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EDITOR’S NOTE

It is with some trepidation that I agreed to take over the editorship of Ohio History from R. Douglas Hurt this year. Ohio History has ranked among the best state and regional history journals for more than a century. Although the journal has witnessed some uneven times in the past ten years, in 2006 Will Underwood, director of Kent State University Press, and Hurt committed to the journal’s return to print. From 2007 through 2009, Hurt returned the journal to its rightful standing in regional history scholarship and gave generously of his time and scholarly knowledge.

When he approached me at the annual Ohio Academy of History meeting in spring 2008 to ask if I would be willing to replace him as editor, I was a bit surprised but ultimately pleased to agree. I thank R. Douglas Hurt and Will Underwood, Sandy Clark, and Joyce Harrison at Kent State University Press for their confidence in my editing ability and for their invaluable assistance during this transition year. As a regular teacher of Ohio history and a scholar of regional history, it is my goal to continue the tradition of supporting scholarship that highlights the complex and interesting history of Ohio and the surrounding region.

L. Diane Barnes
Ohio, perhaps more than any other state, served as a conduit in the nineteenth century for the westward movement of Americans seeking to escape the overcrowded eastern seaboard.¹ After the War of 1812, with fertile lands opening west of the Appalachians, public officials were eager to attract immigrants to fill a population vacuum. No small portion of these newcomers was from Central and Eastern Europe, especially Germans, who streamed across the Allegheny Plateau into the Till Plains, descended the Ohio River, or entered the lake ports.² As a result, a corridor of German settlements emerged from Cincinnati in the southwest to Toledo in the northwest parts of Ohio. These sites became the basis for a belt of Germans, largely from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, who occupied a two-hundred-mile swath that extended to the Mississippi River. They were reinforced by another wave of German immigrants after the 1848 revolutions in Europe and by a potpourri of nationalities who sought jobs along the newly urbanized Erie lakefront at the end of the century.³ The German community was distinguished by such place names as Berlin, Hanover, and Potsdam, but the largest concentration was in Cincinnati where Germans increased from 5 percent in

2. La Vern J. Rippley, The German-Americans (Boston: Twayne, 1976), 41, 45.
1830 to 41 percent in 1900. But by the twentieth century, Cleveland replaced the “Queen City” of the West as “Ohio’s most ethnic city.” The number of foreign-born in Cleveland (speaking over forty languages) increased from 97,095 in 1890 to 196,170 in 1910, making it literally a collage of central, southern, and eastern European nationalities.

It was the Germans, however, who planted the seeds of ethnicity. About half of Ohio’s foreign-born residents were German by the 1850s. German Ohioans more than doubled in number from 1850 to 1890, and German was the dominant ethnic group in thirty-seven of Ohio’s eighty-eight counties from 1850 to 1950. Most notable was their distinctive cultural proclivities. Civic-minded people, they formed improvement societies, patronized the arts, and bonded through spirited beer-drinking and singing fests. Evidence of this “cohesive spirit” abounded, notes William Downard, in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine district; Germans patronized “its many saloons, beer halls, beer gardens, concert halls, and amusement places, while the breweries . . . kept the supply of beer flowing.” That these ethnic traditions did not long persist into the next century may be attributed to a natural blending of Germans into America’s mainstream. It was hastened, however, by the anti-Teutonic sentiments generated by the First World War and the onset of Prohibition, leading Kathleen Conzen to conclude that the “tribal idols as we once knew them are lost to the tribe for good” and that “most, along with most of those who once worshipped them, are now irretrievably ensconced in the larger cave that is American culture itself.”

All traces of German culture, however, were not obliterated in the American melting pot. Not unlike the persistence of place names, America’s preference for German-style beer, musical compositions, and even the Ph.D., suggests the possibility of subliminal influences on American culture, particularly in a state of so much Teutonic presence as Ohio. “To what extent,” one author queries, “the Turner societies and other German American social clubs actually became a venue for cultural exchange between Germans, Americans and other immigrant groups has not been thoroughly investi-
gated.” 11 Despite the early presence of turnvereins (gymnastics clubs), few scholars mention them, and usually only in relation to Union regiments in the Civil War or as centers of socialism or free-thinking philosophy. 12 None emphasize their strength and fitness component, a tradition that originated with Father Friedrich Ludwig Jahn’s national regeneration movement during the Napoleonic era in Prussia and proved highly exportable. The Cincinnati Central Turners (1848) was the first of many such societies in American cities where pursuit of bodily excellence was no less important than intellectual development. 13 “The significance of the German emphasis on the building of individual strength and on physical development,” estimates Kenneth Dutton in The Perfectible Body, “can hardly be overestimated.” 14 Immigrants inspired by German and other European systems were preoccupied with “calisthenics, sports, and gymnastics,” notes medical historian Harvey Green. 15 Though the German model was designed to promote overall fitness, it was firmly linked to athletes who exercised and competed with heavy objects.

