some ministers refused to be as welcoming to Anglican clergy. Furthermore, Maryland did nothing to restrict Anglicans from uniting to support their own churches and ministers, which further allowed for Anglican influence to develop. Additionally, this article showcases the rigidness of society pertaining to religion as while there was toleration in the 1600s, this came after years of struggle just for the toleration to be wiped away a few decades later.

Anglican Influence in Colonial Virginia

When considering the wider thirteen colonies during the colonial period of America, none provide a better example of the Anglican influence of colonial America as does the Colony of Virginia. This is primarily reflected in the legal doctrine within Virginia at this time, especially when investigating the laws enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia in 1619.[20] In the laws enacted by this assembly, there are two prime examples of the influence that the Church of England held over the early colonial period in Virginia. The first example concerns legal doctrine that allowed for the Church of England's influence to continue into criminal matters, also including offenders who must pay fines directly to the Church of England. The second example of the Church of England's influence in colonial Virginia was the expansion of the faith itself through laws mandating religious worship. However, it is important to note that this mandation of religious worship mirrors the situation over religious attendance in England. In 1559 the Act of Uniformity passed, which amongst other things required religious attendance for

[20] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia," Online Library of Liberty, https://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/1619-laws-enacted-by-the-first-general-assembly-of-virginia.

the Church of England.[21] Despite this law mirroring England at the time, it still demonstrates how the Church of England was expanding their control over colonial Virginia.

Within the laws enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia, Anglican influence can be seen throughout both the verbiage that is used in the laws, such as "ungodly disorders," and substance of the laws themselves. This Anglican influence can be seen in how the Assembly decided to deal with the handling of moral crimes in the colony, such as drunkenness. When the regular person in the colony was found committing drunkenness, for the first time they had to privately reprove to the church minister, however the second time they were required to reprove to the minister publicly. This distinction between private and public reproving to the minister is important as it demonstrates how Anglicanism held authority over colonists' everyday lives. By requiring an individual to reprove in private they are only having an interaction between themselves and the church, however, by requiring then requiring an individual to reprove in public it extends this Anglican influence to everyone in the surrounding area. Additionally, the Assembly decided to deal with officers committing drunkenness in a similar fashion, as after the first offense they had to receive a reprimand from the Governor, but for the second offense they had to seek out a Church minister.[22] Upon meeting with the Church minister, they had to publicly and openly inside the Church receive a reproof from the Church minister. Again, this requirement of public reproving demonstrates how the Church of England was becoming even more intertwined with everyday affairs of the public. Overall, these laws enacted by the

[21] "Act of Uniformity 1559," UK Parliament, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/religion/collections/common-prayer/act-of-uniformity-1559/.

[22] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

assembly illustrate how the Anglican Church held influence over the Colony of Virginia as it was allowed to intertwine legal matters and Church affairs, affecting colonists' daily lives.

This intertwining can also be seen in the following laws that were also enacted by the Assembly concerning such crimes as "excess of apparel", which required the Church's input on whether or not someone is dressed appropriately based on "all [their] public contributions, if he be unmarried according to his own apparel, if he be married, according to his own and his wife's or either of their apparel".[23] An important note to make about dressing in excess of apparel is it was a sumptuary law, so that people would dress according to their social status. Nonetheless, despite this being a sumptuary law, by requiring the Church's input it continues to demonstrate how involved the Church was in everyday affairs. Additionally, further intertwining between legal practices and the Anglican Church is seen with how Church wardens and ministers were allowed to seek out people who commit "ungodly crimes"; where with "good admonitions and mild reproof", those found committing ungodly crimes would not be in any trouble.[24] However, these crimes were sexual offences that were generally dealt with by the church courts in England. Furthermore, offenders found committing more severe crimes would still be punished appropriately. This once again shows Anglican influence in colonial Virginia as authority figures from the Church were able to seek out and enact punishment for these offenses. While the punishment outlined for these crimes enacted by the Assembly are not imprisonment or fines, this does not mean that the Anglican Church did not benefit from people who committed offenses.

[23] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

[24] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

Amongst all the laws enacted by the Assembly was one concerning the punishment for swearing. In this law, anyone found guilty of committing an offense of swearing had three chances before they had to pay the Church five shillings for each offense. According to the United Kingdom's national archive, one sterling was equivalent to one day's worth of pay for a skilled laborer, so five sterlings was just under the weekly wage of a skilled laborer in the earlier 1600s.[25] While the punishment for swearing was costly, the punishment for servants who failed to pay the five shillings was even worse as they "shall be subject to whipping".[26]

Alone, the laws enacted by the Assembly demonstrate the influence that the Church of England held over colonial Virginia since these laws were crafted in a way that upheld the privileged position that the Anglican Church had through giving the Church some power over legal affairs. Once this Assembly enacted its laws, it allowed the Church to almost act as its own governing body, along with the government, as it was able to give reproofs for officers who committed crimes, the ability to seek out *ungodly* people, decide whether or not individuals were guilty of an offense, and receive money as punishment for people who committed crimes. While control in legal affairs shows influence over Virginia, the generating of an income from those in Virginia shows the control the Church of England had. By just examining these few laws that were enacted by the Assembly, it becomes clear the amount of power that the Church of England's privileged position held in Virginia. However, Anglican influence was not only in their near absolute control over legal doctrine, but also in the religious laws imposed on everyone in the Colony of Virginia.

[25] Currency Converter: 1270–2017, February 13, 2024, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/.

[26] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

Attending Sabbath was not a choice in the Colony of Virginia, rather a requirement, where defying attending Sabbath resulted in either financial fines or physical punishment. Under the establishment of the First General Assembly of Virginia in 1619, it states that:

> All persons whatsoever, upon Sabbath days, shall frequent divine service and sermons both forenoon and afternoon and all such as bear arms shall bring their pieces, swords, powder and shot. And every one that shall transgress this law shall forfeit three shillings a time to the use of the church, all lawful and necessary impediments excepted. But if a servant in this case shall willfully neglect his master's command he shall suffer bodily punishment.[27]

While the other laws previously examined showcase the Church of England's influence over the Colony of Virginia, the establishment of this single law shows how the Anglican church was using its influence to further push and expand the Anglican faith in the Americas. As from this law, no matter if someone attends Sabbath weekly or they do not, the Church of England benefits from this. If someone goes to church every Sabbath it is expanding the Anglican faith through worship, yet if someone misses, the Church will gain a financial *reward* from this as for each person missed the Church will receive three days of skilled labor pay.[28] This law does mirror a law enacted in England under the Act of Uniformity, where missing Church would result in financial punishment.[29] The enacting of this law in Virginia is significant, as by this law being established in England it was supported by a political entity, England the overlords over Virginia. Demonstrating how Anglican influence was rampant in everyday life in Virginia.

Understanding the Church of England's influence in the early history of the Colony of Virginia is important for both understanding how this influence evolved as the colony grew and for comparison within the Colony of Virginia for the next 150 years, till the American War of

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[27] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

[28] "1619: Laws Enacted by the First General Assembly of Virginia"

[29] "Act of Uniformity 1559," UK Parliament

Independence in 1776. The initial influence that the Church of England held over the Colony of Virginia was very strong, as demonstrated in the plentiful laws that gave control to the Church of England over legal matters rather than just the governing state. In addition to this control, within the laws of Virginia, the people of Virginia were legally required to worship and attend church on Sabbath or face fines. Through review of political and social matters, the answer to whether this influence remained or whether the support for Anglicanism died out within the Colony of Virginia can be seen.

Shifting to nearly 130 years after the First General Assembly of Virginia in the 1750s, the Church of England still maintained and continued to hold a dominance over the Colony of Virginia. However, the influence over the Colony of Virginia was not nearly as absolute as it originally appeared to be 130 years prior. The dominance that the Church of England maintained is reflected in the continuation of mandated Anglican worship in 1750s Virginia. The Church of England began to lose influence in the Colony of Virginia for two reasons, money and local power. The Church of England's influence could only be centrally maintained out of England for so long, as local Anglican vestries ruled by laymen began to gain power and weaken the Church of England's influence in Virginia.[30] Additionally, the Church of England's influence began to slowly fade in Virginia as there was a shortage of clergy from the low salaries they received.[31] In general, the length of time from the founding of the Colony of Virginia till near the American Revolution saw a strong Anglican influence, but as the colony grew older, Anglican influence grew weaker.

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[30] Christine Leigh Heyrman,"Church and State in British North America." National Humanities Center, March 5, 2025. https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/chustate.htm

[31] Heyrman,"Church and State in British North America."