This connection is most evident in the historiography of America’s strength culture. Under the heading of “Giants of the Beer Gardens,” David Webster, in his survey The Iron Game, catalogs the “abundance of great weight-lifters” from Austria and Germany “who mixed lifting of weights and arm-bending with beer steins.” While such strongmen as Franz Stahr, Karl Moerke, and Georg Jagendorfer are all but forgotten, their prodigious feats were “well ahead of the rest of the world” at the turn of the twentieth century. 16 Only Eugen Sandow (Frederick Müller), whose fame was comparable to that of Arnold Schwarzenegger a century later, remains an iron game icon. Likewise Bob Hoffman, so-called Father of American Weightlifting, estimates that virtually all strongmen from preceding generations were either foreigners (mostly German) or first-generation Americans. 17 Using local “Dutchmen” as a base, Hoffman built world and Olympic champion

12. See, for instance, Rippley, German-Americans, 62–64, 99–100.
13. Horst Ueberhorst confirms that the gymnastics clubs, which expanded to Columbus (1851), Dayton (1853), Cleveland (1876), and Akron (1885), “integrated themselves in American society, and assimilated the American way of life.” Ueberhorst, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and His Time, 1778–1852 (Munich: Heinz Moos Verlag, 1978), 94–95.
15. For a connection with Jahn’s movement, see Johann Winckelmann, Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture (1755; repr., La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1987).
teams and a weightlifting empire in York (Muscletown), Pennsylvania, in the 1930s that drew heavily from ethnic minorities. Yet considering the impact Ohio’s foreign-born have had on the development of the state, relatively little scholarship has been done in the field of ethnicity, especially given the amount of attention devoted to Pennsylvania Germans. Even African Americans, a tiny minority of Ohio’s population until the mid-twentieth century, receive sixty-five references in George Knepper’s bicentennial edition of *Ohio and Its People* to only twenty-one for German Americans who were far more numerous and prominent in the state’s early development.

German Americans served as pathfinders in the development of a strength culture that was implanted in Ohio and became a national phenomenon by the late twentieth century, replete with a Schwarzenegger afterglow. Critical to this impact was their confluence with other ethnic groups—Italians, Swedes, Irish, Bulgarians, et cetera—also seeking an American identity. The ethnic Germans not only energized these groups but established a lasting tradition. Their cumulative effect was manifest in the formation of a national lifting association and rules structure, the emergence of bodybuilding and powerlifting, technique and equipment innovations, the integration of women and gays, founding of gym franchises, creation of the muscle media, application of weights to athletics, development of sport politics, and establishment of the nation’s largest fitness festival. No area of strength culture seemed immune from the influence of Ohio’s ethnic Americans, and the Germans laid the basis for it all.

Some indication of how Ohio’s immigrant strongmen adapted and integrated their cultural values into society can be gleaned from studies by sport sociologists. As Robert Boyle notes, “Sport has often served minority groups as the first rung on the social ladder.” But in the sport of weightlifting, the number of champions who emerged out of identifiable ethnic communities from 1945 to 1960 is striking. Of the 105 national champions in this period at least 73 (70 percent) fell into this category. Of the 28 world champions, 25 (89 percent) were ethnic Americans, and 12 out of the 13 Olympic gold medalists (92 percent) were from immigrant families or distinctive minorities. Of these ethnic champions, 18 (25 percent) national, 5 (20 percent) world, and 3 Olympic (25 percent) were from Ohio. Most often they were second-generation Americans, seeking to shed their foreign identity, who

were most successful in assimilating. Strong socio-psychological forces were inducing sons of immigrants to strive for success and acceptance in mainstream America.21 This investigation of the Ohio’s strength culture, rooted in nineteenth-century Germany, shows that the cultural values of the Turners, though seemingly obliterated by the Great War, were actually melded, like the Germans themselves, into the state’s heritage. This cultural dynamic ultimately provided a leaven for the sporting achievements of other hyphenated Ohioans and even their nativist counterparts.

The earliest Ohio strongman, however, emerged from the Old World. Henry Holtgrewe, dubbed “The Cincinnati Strongman,” was born in Hanover, Germany, in 1862 and weighed 280 pounds at five feet, nine inches. Aside from his size, he had no protruding muscles or bulging biceps that would indicate great strength. His nephew, William Amshoff, recalled that Holtgrewe was incredibly strong, capable of putting 287 pounds overhead with one arm. Perhaps his most impressive feat was his hoisting overhead three weights totaling 380 pounds, by first raising a heavy barbell with his right arm, then hanging a lighter weight (a kettlebell) on his right thumb, and, finally, putting up another weight with his left hand. Whether he backlifted a platform weighing 4,103 pounds with two baseball teams at Redlands Field in Cincinnati in 1904 is likely more conjecture than fact. But he could lift all manner of objects in his occupation of saloon-keeper. Amshoff once saw Holtgrewe pull a keg of beer weighing 150 pounds from a tub of ice using his thumb and forefinger. In wrist-wrestling, a favorite barroom pastime, Holtgrewe was undefeated.22 As a measure of his standing, strength historian David Willoughby places him in the august company of such all-time greats as Horace Barre, Louis Cyr, and the inimitable Eugen Sandow.23

From the other end of the state, two brothers of Swedish extraction emerged prior to World War I. Adolph and Joe Nordquest of Ashtabula, drawing on German-related Scandinavian traditions, exhibited extraordinary strength. Adolph’s career began in 1902, when he traveled to New York City and became a pupil of German-born Professor Attila (Louis Durlacher), who had trained Sandow. From Attila he learned weightlifting and the art of strongman presentation.24 One pundit called Adolph, who performed in vaudeville and public exhibitions for fifteen years, “one of the greatest all around strength athletes that the world has ever seen.” In his vaudeville act, Adolph typically

pressed his 170-pound partner overhead with one hand several times. But his forte was impromptu deadlifting: In 1917 he lifted a solid dumbbell weighing 648 pounds several times at O’Rourke’s Café in New York City.25

Joe was even stronger than his older brother, but he had lost his left leg in a railroad accident as a child. So he built a magnificent upper body by hand-balancing and pressing feats. Most remarkable was a stunt where he leaped from a handstand on a thirty-inch table to the floor while remaining upright on his hands. Other tumblers could duplicate this feat, but none at a body-weight of 200 pounds. Nordquest also did twenty-eight handstand push-ups in 1915, prone pressed 388 pounds, and military pressed 241, all great achievements. A great leverage lifter, he was one of only two men ever to raise a twenty-inch iron Indian club weighing eighty pounds over his shoulder with a baseball-bat grip. Sandow could not budge the club from the floor, and Charles Atlas could only tilt it.26 With such performances Nordquest gained self-confidence and acceptance in a society that was apt to be dismissive of those who not only suffered physical disabilities but were stigmatized for their ethnic origins.

Yet Joe Nordquest’s fame owes much to coverage of his exploits in Strength magazine by its editor Alan Calvert, founder of the Milo Barbell Company in Philadelphia in 1902. Also featured was a young strength athlete of German extraction, Harry Paschall from Ashley, Ohio, who was inspired by the feats of German strongman Arthur Saxon (Artur Hennig) in the Ringling Brothers circus in 1911. Paschall’s pictures in Strength brought praises from artists nationwide. One artist thought they proved “how America of today [1916] was capable of producing the bodily equal of the old Greek athletes.” Harry’s proportions were deemed almost matchless, and comparable to Apollo.27 But Paschall was a man of many parts. Weighing 140 pounds, he deadlifted 473 pounds, snatched his bodyweight with one hand, and later won various Ohio state championships. A versatile athlete, he made a hole-in-one in golf and scored a perfect 300 in bowling.28

Paschall’s greatest talent, however, was as a writer and artist, contributing cartoons for movies, newspapers, and magazines, including Strength & Health, for which he later served as editor. Most memorable was his cartoon character Bosco, a superhero whose matchless strength and physique amused and inspired physical culturists. It was an icon drawn from Paschall’s Teu-