Anglican Influence in Colonial Maryland

Throughout colonial American history, nowhere has the Church of England played a more impactful role in shaping the religious and social landscape than in Virginia. However, another colony in America at this time would also experience Anglican influence over the social and legal policies present at this time; this was the Colony of Maryland. Anglican influence at times became intermittent in the Colony of Maryland, as the Catholic population had a very prominent presence, being in control of the government of Maryland during the early years of the colony.[32] Additionally, the original reason behind the establishment of Maryland was as a refuge for Catholics, which had allowed for Catholics to hold control of the government in Maryland. Furthermore, Maryland would establish their Toleration Act in 1649, despite the Church of England not being pleased with Maryland's toleration, Anglican influence was presented in the Toleration Act. Regardless of the Church of England's displeasement with Maryland's Toleration Acts, following the Protestant Revolution, also known as the Coode's Rebellion in 1689 in Maryland, various changes took place reinforcing Anglican influence and control of the Colony of Maryland. Such changes that had been enacted following the Coode's Rebellion included the transformation of the colony into a royal colony under the direct control of an Assembly that was made up of Protestants, the Tolerations Acts in Maryland coming to an end, and this act leading to the eventual creation of the Act of Establishment. [33]

[32] William Warren Sweet, "Transplanting Anglicanism," in *Religion In Colonial America* (New York City, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), 29–35.

[33] Sweet, "Transplanting Anglicanism," 29–35.

In the original thirteen colonies, the first colony to enact any kind of religious toleration act was the Colony of Maryland in 1649. Despite acting as one of the first religious toleration acts, the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 only provided religious protection for differing Christian denominations outside of just the Church of England. While the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 only provided protection for differing Christian denominations, for the time period it was a very wide level of toleration. However, stemming from the extreme rigidness of this act, it had very harsh punishments for anyone who did not believe in God, denied Jesus Christ, the holy trinity, or holy ghost as they were "punished with death and confiscation or forfeiture of all his or her lands and goods to the Lord Proprietary and his heires".[34] Additionally, those who used disrespectful words towards religious figures had to pay fines; if they could not pay these fines they were "publiquely and severely whipt and imprisoned".[35] Furthermore, this act punished anyone who participated in disorderly recreation on Sunday, such as working, swearing, or drunkenness by fines of up to 10 sterlings. However, those who could not pay these fines were imprisoned until they had knelt before a court and pleaded their case; additionally, for their third infraction they were publicly whipped. This act had held an authority over merchants in the region and generally anyone who participated in commerce in Maryland.

Acknowledging the extent and harshness of the Maryland Toleration Act is important as it describes how violent the act was towards non-Christians, showed the lack of a strong Anglican influence and how Maryland was becoming a colony that supported Catholics as equals to Anglicans. While Cecilius Calvert did not establish the Colony of Maryland, unlike any other

[34] "Maryland Toleration Act; September 21, 1649," American Battlefield Trust

[35] "Maryland Toleration Act; September 21, 1649," American Battlefield Trust

English colonies in America, he had placed enormous efforts towards redirecting the course of contemporary civil-religious practices to a trajectory where differing religions could be accepted.[36] Despite what the analysis above revealed about the Toleration Act, it had promoted unprecedented levels of cooperation between various faiths in Maryland, most notably interactions between the Catholic and Protestant populations.[37] From this general acceptance of non-Anglican faiths, it allowed for a dramatic rise of Catholic leadership in various government positions, working side-by-side with Protestant workers. Also from this rise of increased support for Catholics, it allowed for more Catholic churches to develop, resulting in 9 churches by 1690 with 4 to 5 Jesuits stationed at each church.[38] Overall, the religious Toleration Act in Maryland had created a unique environment where Anglican influence was not as present as it was in areas such as the Colony of Virginia. This clearly demonstrates how Anglican influence was not widespread in every British-American colony, as just allowing Catholics to freely practice was adamantly against what the Church of England wanted.

While this unity in Maryland was prospering and demonstrates a step away from Anglican influence, the Maryland Toleration Act was not without Anglican influence. Although the Act primarily allowed for the rise of Catholicism in the Colony of Maryland, it laid the groundwork for which allowed for the prosperity of Anglicanism and Protestant faith. This prosperity would take time to fully develop, however, later on in the colony the extent of this prosperity is revealed with such events as the Coode's Rebellion. This Anglican influenced

[36] Jordan, " Maryland's Experiment in Religious Toleration, 1649-1689."

[37] Jordan, " Maryland's Experiment in Religious Toleration, 1649-1689."

[38] Jordan, " Maryland's Experiment in Religious Toleration, 1649-1689."

framework is best expressed through how the Toleration Act continued to prevent any non-Christian faith from free worship and practice in the colony, as well as overlapping beliefs from Anglicanism and other denominations, such as no work on Sunday, demonstrating how though faint, the Church of England still held influence over social and legal policies in the Colony of Maryland.

While the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 demonstrated how Anglican influence was very limited during the early years of the Colony of Maryland, the Church of England had quickly reinstated its position of authority over the colony. Only a short 40 years after the establishment of Maryland's Toleration Act, Maryland had endured the Coode's Rebellion. While the Colony of Maryland in the decades leading up to the Coode's Rebellion may have seemed as a place full of unity and peace between different Christian faiths, this was not entirely the case as there was a growing tension between Protestants and primarily Catholic people. This tension, paired with the recent overthrowing of the Catholic King James II in England at the time, acted as one of the various reasons that led up to the Coode's Rebellion. Besides the overthrowing of a Monarch and tensions across religious groups, the recent economic downturn left many Maryland planters impoverished and without social opportunities; all of these reasons listed acted as a mini-catalyst for the ensuing revolution.[39]

A primary reason for the Coode's Rebellion was the rising religious tensions in the Colony of Maryland, which were driven from the anti-Catholic sentiment that became increasingly popular amongst Protestants. This sentiment began to rise as Protestants felt that the policies that were in place under Lords Baltimore were geared to favor solely those of the

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[39] Michael Graham, "Posish Plots: Protestant Fears in Early Colonial Maryland, 1676-1689." *The Catholic Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (1993): 197–216. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25023996.

Catholic faith, causing Protestants to view Catholics as a threat to them politically and religiously. This idea that Protestants were at threat religiously became more prevalent as some had interpreted the meaning of the Act of Religion of 1649 as a way to “to turne the Province to the Pope's devotion”.[40] Additionally, notions that Protestants were at threat politically became increasingly common amongst Protestant immigrants. Many of these immigrants had attempted to receive a position of power in the colony such as an office-holding position and other significant political positions, however, many failed at doing so for lacking the proper labels of wealth and having the necessary social prominence for these positions.[41] These political fears of Protestants being at threat only increased anti-Catholic sentiment in Maryland as Charles Calvert had policies which often resulted in his family members and fellow Catholics being placed in these government positions.

The growing disdain for Charles Calvert rule over the Colony of Maryland did not stop at government positions being held for a small select group of people, as social mobility was further limited beyond government positions and Maryland’s farmers were facing recent economic downturns. The main reason behind this social mobility stemmed from the large landholding disparity between two distinct groups. Prior to the 1660s, there was a large divide in landholdings produced by Lord Calvert as while he was rather generous when it came to granting land to the incoming gentry immigrants, his policies were much more restrictive for lower classes individuals.[42] This restrictiveness was significant as the average gentry estate had a

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[40] Graham, “Protestant Fears in Early Colonial Maryland.”

[41] Graham, “Protestant Fears in Early Colonial Maryland.”

[42] William A. Reavis, “The Maryland Gentry and Social Mobility, 1637-1676.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1957): 418–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/1915653.

valuation of five times the worth of a commoner estate at only 3,695 pounds of tobacco.[43] From this disparity in the value of these estates those from lower classes were kept it a state of semitenancy definition for at least a generation. Heading into the 1660s we would see this once rigid and restricted land ownership begin to deteriorate as there was a large inflation in the value of land. This booming in the value of land was very beneficial to the Maryland commoner as it had allowed for the common person to sell their land at a higher evaluation and most significantly allowed for commoners to buy vast swathes of land on credit with very little capital to their names; this had resulted in numerous landholdings to be purchased by commoners.[44]

The early years of the Colony of Maryland farming tobacco seemed very profitable, however, this did not remain the case in Maryland, nor did it in Virginia. Numerous Maryland farmers were facing an economic downturn because the main staple crop of Maryland, tobacco, began to fall in price in the time following Maryland's founding. The fall in the price of tobacco boiled down to one reason, the over-farming of tobacco crops throughout the colonies. Overproduction of tobacco was especially prevalent in the Colony of Maryland because of how profitable the crop was, profitability of tobacco gave Maryland the name of "a fine poor man's country".[45] However, since good things never last, by the 1680s the prices of tobacco had dropped significantly, becoming worth half of the value it was just twenty years prior and a third of its value thirty years prior. Tobacco went from just under two pence a pound by the 1660s, to

[43] Reavis, "The Maryland Gentry and Social Mobility," 418–28.

[44] Reavis, "The Maryland Gentry and Social Mobility," 418–28.