25. Ottley Coulter, “Reminiscences and Impressions over the Years,” Coulter Papers, Todd-McLean Collection, Univ. of Texas at Austin; David Webster, Sons of Samson, 2 vols. (Irvine, Scotland: Strength Games 90, 1993), 1:49.
tonic roots, as depicted in a 1940 article and cartoon, “Carnage in Cleveland,” where Bosco, after a day of heavy drinking in ethnic gymnasium, appears in the rathskeller below the local Slovenian Hall. “Here, too,” says Paschall, “our eyes are not deceiving us when they seem to view a large figure up-ending a barrel. The figure is Bosco, and what is in that barrel ain’t cherry pop!” The auditorium upstairs, where a national weightlifting championship has just taken place, then serves as a setting to illustrate how Ohio’s ethnic culture blended beer and brawn. Here Bosco declares, in a thick German accent, his intention to break all of Arthur Saxon’s records and begins assembling all the weights in the place into two large barbells.
When he finally gets them together they weigh respectively 785 lbs. and 315 lbs. He rolls them out on the stage and it sounds like a panzerwagon going over rough terrain. The expectant audience shudders with apprehension, as well it may!

When the weights are ready, Bosco whips off his pants and walks to the footlights and holds up a hand for silence. “Laddez and Chentulmen!” he roars. “I weel now show you how to beat der stuffinks out uff Arthur (hic) Saxon. He had to bant-press der weights. I weel (hic) SNATCH um.”

While Bosco was able to negotiate the 785 overhead with ease, the 315 slipped from his hand and crashed through the floor on to the heads of the patrons of the bowling alley below. Pandemonium reigned!29 Later, during the cold war, Paschall imparted an element of morality to his larger-than-life figure to combat the forces of evil. Bosco by this time, like so many German Americans, had become thoroughly Americanized as the “Hope of the Free World—the 101% American Red Blooded Boy.”30

Another dimension of German ethnicity was evident in Siegmund Klein, born in Thorn, West Prussia, in 1902 of Jewish parents. When he was an infant, his family moved to Cleveland where Jews, though a small minority, were prominent. According to Andrew Cayton, “no German speakers were more eager to integrate themselves into Ohio than Jews.”31 As a youth, Siegmund was inspired by his father’s muscularity and the tutelage of local turnverein instructor Carl Hein. Unlike most strongmen of his era, Klein expressed more interest in bodybuilding than in strength. His motto was “train for shape and strength will follow.” With bodybuilding in its infancy, he won the “Plastic Beaute” contest staged by Le Culture Physique magazine of France in 1925, a forerunner to the Mr. Universe contest. But Klein was also strong, his best lifts being a 270-pound clean and jerk, a 190 snatch, and a strict 222 military press at 147 bodyweight. In 1927 he took over Professor Attila’s gym in Manhattan and married his daughter Grace. Devoted to his German roots, Klein turned the dining room of his townhouse into a replica German tavern that included part of his collection of steins.32 More

Steins graced the walls of the gym he opened on Seventh Avenue, which became a landmark for visiting musclemen. Klein also displayed his Teutonic consciousness in Strongman, a magazine he published in the 1930s that focused on exploits of German lifters. “For centuries the Germanic peoples have had a penchant for physical prowess,” he argued in an article on Carl Abs, the “German Oak,” noting that it was “especially manifest in bodily

Siegmund Klein, pioneer bodybuilder from Cleveland who exhibited many of the old-world ways of his German heritage, circa 1930s. (Author’s collection)
development.” It was revealed “socially and athletically as well as politically” and was first evident “among the weight lifters.” Although Klein was most closely identified with New York, it was from his German heritage in Ohio that he developed his passion for physical culture.

The Irish and German (Ohl was his mother’s surname before marriage) origins of Ottley Coulter of Parkman, Ohio, were less obvious, but this circus and stage performer drew strongly from German traditions in searching for a means to verify the feats of strength athletes. In a 1917 Strength article on honesty in weightlifting, Coulter noted that sports which had joined the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) since its founding in 1888 were properly regulated and had “a greater real rivalry. There can be no real rivalry without a basis of equality.” During World War I, he remained in touch with Theodor Siebert and Albert Stolz, the two most reliable sources on German records. “Up all night writing ‘Records for Strength’” is Coulter’s diary entry for October 1, 1920. A full disclosure of European records in forty-six lifts and their American counterparts soon followed in Strength. Coulter also advocated a weightlifting organization that would systematize lifts and records, foster competitions, and enhance the sport’s credibility. Responding to Coulter’s appeal, strongman George Jowett, an Englishman who had migrated to Ontario, believed it would be better to form one “for the whole American continent.” Subsequently Jowett and Coulter, with David Willoughby of California, established the American Continental Weight-Lifters Association which evolved into the AAU and then Weightlifting USA, the sport’s current governing body. A final contribution of Coulter was his collection of strength-related memorabilia, which became the nucleus for the world’s largest physical culture archive, held at the University of Texas. The seeds for these developments were planted in Ohio.

As the iron game gained greater credibility from the regulatory structure Coulter suggested, Ohio lifters figured prominently in annual national championships. At the 1933 version held at the Chicago World’s Fair, the Lion Tailors Bodybuilding Club of Akron finished second to Bob Hoffman’s York Oil Burner Club and ahead of German American clubs from New York and Detroit. An ethnic flavor permeated the proceedings, which were staged at the First German Sports Club of Chicago, studded with hyphenated German and Eastern European American athletes and attended by AAU president Avery Brundage and national lifting chairman Dietrich Wortmann, future

34. Personal record file, Sept. 1944, Coulter Papers.
38. Jowett to Coulter, Nov. 9, 1920, Coulter Papers.
sympathizers of Nazi Germany. Two Akron lifters, featherweight Mike Fontana and heavyweight John Mallo, won titles, and junior national champion George Mansor took a third. All three, and their coach Jules DeSure, betray ethnic origins. Hoffman was lyrical in praising Fontana as “one of the finest built men ever seen” and Mallo at 260 pounds was “a true Goliath.” When Mallo, a Syrian American, died of appendicitis a year later, Mark Berry reported that his funeral was the largest ever seen in Akron, with “four hundred automobiles in line. It is almost beyond belief that a strong man could be so popular in his community.” Such an outpouring of emotion not only highlights Akron’s respect for strength, prominent since its Turner society

was founded in 1853, but indicates a spread of this tradition to other immigrant communities.

Perhaps the most remarkable phenomenon of Ohio weightlifting lore was the “American College of Modern Weightlifting,” founded in Akron during the 1920s by two brothers of Norwegian parentage, Larry and Lewis Barnholth, employees at the local Goodyear plant. While Lewis served as teacher and technician, Larry, inspired by a circus performance of Arthur Saxon in Cleveland in 1906, was the spiritual head. Their training facility was a converted three-car garage behind their residence, free to anyone seeking improvement. Longtime member Robert Creswell describes the setting as “spartan.” But the Barnholths achieved amazing results. By 1984, their lifters had competed in seventeen straight world championships, four Olympiads, three Pan-American Games, and three Maccabian Games. Over five hundred of them had won titles in district, state, national, and international competitions, and at one time the college won eleven straight Ohio AAU championships.41 Such a record led journalist Gord Venables to muse with *Muscle Builder* readers: “What is the weightliftingest . . . city in the world? It is Akron, Ohio!”42

Much of this success may be attributed to Larry’s philosophy of positive thinking (“What the mind can conceive, the body can achieve”) and Lewis’s innovative techniques that virtually revolutionized Olympic-style weightlifting.43 But more than anything else, it was the human material molded by the Barnholth brothers that brought success. Most outstanding of their protégés were three Bulgarian American brothers from Akron’s East End—Pete, Jim, and George George—who amassed a host of titles. Pete, often called a Boy Wonder, was national champion in 1946, world champion in 1947, and silver medalist in the 1948 Olympics, all while a teenager. He eventually garnered three Olympic (including a gold in 1952) and seven world championship medals. Younger brother Jim won two Olympic and four world championship medals and set two world records at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Oldest brother George placed third in the 1948 Olympic trials and won the 1948 Ohio Championships. Pete observed that if he and Jim were a separate nation, between 1947 and 1960, “we would have scored more points in world and Olympic competition than all but 4 nations.” Conscious of his ethnic

origins, Pete noted he was “the first person of Bulgarian ancestry to win an Olympic Gold medal,” which might have inspired Bulgaria to become eventually the world’s greatest lifting power.44 If Pete’s story were true, this scenario would be the Ohio ethnic achievement factor, rooted now in multi-ethnic Akron, in reverse.

Columbus became a hotbed of physical culture during World War II, largely through the efforts of Dick Falcon, who was a city, state, and national lifting champion and at one time held all Ohio featherweight records. Later he attained fame as a photographer whose pictures graced the pages of many muscle magazines. Falcon also started the first Columbus weightlifting team, which included an aging Harry Paschall, whom he tried to reform from smoking and drinking, and a young Roger Eells, who had reformed himself.45 Facing death, Eells recovered from tuberculosis by doing