[45] Robert J. Brugger, "From Province to Colony (1634-1689)," essay, in *Maryland: A Middle Temperament: 1634-1980* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 28.

being worth barely a pence a pound in the 1680s - 1690s. [46] This timing is significant as the drastic decrease in tobacco prices resulted in the Coode's Rebellion in the same decade.[47] Additionally, besides overproduction in Maryland, in the summer of 1667 a catastrophic hurricane swept the region, leaving nearly every tobacco field that the hurricane had passed through leveled and unusable for tobacco farming.[48] In general, there was a heavy longing for change in the Colony of Maryland from a poor string of events that left many people in Maryland impoverished or stuck in their social standings.

The last major reason for the Coode's Rebellion was the recent overthrowing of the Catholic Monarchs in England as a result of the Glorious Revolution. Unlike other English colonies at the time that quickly accepted the change in religious leadership in England, the Colony of Maryland remained hesitant to the new Anglican Monarchs now in control of the throne. This hesitation stemmed from Maryland acting as a haven for Catholics facing religious persecution elsewhere in the English-speaking world, as well as much of the government in the Colony of Maryland being run by Catholic individuals, including the Lords Baltimore. However, this hesitation had ultimately acted as fuel to the flame for anti-Catholic sentiment as it allowed for a host of rumors pertaining to this hesitation to rise, which acted to spread fear amongst the Protestant population in the Colony of Maryland.[49] While the other two reasons of discontent for the current government of the Colony of Maryland, social mobility and economic downturn, may

[46] Jordan Goodman, Tobacco in History and Culture: An Encyclopedia (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005).
[47] Brugger, "From Province to Colony (1634-1689)," 30.

[48] Brugger, "From Province to Colony (1634-1689)," 35.

[49] Denis M. Moran, "Anti-Catholicism in Early Maryland Politics: The Protestant Revolution." *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 61, no. 4 (1950): 213–36. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44210137.

have not acted as enough of a justification for the Coode's Rebellion, these paired with hesitation to proclaim the new King and Queen of England allowed for the right conditions to have the Protestant population in Maryland overthrow the Catholic-controlled government.

The background information behind why the Coode's Rebellion took place is important as it demonstrates how despite there being a noticeable lack of Anglican influence in the colony, this would not last as the Coode's Rebellion soon brought impactful and lasting effects on various aspects of the Colony of Maryland. Such impacts from the Coode's Rebellion included the complete reversal of Maryland's Toleration Acts that had allowed for the coexisting and allowance of notably Catholic followers in all levels of Maryland's society. The virtual extermination of anybody that was Catholic in the Colony of Maryland stemmed from the reversal of toleration acts, but also the establishment of Maryland as a royal colony under the English crown. This new establishment brought the once very religiously-free colony under the Church of England's influence that had a drastic impact on the social and legal policies following the conclusion of the Coode's Rebellion in 1692. These impacts are important to analyze in-depth as they express the amount of influence the Church of England gained over the Colony of Maryland.

The most important change to come out of the Coode's Rebellion was the overthrowing of the Catholic government in the Colony of Maryland. Along with this overthrowing of a Catholic government, it had disbanded a major presence of religious toleration on the North American East Coast, however, there was still religious toleration in other colonies such as Delaware, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania. This overthrow caused a dramatic shift in Maryland's government and general legal handlings to a more Protestant view. Additionally, it had allowed for the reestablishment of a strong Anglican presence in Maryland, where they once again held a privileged position over social and legal policies in the Colony of Maryland. This Anglican influence had come out of the nearly three decades of direct English control over the colony, specifically in new religious laws and social methods to expel Catholics. Directly after the events of the Coode's Rebellion, the newly appointed governor of the colony removed all Catholics from powerful positions in the colony through requiring any office holding person to take a Protestant oath.[50] However, Catholics were not expelled in Maryland through social methods only, but also through strict and rigid religious laws aimed to destroy the Catholic presence in Maryland. Thirteen years after the rebellion in 1702, the Church of England was established as the official church of Maryland. While this marked the beginnings of Anglican influence, sixteen years later in 1718, Maryland completely barred Catholics from being able to vote, showing the full capability of the Anglican church.[51] The barring of Catholics from participation in government activities would be further legitimized by similar events unfolding in England, as after the Parliament Act 1678 Catholics were effectively barred from government positions. [52] This legitimization of the Anglican Church by England is important as it gave the Church the ability to continue exerting their influence over Maryland with minimal push back. So in just over one generation, the Colony of Maryland transformed from a religiously-tolerant and prosperous place for Catholics to one where Catholics were being pushed out of the

[50] Paul Finkelman, "Maryland Toleration Act (1649)," essay, in *Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties* (London: Routledge, 2006), 975–76.

[51] Finkelman, "Maryland Toleration Act (1649)," 975–76.

[52] "Parliament Act 1678: Section VI," Legislation.gov.uk, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Cha2/30/2/section/VI/enacted.

Anglican-influenced government. Catholics were socially exiled and functionally removed from social matters, notability through the ban on free worship.

Conclusion

When examining Anglican influence in both the colonies of Maryland and Virginia, it becomes clear that there was a strong Anglican presence in both colonies. This presence had originally stemmed from the push the Church of England received from England, in the founding and lifespan of the colonies. Additionally, the Church of England's actions would be further legitimized by similar events occurring in England in parallel with Anglican influence growing in the colonies. The strong Anglican presence allowed for the Church of England to dictate and control much of the social and legal doctrines in both the colonies of Maryland and Virginia.

The Colony of Virginia was the first colony in America to have any presence of the Church of England. From this presence, the Church of England's influence is best seen in the rigidness of the acts enacted at this time; when these laws were not followed, it resulted in severe punishment that showed how willing the Anglican Church was to exercise their privileged position in the colony. Such privileges included receiving money generated from the fines from breaking laws concerning sabbath, excess of apparel, swearing, or otherwise acting in an ungodly manner. This rigidness and severeness of the acts in Virginia were intentional as it had allowed for the further extending of the power and influence of the Church of England.

While in the Colony of Maryland, the Church of England's influence was not as initially as strong as it was in Virginia, Maryland also fell under a strong Anglican control like Virginia had. This strong Anglican influence was best reflected in the aftermath of the Coode's Rebellion where the Anglican Church had gained an almost absolute control over the colony. Prior to the

Coode's Rebellion, Maryland was largely ruled by Catholics in most levels of government. However, the tension created from this and the Glorious Revolution in England lead to the Coode's Rebellion, overthrowing the Catholic-controlled government, and bringing the Colony of Maryland under the direct control of England for nearly three decades. During this time, the Anglican Church established its influence and control by making the Church of England the official church of Maryland and preventing Catholics from voting in laws in 1718.

Overall, through the examination of legal matters and society as a whole in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia, it becomes clear how the Church of England established a strong control over these colonies through the use of legal and social doctrines. Fines and punishment for crimes were intermingled between the church and government, allowing for the Church of England to benefit and maintain control. Religious toleration, or lack thereof, created significant changes socially and politically in the colonies, with Catholicism being intentionally excised. With control over government positions, and by enacting laws favorable to the Church, the Church of England was able to maintain their control in both Maryland and Virginia for decades.

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From Prosperity to Ruin: The Tragic Fall of Black Wall Street

By Kam Owens

History remembers the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921 as one of America's worst examples of racial violence incidents. Throughout the span of two days, "Black Wall Street," an iconic Tulsa, Oklahoma district known for its independent African American community, suffered destruction and intentional burning. A white mob started the massacre when they launched attacks against the Greenwood district after a false accusation against a Black teenager named Dick Rowland. The violence destroyed numerous homes and countless businesses while violent mobs killed hundreds of African American inhabitants. These attacks left 10,000 Black folks without shelter as they lost every bit of accumulated wealth across multiple generations. This catastrophic event was left out of official records for many years, thus further traumatizing the survivors and their offspring. Public awareness about the massacre has emerged again only in recent times because of grassroots activism alongside academic research and government admission of the incident. As this essay will emphasize, this enterprising research examines the Tulsa Race Massacre through discussions about reparations, and it also considers cultural restoration and public memorialization efforts as the United States deals with racial inequality.

This violent episode showed how racial and economic oppression combine to create one destructive force. Black achievement faced a premeditated attack when the Greenwood district in Tulsa suffered its devastating destruction. In 2025, a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report termed the violence a "coordinated military-style attack" to show that racism against Black people operates as a structured system. The new discoveries about Greenwood's destruction have sparked renewed discussions regarding accountability as the survivors' descendants, together with advocate groups to seek reparations under both moral and economic standards. Cultural initiatives such as Fire in Little Africa combine storytelling and hip-hop media to gain back control over Greenwood's memory. An arts and education initiative directed by Oklahoma artists, this initiative gained support from Monroe Nichols IV when he became Tulsa's first Black mayor, demonstrating how the arts can fight historical amnesia. The 2024 monument in Tulsa stands alongside educational reforms to as tools to enshrine the massacre into American public memory. This essay examines three essential questions about how public memory of the Tulsa Race Massacre has transformed since its centennial remembrance events: (1) What recognition has the public displayed about the Tulsa Race Massacre since its initial commemorations? (2) How have contemporary initiatives, such as reparations efforts, cultural projects like Fire in Little Africa, and government acknowledgments, shaped the way the massacre is remembered and understood? (3) What are the current methods for remembering the Tulsa Race Massacre through education programs and media exposure, and public memorial sites? Research in primary sources such as testimonies, photographs, legal documents from the Tulsa Library's African American Resource Center and secondary sources containing government reports and media coverage to develop answers to these three fundamental questions.[1] The lessons from Greenwood require newfound importance as the country prepares to observe the 104th anniversary of the massacre.

U.S. Department of Justice. This defining truth reveals that the massacre went beyond being called a "riot" since it formed part of an ongoing system of racial violence. The 2023 investigation conducted by the DOJ established that white vigilantes launched orchestrated attacks that utilized aerial surveillance in addition to arson and organized theft to destroy

[1] Urell, Aaryn. 2025. "Justice Department Finds Tulsa Massacre Was a 'Coordinated, Military-Style Attack.'" *Equal Justice Initiative*. January 13, 2025

Greenwood. Surviving witnesses recorded their testimonies at the African American Resource Center at the Tulsa Library, detailing how planes released flammable materials on Black businesses and residences alongside archival photos of burning wreckage. The incidents of violence followed a precise protocol to eliminate Greenwood's economic dominance, which threatened the racist social arrangement of Jim Crow Oklahoma. The formal execution of the attack operation proves that it was planned. Portside an article that focuses on progressive political and labor focused news content, demonstrates how event organizers applied wartime operation tactics which gave authority to white civilians through local authority deputization for legitimizing violence.[2] The collaboration between local law enforcement and vigilantes demonstrates how governmental agencies used their power to authorize racial terrorist activities. The initial arrest of Dick Rowland held by police against the white woman, became the trigger for the violence but deep-running white animosity toward black success in Greenwood led to the brutal escalation. The 600 businesses combined with 1000 residents on Black Wall Street exposed white supremacy because the thriving black community disproved stereotypes about black inferiority. The attack on this community functioned as both economic and sociological destruction which intended to enforce racial domination.

Evidence shows that racial capitalism, a system in which economic exploitation is structured through racial inequality which is what motivated the massacre, as perpetrators used violence and force to strip Black communities of their wealth. The findings from the Department of Justice match the documented information in historian Mary E. Jones Parrish's book documents the burning structures and the burned down buildings after the massacre while city

[2] "Justice Department Finds Tulsa Massacre Was a 'Coordinated, Military-Style Attack'" 2025.

ordinances set expensive fire safety requirements for reconstruction.[3] The systematic economic restrictions guaranteed that Greenwood suffered destruction not only as a physical place, but also as an economic center. The patterns showing racial violence in the massacre revealed the United States' general practice of establishing economic and social hierarchies through racial violence tactics. The historical racist violence that occurred during the massacre continues to evolve through present-day reparations programs and cultural initiatives as well as public memorials.

The 2025 centennial commemoration of the Tulsa Race Massacre transformed public perceptions through advocacy for reparations and cultural revival initiatives and calls for governmental accountability. These initiatives pay tribute to the victims by placing the massacre firmly in American collective awareness as they fight against historical memory loss. Through the "Greenwood Project" endorsed by Tulsa's new African American mayor Monroe Nichols IV, people who suffered during the Tulsa Race Massacre are fighting to receive land back alongside the Justice Department issued its 2025 report detailing how the 1921 losses continue to drive racial wealth inequality because the economic ramifications of the massacre remain unresolved. Advocates have changed passive commemoration into active justice through their economic and moral message about reparations.

The project Fire in Little Africa is a multimedia project by Motown Records with Oklahoma hip-hop artists presents music, podcasts, and documentaries to tell the story of Greenwood from a new perspective. Dr. View one of the overseers of this project as well as 'Sneak the Poet' and 'Jimmi' Joe Burner are some of the artists apart of this project. Through "Black Wall Street, blends survivor accounts with rhythmic compositions that unite traditional

[3] Mary E. Jones Parrish, *The Nation Must Awake: Our Witness to the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921* (Trinity University Press, 2021); *Oklahoma Historical Society.* n.d. "The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre." www.okhistory.org.

African sounds with contemporary trap elements to build a musical homage. Through these projects, Black voices find their rightful place in history as they combat historical accounts that attempted to silence their voices. Such projects appear alongside suppressed photos from the massacre aftermath exhibited by the National Archives in 2021. These works blend activism with art to preserve the memories of the massacre and guide current efforts striving for equality. Public understanding about the massacre was transformed by these educational memorials. Tulsa honored the memories of confirmed victims by dedicating a monument in 2024 as an important move to reverse decades of official silence.[4] The Survivor organization presents Greenwood through oral testimonies and relevant map features that enable users to see the magnitude of damage in combination with authentic survivor stories. This digital access to history spreads widely throughout all ages; however, it mostly benefits younger demographic groups. A quote given Dr. Kristen Oertel on FOX News Channel 11 in Los Angeles states, “This isn’t just about 1921 it’s about why Black lives still don’t matter in 2021”.[5] Memorials act as active instruments which turn recalls into tools formaintaining sustained advocacy efforts. These memorials of the Tulsa Race Massacre serve as a form of historical remembrance while providing a foundational framework for studying America's current racial inequalities and fueling calls for justice restoration.[6]

Hip-hop has been an essential tool to recover the concealed history of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and build resistance while restoring the cultural heritage of Black Wall Street's Greenwood district. The 2025 launch of this project brings together storytelling along with hip-

[4] Monument Erected in Tulsa for Victims of 1921 Race Massacre.” 2024. *AP News*. November 12, 2024.
[5] FOX. 2021. “Tulsa Race Massacre: 100 Years Ago, a White Mob Torched ‘Black Wall Street’ and Slaughtered Black Residents.” FOX 11 Los Angeles. May 28, 2021.

[6] Featured Document: Remembering the Tulsa Race Massacre.” 2021. National Archives. May 3, 2021.

hop music and documentary filmmaking for both remembering Greenwood's history and preserving its living spirit. Through artistic collaborations of 50 artists and podcasting alongside documentary film content, "Fire in Little Africa" unites historical trauma with modern creativity by using hip-hop both for educational purposes and empowerment. This artistic reinterpretation of suffering history transforms Black empowerment into both a social bond builder and cultural healing force. Hip-hop's power to safeguard traditional oral storytelling practices and amplify marginalized voices lies at the heart of this movement. Greenwood's pre-attack success stories, alongside its bloody end, become both beat and lyrical creations that turn mourning into strength. Through their art, they preserve the past while demanding justice and reparations in the present. Grassroots activists, together with Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols IV, have driven the initiative forward because they see it as the truth and as a means of fostering civic harmony among residents. The celebration of Black Wall Street motivates us to face its disappearance while making "Fire in Little Africa" promote hip-hop as a living group that maintains history and maintains hope. Through this artistic project Oklahoma's hip-hop movement achieves national recognition and memorializes victims from the 1921 racial massacre together with survivors while highlighting artistic capabilities to restore identities and uplift following generations.

While projects such as Fire in Little Africa create a bond and inspire African heritage, it is just as necessary to preserve history via public organizations. Tulsa's artists are working closely with those who save Greenwood's history to make sure it is remembered and clear. Both strive to work together to recall the past, respect the victims, and give education to new generations. The Tulsa City-County Library's African American Resource Center and the Research Center are vital in preserving the history of the massacre. A review of rare photographs, movies and city records can provide the public with information about how the Greenwood

District, formerly “Black Wall Street,” was ruined by devastating events. Among the best resources are 29 films and pictures taken by Solomon Sir Jones, who was a Black minister and businessman at that time and which the Library of Congress has since acquired and preserved.[7] These resources point out the problems caused by racism and encourage people to work hard to overcome inequality. In addition, Jones demonstrates that telling people’s personal stories promotes understanding and helps to combat the erasure of history. Because of the financial losses in Greenwood, we should now recognize the importance of supporting Black-owned businesses and seeking fair economic policies. Furthermore, the library demonstrates how public institutions can promote learning, accuracy, and remembrance. Studying these issues can lead to a fairer society. While you can find key information about the Tulsa Race Massacre in archives and old reports, meeting the survivors adds real emotion to our understanding of this event. The testimonies of both Van Ellis and Viola Fletcher help us understand how fearful and devastating things were for those living in Greenwood. Their personal narratives complement the documents and photographs as testimony demanding justice for individuals who lost everything.