light exercises with weights in bed and increasing his bodyweight from 102 to 167. He then decided to help others by editing a magazine called VIM (Vigor-Intellect-Might) and opening a physical culture studio in Columbus. His instructors included two German Americans, Paschall and Elmer Diltz (a future AAU administrator), and Jack Libertore, an Italian American whom Eells had trained from a sickly 132 pounds to a hardy 175. Later Libertore opened his own gym, where Fraysher Ferguson, who had worked for Eells, was manager. Ferguson, a graduate of Springfield (YMCA) College, was Mr. Ohio for 1945 and runner-up for the Junior Mr. America title in 1946. Finally, there was Charles Tiffin, whose “Super Men” cartoon appeared in Strength & Health from 1939 to 1941. Through the efforts of Falcon, Eells, Paschall, Libertore, Ferguson, and Tiffin, Columbus became a physical culture hub; it conducted numerous lifting and physique contests and was regularly visited by Bob Hoffman and his York gang.

That Ohio strongmen were in sync with national trends was further evident in the athletic feats of Frank Stranahan, heir to the Champion Spark Plug fortune in Toledo. He initially used weights to improve his football ability, but he was so impressed by his strength gains that he started entering lifting meets. During World War II, as a flight officer in Florida, he pressed 220, snatched 200, and clean and jerked 260 pounds to post the highest total in a 1945 Jacksonville contest. Afterward he applied weight training to golf, and he soon became a national celebrity. In travels to tournaments he would transport a 200-pound exercise set in his car for brief clubhouse workouts and visit gyms such as Siegmund Klein’s in New York when possible for heavy workouts. Dubbed “Muscles Stranahan,” he insisted that his golf driving power benefited most from heavy weights. Through this innovative combination of weight training and athletics, the Ohio native undermined the muscle-bound myth and became weightlifting’s goodwill ambassador. Acclaimed as one of the world’s best amateur golfers, Stranahan won seven national titles, the British Amateur Open in 1948 and 1949, and over seventy amateur championships. He also ran over a hundred marathons and made a respectable three-lift total of 770 pounds at the 1950 Ohio State Championships. He was a pioneer in the movement for applying weight training to sports that Bob Hoffman promoted in the


1950s. Eventually resistance apparatus and strength coaching became standard in all athletic programs.

Although Stranahan never exhibited any ethnic traits, those of Charles (Chuck) Vinci of Cleveland were overt. The 25,000 Italians who arrived between 1889 and 1924 became part of the city’s most segregated ethnic group, owing largely to their inability to speak English. Vinci started lifting in 1952 at John Schubert’s Health Club and won the Ohio State Championships in Lorain the following year as a bantamweight. In 1954 he won his first of seven national titles and moved to York to train with Hoffman’s champions. He went on to win Pan-American titles in 1955 and 1959 and a gold medal at the 1956 Olympics. He set world records in all three Olympic lifts, his best being a 296-pound clean and jerk in Cleveland in 1956. But Vinci, with a thickly muscled back from Olympic lifting, was always interested in bodybuilding. Sporting sixteen-inch biceps, he curled 155 pounds and bench-pressed 300 pounds in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1955. The climax of his career came at the 1960 Rome Olympiad, where he became the last American male to win an Olympic gold medal in weightlifting.

Vinci also marked the end of a long line of strength athletes with identifiable old-world associations as American society became more homogeneous by the 1960s. But Ohio’s ethnic groups had imparted an interest level sufficient to sustain an ongoing strength culture. Indeed, prior to 1960 one would be challenged to find a leading strength figure not from an identifiable ethnic minority. Coming forward to tap this lingering and diffused propensity was Jim Lorimer, who had become aware of the importance of weight training as a high school football player in Pennsylvania. Upon moving to Columbus in 1959, he became a successful coach and administrator for women’s track and field. Lorimer’s organizing ability led AAU officials to invite him to conduct the 1967 national weightlifting championships in Columbus. With Fraysher Ferguson as director, he conducted one of the most successful meets ever. “I can’t say enough fine things about the show,” exclaimed Bob Hoffman. “A terrific job!” Johnny Tremble in Muscle Training Illustrated concurred, hoping “meets of the future are staged as well.”