Hearing Viola Fletcher’s and Hughes Van Ellis’s stories provides a nauseating reminder of the full and violent story of Tulsa Race Massacre, when Greenwood’s Black Wall Street was reduced to flames. The siblings whereas on the run and remembered the atmosphere was so filled with smoke that no sunlight could be seen, while planes were trying to burn houses and businesses to the ground. As a result, the family lost everything they owned, just like hundreds of other families in the same situation. When the massacre was taking place, Hughes Van Ellis had not reached his first birthday. After taking part in World War II, he found that the U.S. failed to give him the honor he deserved. Without a real reason, these accusations against the teenage boy

[7] “1921 Tulsa Race Massacre | Tulsa Library.”

meant 35 blocks were obliterated, hundreds were massacred, and thousands were left homeless. Those who survived tell us about bodies everywhere and a decade or more of being forbidden to recount their stories.

Fletcher and Van Ellis waited their entire life to get justice, and it was only in 2021 when they spoke up about it publicly. Fletcher said, “I still witness Black people drowning in the river.” As a result of their opposition and protest, survivors’ complaints were motivated to file lawsuits demanding justice, though courts have not affirmed them. The survivors insisted that race-based violence has denied families' generational wealth, causing suffering that has been ignored by the country for a long time. Until the survivors spoke out, the events of 1921 in Oklahoma were hidden from view, but now people are seeking to make up for the damage and honor those who survived. Thanks to their strength, the pain of America’s past might create a call for America to understand its past, honor Greenwood’s legacy and recover from its wounds. In Van Ellis’ words he says, “I want the people to know what really happened and I want something back for that.”[8] The voices that we hear down the centuries prove their struggle for survival and their attempts to be fair. Fletcher and Van Ellis’ accounts inspired many to pay closer attention to our cultural past. Beyond their individual contributions to public memory, they motivated both artists and the people to act together and express themselves powerfully. Art movements emerged to remember Greenwood by combining music and storytelling in a way that touches up-and-coming generations.

Over 60 Oklahoma artists are involved in Fire in Little Africa, which serves to turn history into art. The purpose was to use horror as an art to describe how the native community felt and what they had been through during their history. It was through art and culture, rather

[8] “Hughes van Ellis, Youngest Known Survivor of Tulsa Race Massacre.” 2023. AP News. October 10, 2023.

than standard histories and memorials, that the artists made the people and events relatable by invoking feelings in viewers and listeners. “Shining” and “City of Dreams” describe what life was like for Dick Rowland and connect the audience to the victims emotionally.[9] Through music, people can feel strongly connected to history, and artists attract audiences using both their words and musical style to address a particular case of injustice and efforts to achieve justice (and reparations). The recordings were done in some of the historic places in Tulsa, including where the KKK leaders lived, now a space for artists. It is another way for African Americans to reclaim their memories and identities. Fire in Little Africa continues to shape Greenwood today by inspiring young people to reflect on their heritage and act, showing how music can promote health and healing. Music and storytelling have allowed the people of Tulsa to look deeper into their identity. At the same time, artists expressed their pain through art, while government institutions devoted greater attention to past issues.

Official investigations were set up to uncover the truths that people were denying for so long. The Cold Case Unit of the U.S. Department of Justice, the meeting of violence on Greenwood’s Black community was not a riot but was carefully organized as a military attack. After reviewing available records and accounts, investigators found that the massacre was planned and carried out by armed white mobs, police, and representatives of the city. To engage in the assault, private planes monitored the district and released devices igniting fires, much like in the first aerial bombardments. Simultaneously, an organized group of white attackers, recruited by officials, stole property, burned much of the area and killed approximately 300 Black people. The report found that these institutions had conspired to rob Black families of their assets and inflict racial terror on a prosperous Black community. According to their findings, the

[9] Magazine, *The Nuance*. 2021. “NUANCE.” NUANCE. June 19, 2021.

violence at Tulsa's massacre is still affecting people and has yet to be fully addressed. Today, it is common to see members of marginalized groups being targeted by law enforcement while past injustices remain unresolved. Hughes Van Ellis and Viola Fletcher, who have struggled for years to get justice, described the report as a late acknowledgment of what they suffered. Despite its limitations, the report is important for helping teachers and campaigners understand that allowing law enforcement to act with violence allowed racial terrorism, which continues today. The judgments from the DOJ encourage Americans to address the continuing issue of racial violence. As the true motives behind the massacre are revealed by the federal government, institutions in the area have begun to make sure this information is shared with the public. Although the DOJ report confirms these facts, sites such as Greenwood Rising use storytelling and programs to involve the community in learning about them. All these measures indicate that only acknowledging the problem legally and educating the public can lead to efforts to redress racial violence.

The Greenwood Rising Historical Center is a world-class history museum that stands in Tulsa, Oklahoma, not far from the Greenwood District. Opened in 2021, its purpose is to commemorate the victims and survivors of 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and to teach people about the history of racism and how Black people overcame it. The Greenwood Rising Historical Center will contribute to people's understanding of the Tulsa Race Massacre through exhibits, videos, and learning opportunities that offer the facts left out of ordinary school curricula. The Center recounts the massacre and places it in the context of the United States' history of racism as well as efforts for justice. Greenwood Rising encourages visitors to feel empathy, understand better, and discuss this dark period. Now, it serves as both a learning resource and a reminder of the city's history, showing the impact of racial issues and emphasizing ways to correct them for a more informed American public. As Greenwood Rising increases knowledge, community leaders are figuring out how best to use what they have learned. Bringing these wrongs to attention is not enough; we also need government action to aid the people and their families. Therefore, Tulsa's leadership plans to focus on justice, healing, and repairing the community in 2025. People who experienced or were affected by the Tulsa Race Massacre are being listened to consider what kind of reparations might best address the violence they suffered. Examples of such a plan could be financial support for developing the Greenwood District and educating people to make sure the tragedy is not forgotten. These actions serve to both commemorate history and promote fairness and unity in the future. Lip service is not enough, so they are at work with area groups and historians to bring real change. We should aim to use awareness and education to hold people responsible and give them power. Greenwood Rising gives the facts of history to community members and policy makers who are working to make actual changes. These projects mark a new phase in Tulsa's effort to seek racial justice and heal after the race riots.

In 2025, Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols, a Black man, will present a roadmap for repair on the official Day of Observance for the 1921 Race Massacre (June 1). The roadmap is meant to help survivors and their descendants cope with the aftermath of the massacre. It consists of giving direct cash assistance to relatives of those killed, reviewing city land to find what was taken during or after the massacre, favoring hiring descendants for various city positions, setting up a hospital dedicated to Dr. Andrew C. Jackson, who died during the massacre, and giving descendants a tax exemption. Many more people are now aware of the Tulsa Race Massacre than during its first anniversary events. The massacre used to be ignored but is now recognized thanks to various efforts such as those recounted in this essay. Lessons about the massacre are now taught in schools, and places such as the Greenwood Rising Historical Center serve as memorials to the victims and give information to those who visit Fire in Little Africa is a musical and visual project, formed by local artists, meant to share stories and songs to help others understand the event's history. Furthermore, plans such as Mayor Nichols' reparations offer a sign that the government is serious about healing from the past and uniting communities.[10] As a result of these three types of efforts, people in 2025 remember and comprehend the Tulsa Race Massacre differently, hopefully avoiding its repetition.

People know more about the Tulsa Race Massacre because of the community, artistic, and governmental effort outlined in this essay. The Justice Department confirmed that the attack on Greenwood, an affluent Black area, was carefully planned and carried out as a military operation. According to those who survived and recent studies, the report revealed that racism was at the core of the killings, the destruction of many buildings, and more than 50 years of concealing the truth from the public. To respect the people who lost their lives in Tulsa, it is important to expose what happened and prevent history from repeating itself. Because the truth was repressed for so long, members of the community and their descendants have suffered a lot. Currently, artists like Ethio-Jazz use music to share these experiences, allowing younger audiences to feel and grasp the truth. Tulsa demonstrates the importance of truth and deeds in starting the healing process. Acknowledging racism, calling for reparations, teaching true history, and paying attention to survivors will help the U.S. achieve justice. We should remember Tulsa for its history, courage, important legacy, and positive change.

[10] "MSN." 2025. Msn.com. 2025.

Book Review: Amussen, S., & Underdown, D. (2017). *Gender, Culture and Politics in England, 1560–1640* (D. E. Underdown, Ed.; 1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

By Katya Tapia Becerril

Gender, Culture, and Politics in England, 1560-1640 by Susan D. Amussen and David Underdown is a collaborative study that began with David Underdown who was a historian of 17th century English politics and culture, and subsequently completed by Susan D. Amussen, a specialist on the history of Modern Britain and the Atlantic World at the University of California, Merced. Throughout Amussen's and Underdown's conversations, it became clear that debates about gender and politics were deeply intertwined, and thus, their collaborative study focuses on unruly women and failed patriarchs and how it affected families and politics.

Gender, Culture, and Politics in England, 1560-1640 is organized into five chapters. Throughout the first chapter, "Unruly Women" Amussen and Underdown expose the discourse surrounding women in early modern English society. The common discourse surrounding women portrayed them as irrational, disorderly, dishonest, idle, excessive talkers, and lacking in sexual self-control. In contrast to their male counterparts who were seen as rational, virtuous, prudent, and capable of self-control. To support this, Amussen and Underdown effectively examine Joseph Swetnam, the author of the pamphlet *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women,* who held misogynistic views of women. Swetnam's rhetoric was intended to be used as a way to warn husbands of the importance of controlling their wives and what they could expect of them. In the second chapter, "Failed Patriarchs" Amussen and Underdown effectively argue that patriarchal authority in household governance sets men up for failure. Traditionally marriage marked a transition into full political adulthood which meant that marriage provided men with the authority to govern a household. While husbands and fathers were held accountable for the conduct of their families, they lacked the means to fully control them. Amussen and Underdown point out that family members often had duties that took them outside of the household, which then granted them a certain level of independence that made total patriarchal supervision impossible.

The third chapter, "Performing Inversion: Theatre, Politics and Society," the authors provide insight into how unruly women and failed patriarchs were visible across society and were central to the theatrical world. For example, John Webster's play *The Duchess of Malfi* includes messages about the contrast between good and bad patriarchs and unruly women. In Webster's play when the Duchess asserted her independence, it led to the Duchess, her husband, two children, and two brothers all dying. The rest of this chapter goes into depth on other theatrical comedies and plays to show how stage performances acted as examples of contemporary social events. In the fourth chapter, "Performing Inversion in Civic Pageantry and Charivari" Amussen and Underdown draw attention to a case study that occurred in Wells, Somerset. The case consisted of a complaint made by John Hole to the Star Chamber because a group of young people were celebrating the traditional May festivities with the support of their elders. After Hole tried to stop the festivities, the young people still put on two pageants with the support of the elders. One of the pageants made fun of Hole and his friends and made them seem like poor men, rather than the wealthy merchants and tradesmen they were. Lastly, in the fifth chapter, "Witches, Magicians and the Upside Down World" Amussen and Underdown effectively argue that witchcraft was seen as a threat to stability. They explain how witchcraft led people to believe that it, "not only involved the use of satanic powers which turned the entire moral order upside down, but it also provided an explanation for unruly women's actions."[1] By

[1] Amussen, S., & Underdown, D. (2017). *Gender, Culture and Politics in England, 1560–1640* (D. E. Underdown, Ed.; 1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 174.

labeling witchcraft as a way to manipulate the world it allowed people to accuse unruly women of being witches.

Overall, both Amussen and Underdown's effectively show us how the established gender order in early modern English society was contradictory. They emphasize in chapter two, “Failed Patriarchs” that men had authority in marriage but could not control their families because people went outside for work. This is a powerful example of how men did not have total authority in the household. It’s also important to know that the wife was also important in making sure the household ran smoothly. Both Amussen and Underdown successfully use multiple sources such as theater plays, court records, witchcraft trails, and pamphlets to support their argument. By piecing all of this together both Amussen and Underdown emphatically demonstrate how gender and politics are deeply intertwined in Early Modern English society.

Book Review: Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

By Isaac Gonzalez-Leon

Susan Dwyer Amussen's *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640–1700* examines how England's participation in Caribbean slavery reshaped English society during the seventeenth century. Rather than treating slavery as a distant colonial institution, Amussen places the English Caribbean at the center of England's social, cultural, and political transformation. The book traces the movement of people, ideas, and practices across the Atlantic, revealing how colonial experiences influenced metropolitan understandings of labor, authority, race, and gender. By analyzing slavery as an interconnected Atlantic system, Amussen challenges histories that isolate England from its colonies and instead presents both as part of a shared and evolving social world.

Throughout the book, Amussen argues that slavery in the English Caribbean was deeply embedded within English society rather than existing on its margins. Early on in *Caribbean* Exchanges, she emphatically states, "Yet while this traffic was of growing significance in late seventeenth- century England, it has been largely invisible in the work of historians of England in the period."[1] This framing pushes against interpretations that confine slavery to overseas spaces and highlights how developments in the Caribbean shaped English political thought and social relations. Through this approach, Amussen demonstrates that slavery was not simply an economic system but a force that transformed English ideas about hierarchy, discipline, and power. Amussen further argues that English slave societies were not fully formed when colonization began. Instead, slavery developed through experimentation and coercion as English

[1] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 6.

settlers responded to labor demands and resistance. As she explains, “One of my central contentions is that owning people did not come ‘naturally’ to the seventeenth-century English: slaveholders had to learn to do it.”[2] From this, she is able to emphasize the instability of early colonial labor systems and challenges assumptions that racial slavery emerged naturally from English social traditions. When focusing on process rather than inevitability, Amussen is able to draw attention to the choices and conflicts that shaped plantation societies over time.

In *Caribbean's Exchange,* one of the most distinctive features within the book was its sustained use of visual sources/information throughout the book. In particular, Amussen treats illustrations and engravings not as supplemental material, but as central historical evidence. As she notes that “Black attendants do not appear in English paintings until there actually were black slaves and servants in England; real people from Africa and the American colonies come to fill the aesthetic supporting roles projected for black subordinates…”[3], especially for those who had no direct experience of colonial life. These images shaped how English audiences understood race, labor, and authority, often presenting slavery as orderly and profitable while minimizing the violence that sustained it. Through careful visual analysis, Amussen shows how familiar artistic conventions helped normalize coercion and hierarchy within English culture, with legal records forming another key body of evidence in the book. Because of this, Amussen closely examines sources like the colonial laws and court cases to demonstrate how English legal traditions were reshaped to support slavery. She argues that “the law protected planters, not slaves, ... as being created men though without the knowledge of God.”[4], revealing how legal

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[2] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 10.

[3] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 216.

[4] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 131.

systems were adapted to reconcile English claims to liberty with the reality of human bondage. As it defined enslaved Africans as property, the colonial law enabled the English settlers to preserve their own rights while denying those same protections to others. In the end, the analysis demonstrates the role of law as an active instrument of power rather than a neutral framework.

Alongside visual and legal sources, Amussen also draws on plantation records, travel narratives, and administrative documents to reconstruct daily life in the English Caribbean. From these materials, she reveals the harsh labor regimes imposed on enslaved people and the anxieties of colonists attempting to maintain control. Amussen emphasizes that coercion was foundational to plantation society, noting that "The violence used to control servants and slaves grew out of the systemic violence fundamental to colonial society, as well as out of fear of violent resistance."[5] This focus reinforces the book's broader claim that slavery depended on constant force and surveillance, shaping both colonial society and English attitudes toward authority and discipline. All told, the sources that Amussen uses throughout her book allows her to connect slavery in the Caribbean with broader social and cultural transformations. From combining visual culture, legal analysis, and archival records, *Caribbean Exchanges* demonstrates how slavery became embedded in English society on both sides of the Atlantic. The careful integration of these materials strengthens the book's central claim that England's emergence as an imperial power was inseparable from the development of Caribbean slavery.

Beyond its use of diverse sources, *Caribbean Exchanges* is also distinguished by its impactful methodological approach, particularly its integration of social history, legal analysis, and visual interpretation. Amussen treats the images, laws, and archival records as poignant and intersecting forms of historical evidence rather than isolating them by category. As she explains,

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[5] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 147.

"The process of constructing slave societies explored in this book provides a critical background for many of the ways in which race and gender were connected to work, identity, and law."[6] Because of this, she allows the book to explore not only how slavery functioned on plantations, but also how it was normalized and justified within English society. Rather than portraying influence as flowing only from England to the Caribbean, Amussen shows how colonial practices reshaped metropolitan assumptions. She argues that colonial experiences "The Caribbean provided a model for a society where the bonds of paternalism had been largely abandoned."[7] By framing empire as a reciprocal process, the book challenges traditional center–periphery models and highlights the extent to which England itself was transformed by slavery. From this perspective, it helps strengthen the book's broader claim that colonial violence cannot be separated from domestic social change.

Gender analysis was also utilized within the book, further reinforcing Amussen's interpretation of slavery as a socially transformative institution. Throughout the book, she connects English ideas about household authority and gender order to the shaping of plantation discipline within the Caribbean. At the same time, the Caribbean conditions destabilized these familiar norms, forcing the settlers to adapt during the time period. Amussen notes, "Enslaved women were marked by race in that they were fundamentally different from European women."[8] By integrating gender into her analysis, Amussen demonstrates that slavery reshaped social relations at multiple levels rather than operating solely as an economic system. The effectiveness of *Caribbean Exchanges* lies in its consistent grounding of interpretation in concrete evidence.

[6] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 235.

[7] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 236.

[8] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 68.

Rather than relying on abstract theory, Amussen repeatedly returns to specific examples drawn from law, imagery, and plantation life. Using the analysis of colonial legislation, Amussen was illustrates how legal systems were deliberately structured to maintain control. This transformation of the law to prioritize capital over human life is most evident in her analysis of the 1688 Barbados Act and the 1696 Jamaica Act. Amussen concludes that “The law of slavery in particular mandated harsh punishments for all offences...The protection of property and wealth was at the center of both the labor and legal regimes of the islands, and no cruelty was too great.”[9] With her focusing on these practical applications of institutional power, Amussen convincingly shows that the "liberties" enjoyed by English planters were entirely dependent upon the violent subjection of those they defined as property.