Duly impressed, the AAU and its international affiliate asked Lorimer to host the 1970 world championships in Columbus. Concerned about funding, to arouse popular interest he added a Mr. World physique contest and asked

54. Interview with Jim Lorimer, June 29, 2006, Columbus, Ohio.
ABC Wide World of Sports to cover it—an iron game first. He also called Arnold Schwarzenegger, the “Austrian Oak,” at Gold’s Gym in California and sold him on the idea. Excitement reached a high pitch not only from the television coverage but from the disqualification of nine lifters for drug use and from the world’s first 500-pound clean and jerk by Russian heavyweight Vasily Alexeev. **Strength & Health** editor Bill Starr pronounced it “the greatest lifting show ever staged on American soil.”56 The Mr. World contest went equally well, featuring the world’s two leading physiques, Schwarzenegger and Cuban American Sergio Olivia, who stood side by side in the first ever pose down before a record audience of 5,000. “The crowd went absolutely wild,” Lorimer recalls. In **Muscular Development**, John Grimek commended not only the winner, Schwarzenegger, but the spirited crowd and organizers. “Everything was just perfect.” Most pleased of all was Schwarzenegger, who told Lorimer that it was the best contest he had ever attended. “When I am done competing in the sport of bodybuilding, I want to go into the promotion of the sport. I want to raise the cash prizes up to $100,000 . . . . And I’m going to come back to Columbus, Ohio, and ask you to become my partner.”57 It foreshadowed the future Terminator’s famous line: “I’ll be back!”

By the 1970s, weightlifting and bodybuilding were not the only strength sports thriving in Ohio. Larry Pacifico, a fifth-generation Italian American from New York, came to the University of Dayton to study sports education in 1964, when he “picked up a **Strength and Health** magazine and saw guys doing something other than Olympic lifting.” Powerlifting (squat, bench press, and deadlift) had an immediate appeal, and he started training with kindred spirits Milt McKinney and George Crawford at promoter Ed Matz’s garage in Toledo.58 All three won their weight classes in the first world powerlifting championship in York in 1971. Pacifico then reeled off nine consecutive world titles, set fifty-four world records, and organized a highly successful world championship in Dayton in 1979. “Long Lift the King” was the title of a 1979 **Sports Illustrated** article on him.59 Fellow Ohioan Vince Anello, an Italian American from Cleveland, won the world title in 1972 and 1980 mainly with his deadlifting ability. In 1978 Terry Todd called Anello invincible, noting he “has ruled the deadlift, holding the 198-pound class record since 1970, the 181-pound class record since 1972, and the 220-pound class record since 1973.” Anello’s best pull was 821 pounds at 198 bodyweight.60

57. Interview with Lorimer; and John Grimek, “Mr. World,” **Muscular Development** 7 (Dec. 1970): 8–9, 67–68.
58. Larry Pacifico, **Champion of Champions** (Dayton: privately printed, 1986), 1; interview with Larry Pacifico, Mar. 25, 2007, Dayton, Ohio.
60. Terry Todd, **Inside Powerlifting** (Chicago: Contemporary, 1978), 53; and Chris Mason, “Interview,” **Powerlifting USA** 31 (Feb. 2008): 68.
Upholding Ohio’s strongman tradition, which now transcended ethnicity, Pacifico ran a health club, marketed supplements, won the Mr. Ohio over-forty title, and became a personal trainer.61

No less persistent and an even more successful advocate of powerlifting is Louis Simmons, whose Westside Barbell Club in Columbus has dominated the sport since the 1990s. Simmons, whose powerlifting career dates back to 1966, readily recognizes a debt to McKinney, Crawford, Anello, Pacifico, and Matz. He also has no moral, ethical, or physical qualms regarding steroids, admitting that he has been taking them since 1970 and can still do an 835-pound squat in his early sixties. “Anyone in the top ten is using drugs. But I never tell anyone to take anabolic steroids.”62 Nor does he have reservations concerning age or gender. At age forty-two, Amy Weisberger “keeps getting better and better,” he says, holding records in the 148-pound class. Chuck Vogelpohl, who has been with Simmons since 1987, squatted 1,150 and deadlifted 835 in 2007 at age forty-two and 264 bodyweight. George Halbert has broken eleven world bench press records, including a lift of 733 pounds at 220 bodyweight. At age nineteen and 220 pounds, Dave Hoff, has made the only 1,000-pound squat by a teen.63

While so many German-sounding names suggest a link with Ohio’s ethnic strongmen of the past, Simmons attributes the success of his team to innovative training methods. “Powerlifting is my life,” he says. “We do all the old Soviet Union methods. The dynamic method. . . . Speed is more important than strength. We train fast. It’s the Bulgarian method, the one that Alexeev used.” Facilitating these regimens are such training aids as the reverse hyper machine he devised for the lower back, the sled drag and foam box for the thighs, and rubber bands and floor presses with dumbbells for the torso. Most critical to Westside’s success is mental training, seemingly an updated version of the Barnholths’ formula. Like at the Barnholth gym, there is no admission charge, but expectations are high. “When my people come here, the object is to get their names on the blackboard. It’s all mental,” says Simmons, “Contests are a joke after training here. It’s the big weights that give you the thrill. Doing things on the edge. I like to live on the edge. I run on anger, fun anger, but anger.” Trainee Greg Pavoni attests that “there’s no gym anywhere near this strong. We’re all nutty, but it’s a good nutty.”64 Virtually all Westside lifters are nationally ranked.