Despite its many strengths, the book does present certain limitations. While Amussen is careful to acknowledge the constraints of the archive, the perspectives of enslaved Africans often remain mediated through colonial records. She herself notes that “While we cannot tell the story directly from the perspective of enslaved people, ... in the seventeenth century, we catch only glimpses of them.”[10] Although this limitation reflects the nature of the sources rather than a failure of interpretation, it still limits the scope and scale of her analysis in the book. With greater attention to resistance or everyday acts of defiance, it might have further complicated the narrative of control and authority within the Caribbean. Alongside the book’s narrow geographical focus, it also invites questions about comparison. While Amussen is able to concentrate on the English Caribbean, she then offers a detailed and persuasive case study, but many may wonder how these developments compared to other Atlantic slave societies. From

[9] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 228.

[10] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 10.

this, Amussen acknowledges this limitation in the book, noting that her purpose is not to provide a comprehensive Atlantic history but to explain how "Slavery transformed English ideas of law and order, gender, work, and property."[11] This clarity of purpose essentially supports the book by maintaining analytical focus rather than diluting its argument. In the end, *Caribbean Exchanges* is a compelling and carefully argued study that demonstrates the centrality of slavery to England's seventeenth-century transformation. Through its smart use of visual sources, detailed legal analysis, and emphasis on transatlantic exchange, the book challenges readers to reconsider the boundaries between a colony and a city. Amussen convincingly shows that English society was shaped not only by events within its borders but also by the systems of coercion and exploitation it developed overseas. In doing so, *Caribbean Exchanges* makes an important contribution to the histories of slavery, empire, and early modern England, and offers a framework that highlights the inseparability of colonial violence and metropolitan change.

[11] Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society,* 42.

Book Review: Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

By Julian M. Curiale

The birth and maintenance of the Atlantic world hinged on the enslavement and commodification of African peoples, a process that rendered human beings into property and, in doing so, stripped them of their capacity to be recognized as people. Stephanie E. Smallwood's *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* recontextualizes the Middle Passage as a cold, almost scientific mode of turning human beings into slaves, into commodities meant to be stocked, stored, and sold as such. Smallwood intends to peer past the foreground and give her audience a closer look at the mechanics of slavery: an end-to-end view of the physical infrastructure, economic calculations, gross violence, and bureaucratic machinery that carried captives from the Gold Coast to the New World. The foundation of Smallwood's research is predicated on the distinction between documents and ledgers of the Royal Africa Company and the internal correspondence of officials and company agents. Methodologically, she reads these company documents against the grain in an attempt to uncover a semblance of enslaved African experience. Her book essentially argues that commodification facilitated the social death uniquely complete for saltwater slaves. *Saltwater Slavery* is a scholarly masterclass that effectively exposes the deeper implications of human commodification and the deprivation of agency, dignity, and humanity from those commodified, revealing how the Middle Passage and the African diaspora across the Middle Passage were built on the violent erasure of personhood.

Smallwood's primary aim in *Saltwater Slavery* is to reconstruct the Middle Passage, not as the mere transportation of the enslaved across the sea to the New World, but as a process of commodifying human beings. She makes it clear that long before enslaved Africans would see the shores on the other end of the Atlantic, the system of enslavement was designed to break captives down and remove their humanity, reducing them to goods to be sent to market. Her use of the term “saltwater slaves” is poignant and suggestive of a grander scale of slavery that reaches across the sea—she highlights the anguish and terror-sustained nature of African dispersal. The impact of such vocabulary reflects a profound understanding of her subjects and speaks volumes about her ability as a writer to evoke such emotion in her readers. Smallwood juxtaposes herself against the detached, benign “political arithmetic” of the slavers and gives a voice back to those who were kept silent by oppression. By restoring the presence of enslaved people, she simultaneously solves the problem of how to write a history of a people whose commodification was meant to erase their personhood, and she does so with plenty of grace. The book's overarching goal is to trace the story of enslaved people from capture, confinement, subjugation, and finally commodification and embarkation to the Americas.

The backbone of Smallwood’s research is the transatlantic records of the Royal African Company in the form of ledgers, invoices, and bills of lading. She employs their own ostensibly anodyne quantitative documents that reduced human beings to “cargo” and “units” in order to glean a more nuanced and humane view of events. Evocative historiography, coupled with strong exegesis, achieves a far more robust elucidation than purely analytical narrating of the past. Smallwood distinguishes between the company’s public-facing ledgers and the internal correspondence between London officials, Cape Coast agents, and American factors—letters discussing escaped slaves, food shortages, insurrections, and deaths that never appeared in official accounts. By contrasting the relevant information, she is allowed to read them against one another, exposing the human stories that the ledgers purposefully left out. She further buttresses her study with supplementary sources of European travelers (de Marees, Bosman, Barbot), Akan oral traditions, and the enslaved testimony of Equiano and 'Sibell. Additionally, she surveys the English fort where slaves were held, assessing the level of cruelty inflicted upon its captives by way of inhumane dungeons made purposefully to break the spirit. Smallwood's sources function as a means to trace captives continuously from African purchase to American sale within a single bureaucratic system and furthers the goal of re-humanizing enslaved peoples.

Smallwood's methodology and analytical approaches in the scholarship of *Saltwater Slavery* are, in large part, what make her arguments and assertions so compelling. Beyond a simple surface-level reading of historical documents, she reads beneath the text, seeing what they unintentionally disclose: starvation, resistance, despair, and trauma. Within each banal document of the Royal African Company's invoices, reports, or correspondence is a real human story, and Smallwood makes a deliberate effort to work in favor of that humanity. She points out the empiricism that slavers employed to keep slaves on the edge of: "conditions adequate to support life" as evidence of starvation and desperation; when captors report escapes, she finds signs of resistance (Smallwood 51). Through phenomenological analysis of the slave ships, she paints the gruesome picture that enslaved people had to endure in bondage and in crossing the sea. The horrid conditions of the slave ships were those of sensory deprivation, loss of temporal or spatial orientation, and often death without the basic human kindness of a proper burial. Once again, Smallwood elicits a visceral emotional reaction in the reader, one that they are not soon to forget.

Saltwater Slavery's execution is without a doubt thorough and detailed. Smallwood entices her audience with a gripping title and introduction and keeps them enticed throughout her book. Her use of strong gravity-inducing rhetoric turns the pages for the reader, while her eloquent erudition of the subject brings much-needed light and humanity to her work. Smallwood somehow manages to make a rough and dreadful topic, such as the transatlantic slave trade, into a pleasure to read, like some morbid curiosity we are compelled to bear witness to. So much of the horror and evils that enslaved Africans were forced to endure have been either intentionally ignored, undermined, downplayed, or outright forgotten. Smallwood uses the power of scholarship to raise awareness and recognition of the plight of enslaved Africans, whilst providing some semblance of justice by disseminating that knowledge for the human beings who suffered along the way.

At its core, *Saltwater Slavery* is more than a history of the Middle Passage; it is an audacious act of recovery. Smallwood takes a system calculated to reduce human beings into commodities and, through meticulous scholarship and humane prose, forces it to yield back the stories it was meant to purge. She reconstructs not only what was done to enslaved Africans, but also illuminates what was taken from them—agency, dignity, the right to die properly, and the possibility of return. In doing so, she offers no easy redemption, no tidy narrative closure. The book ends where its subjects' stories too often ended: in fragmented silence. However, that is precisely where it draws its power from. Smallwood proves that writing history from the margins means sitting with what cannot be fully recovered, with wounds that never fully heal. *Saltwater Slavery* is a masterwork of a historian's craft, one that reminds us that the Atlantic world was built not just on forced labor and capital, but on the violent destruction of human beings.

Book Review: Bianca Premo. *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

By Ashley Cendejas

The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire by Bianca Premo explores preconceptions about the Enlightenment era in Europe. Premo, a distinguished history professor at Florida International University, specializes in Iberian and Latin American History, with a particular focus on law in Spanish colonies.[1] In *The Enlightenment on Trial*, she concentrates on the Enlightenment's legal influence on residents of the Spanish colonies, especially how marginalized groups used the legal system in Spanish America to sue the powerful tyrants who abused them.The analysis, careful consideration of case-by-case context, and the in-depth research highlight Premo's expertise and dedication to the people studied.

The Enlightenment on Trial looks at specific cases regarding marriage, indigenous community members against leaders, and enslaved people against their masters. Premo analyzes cases in two specific cities in colonial Spain: Mexico City, Mexico, and Lima, Peru. The author takes into consideration the contexts of the two major cities, their historical significance, populations, and roles in terms of legal resources. Alongside the two metropolitan studies, Premo also examines more rural regions in both Mexico and Peru: Oaxaca, Mexico, and Trujillo, Peru. The comparison of the two cities and two rural towns provides a crucial comparative research method in Premo's monograph, emphasizing how access to legal resources in particular places shaped how residents of Spanish colonies utilized Enlightenment discourse in legal courts to

[1] Florida International University - Digital Communications, "Bianca Premo," FIU Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs, accessed January 13, 2026, https://sipa.fiu.edu/people/faculty/history/premo.bianca.html.

resist oppressive powers. The choice to study such diverse regions allows for more accurate research, as it explores the differences in legal cases and their diverse populations.

Premo argues that the Enlightenment and its supposed original, revolutionary ideas were not exclusive to Europe, but also spread to the Spanish colonies. The book highlights the ideas brought about by the Enlightenment, motivating people living under colonial rule to utilize legal resources as a form of resistance against oppressive powers. As phrased by Premo, "Spanish imperial culture was a suing culture," and this tradition surely continued to the Americas. The author examines the cases of people in rural areas, with little to no formal education in law or literacy, and how the Enlightenment's growing interest in law expanded legal opportunities for many marginalized communities. Analyzing the pursuit of legal advancements and the quest for justice allows the author to honor the perseverance of people living in the colonies.

Premo also brings attention to the complicated process in which many litigants in civil court cases sought justice. These efforts can be seen in cases such as Agustin Carabeli, an enslaved man suing his owner for abuse, and Maria Micaela Vega, a woman suing her husband for abuse. Both parties, for their distinct cases, sought the work of public scribes to draft the initial paperwork, document their testimonies, and produce other legal documents. These scribes would have to produce an argument strong enough to compete with that of the other party's lawyer, as in these cases, representing people with a disproportionate level of power. By acknowledging this imbalanced ratio of legal resources, Premo sheds light on the efforts litigants made to receive justice for the abuse they experienced.

The author mentions in her introduction that the book aims to honor the efforts of oppressed communities in the colonial Americas and provide a comparative analysis of legal resources between rural areas, spanning the power dynamics within social classes. Premo's extensive research on these vast topics allows readers to develop a thorough understanding of the legal system in the colonial Americas, including why people of lower social status seeking justice was so revolutionary, and how the Enlightenment influenced the accessibility of the legal system. Premo's care for the topic and especially the individual litigants in the monograph is a product of her in-depth research and her deep respect and high regard for her historical subjects.

The Enlightenment on Trial is thoughtful and expansive in its approach to understanding how the ideas of the Enlightenment operated beyond Europe and impacted the experiences of ordinary people in the Spanish colonies. Premo's careful attention to social class, geography, population, and its impact on legal resource accessibility allows readers to move beyond abstract theory and focus on the voices of those who are most often excluded from historical narratives. By examining both major urban centers and rural regions, Premo demonstrated how legal opportunities varied across space while remaining accessible enough for even marginalized individuals to challenge authority. This layered analysis deepens our understanding of how revolutionary it was for enslaved people, Indigenous community members, and women to pursue justice within a colonial legal system designed to uphold hierarchies of power.

Additionally, I valued the manner in which Premo considered the many actors and processes involved in colonial litigation, particularly the role of scribes and intermediaries who enabled ordinary litigants to navigate complex legal systems. Her attention to the procedural challenges faced by those with little education or social standing highlighted the persistence and strategic thinking required to bring cases before the courts. Rather than portraying the Enlightenment as a distant European movement, Premo effectively illustrated how its legal and philosophical ideas were adapted and mobilized by colonial subjects seeking relief from abuse and injustice. This comprehensive and empathetic approach underscores the author's respect for the individuals she studies and reinforces the book's broader argument about the significance of law as a tool of resistance in the colonial Americas.

Hybrid Film and Book Review: Daniel Vigne, dir., The Return of Martin Guerre (1982) and Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

By Ruben Paredes

Natalie Zemon Davis' book and Daniel Vigne's film, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, are two works aimed at retelling and analyzing the 16th century case of an impostor claiming the name, family, and property of Martin Guerre. The tale begins in 1527 as Sanxi Daguerre and his family leave their property in the Basque village of Hendaye to resettle in the French village of Artigat. Sanxi's son, Martin Guerre, eventually marries a woman named Bertrande de Rols and together in Artigat, they have a son. However, Martin Guerre later abandoned his family after he was accused of stealing grain by his father. In 1556, the impostor Arnaud du Tilh arrived in Artigat and claimed that he was Martin Guerre, eventually fathering two children with Bertrande. Doubts grew about Arnaud's identity following a land dispute between Arnaud and Martin's uncle, Pierre Guerre, leading to Arnaud being tried in Toulouse. At the trial, the true Martin Guerre appeared and Arnaud du Tilh was found guilty and sentenced to death. Both historian Natalie Zemon Davis and filmmaker Daniel Vigne aim to reconstruct this dramatic story, with each emphasizing the significance of Guerre's wife Bertrande de Rols in unique ways. Vigne successfully recreates a compelling story of deception, while Davis utilized Bertrande's experiences to analyze the prevailing cultural, religious, and gender norms of early modern European society.

Davis' analysis of the case through her scholarship provided a perspective that centered primarily around Bertrande de Rols and the theme of legitimizing identity. Davis writes on how Bertrande was left in a difficult position following Martin's departure, previously being a married woman and then abruptly becoming neither a wife nor a widow, all while raising a son alone.[1] Davis examines how the patriarchal customs and laws of Artigat dictated Bertrande's social status, a woman with her marriage status left in limbo and unable to remarry unless she could find concrete proof of Martin's death. Arnaud's impersonation of Martin Guerre offered Bertrande the opportunity to rebuild her identity as a respected wife and woman of high virtue, as demonstrated through Bertrande's refusal to separate from Arnaud during the village's questioning of his identity and defending Arnaud during his first trial in Rieux. Davis' emphasis on the role of Bertrande offered a refreshing perspective on how the case of Martin Guerre was not only a struggle for Arnaud du Tilh to retain his identity as Martin Guerre, but also for Bertrande to maintain her identity as a respectable woman with her honor and status intact.

While an gripping motion picture, Vigne's retelling of the case of Martin Guerre, however, downplays the importance of Arnaud and Bertrande, especially how they found and seized opportunities in the context of the growth of the Protestant religion. The shift from Catholic dominance to growing Protestant sympathies in the village of Artigat was especially crucial for Bertrade and Arnaud, as they were likely able to avoid the Catholic practice of confessing their sins to a priest.[2] While religion is depicted throughout the film, it came in the form of Bertrande's inner turmoil of possibly being condemned to Hell for adultery and raising an illegitimate child with Arnaud. Confessing to God alone, as the film illustrates, allowed Bertrande and Arnaud to conceal the true nature of their marriage and protect their reputation as loyal husband and wife from human and divine judgement. However, the film presented very limited discussion of Catholicism and Protestantism and how Arnaud and Bertrande were able to use it to their advantage.

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[1] Natalie Z. Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard University Press, 1983), 33.

[2] Ibid., 47.

While many historians were critical of Vigne's film (Davis included) due to various historical inaccuracies, his film draws in viewers with a suspenseful and tense relationship between Bertrand and the imposter Martin Guerre. Rather than depicting Bertrande as an accomplice who was aware of Arnaud's identity, Vigne highlights Bertrande as a victim of Arnaud, cycling through her inner turmoil of being loyal to her husband or believing the villagers who accused the new Martin of being an impostor. It was not until the last segment of the film in which Arnaud du Tilh committed his fatal error; accidentally revealing that he learned of Martin's abandoned life in Artigat after having met him during their time in the army of Picardy.[3] Bertrande viewed this as the truth, and is shown in a saddened state as Arnaud is executed in the very last scene of the film. Vigne bestows grace and instills humanity into Bertrande, showing her as a victim of a love she wished she could have, a romance that was unfortunately built on deception and could not be legitimized. While many historical accounts point to Bertrande perhaps being a willful participant in concealing Arnaud's identity, Vigne's film argued for a more sympathetic understanding of Bertrande's position and her want for a stable and loving marriage.

The story of Martine Guerre's return is one of deception, identity, love and loyalty. Vigne's film brought forth these themes through his powerful directing, using Bertrande de Rols' inner turmoil in tandem with her actions to defend the new Martin Guerre in an attempt to bring to life a tragic love story. While historical inaccuracies were present in the film, Davis' extraordinary work complements it with detailed analyses. Davis detailed explanations and her knowledge of Basque and French marriage and inheritance laws vividly illustrate how religion helped to legitimize marriage and spiritual salvation, and how gender roles influenced status in

[3] Daniel Vigne, dir., *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1982: France: European International), DVD. 1:38:18-1:46:00.

16th century French communities. Davis' and Vigne's respective works provide the most intimate and well-analyzed retelling of the story of Martin Guerre, demonstrating how motion pictures can serve as the bridge between historical works and entertainment.