61. Interview with Pacifico.
64. Interview with Simmons. A compilation of the twelve top powerlifting totals of all time by Michael Soong shows that seven of them (first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, and eleventh) were done in Columbus, thus validating its domination of the sport. Michael Soong, “Top Twelve Powerlifting Totals,” Dale Harder’s Strength and Speed Newsletter 51 (Apr. 2008): 17.
By the 1970s Ohio was also taking the lead in women's bodybuilding. Henry McGhee, weight training director at the Canton YMCA, started things off when he staged an Ohio women's physique contest in 1977. The winner was Gina LaSpina, a former gymnast from Brook Park. Afterward, according to journalist Steve Wennerstrom, she appeared on the Mike Douglas Show with singer Anne Murray and baseball star Reggie Jackson. “When Jackson did a triceps shot, LaSpina playfully pinched the back of his arm and noted that he needed some work there. The crowd loved it.” McGhee soon started a national women's physique association, which held its first national championship in 1978 in Canton. Although contestants came from other states, Ohioans took top prizes, with Marybeth Pritta of Canton taking the title and Lisa Sweterlitsch of Massillion and LaSpina winning height divisions. That the Ohio winners also had foreign-sounding names no doubt escaped the notice of observers more interested in the spectacle of muscular women. “There She Is—Miss What?” was the title of a 1980 Sports Illustrated article, whose writer was obviously spooked by the phenomenon. By 1984 women's bodybuilding was growing at “a staggering rate.” The American Federation of Women Bodybuilders boasted more than 2,000 members, and a Miss Olympia Contest was counterpart to the Mr. Olympia, bodybuilding's leading professional event. Although McGhee and his organization receded as more powerful forces exploited the new sport, MuscleMag International recalled their significance in 2007, when it cited early events in Canton as “the true beginning of women's bodybuilding contests.”

While Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, Dayton, and Canton thrived as strength centers during the 1970s, Cincinnati continued to host events associated with the culture of early German settlers. The Central YMCA was a hotbed of activity. Local promoter Charles Gschwind conducted powerlifting contests and the annual Cincinnati Open, an Olympic lifting meet of national stature. But the most notable Cincinnatian was Ken Sprague, a robust bodybuilder from the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. “Lifting weights and drinking beer was a part of the club culture,” observes Kim Wood. “Sprague was the bull of the woods in Cincinnati.” While attending college, he won the Mr. Cincinnati title in 1967. What drew him to Los Angeles three years later, with only ten dollars, was an opportunity to use his physical

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assets to make lots of money in the pornography industry. Wood calls him “the connector between bodybuilding and homosexuality.” Adopting the screen name “Dakota,” Sprague, according to a 1974 interview, was “one of the gay community’s top physique models and ‘porno’ movie stars” and had become “a millionaire.” He used part of his fortune to purchase the original Gold’s Gym in Venice for $77,000. While Joe Gold founded it in 1965, Sprague made Gold’s a Mecca for serious bodybuilders and part of the iconography of California culture. Critical to his success was “promotion. Any time a movie studio needed a gym, I let them have ours free,” he explains. Much of the classic bodybuilding film *Pumping Iron* was shot there, and it became a choice venue of physique photographers. “There were years in the late 1970s when bodybuilders from our gym were winning every elite contest.” Schwarzenegger trained there, and Sprague claims to have secured the Hulk position for Lou Ferrigno through his gym. Sprague had managed to link Gold’s to Tinseltown and lay the basis for an international franchise, with over 600 facilities in forty-two states and thirty countries.

Sprague used his influence as AAU Physique Secretary to make major changes in the conduct of the sport. In 1977 he organized the Mr. America contest in Santa Monica. The parade preceding the event featured a cavalcade of musclemen on elephants and a hundred units, including seven marching bands, and 100,000 spectators. The contest itself, with a twenty-piece orchestra and an appearance by Mae West, attracted 3,200 muscle fans. The next year Sprague staged an equally successful Mr. America contest in Cincinnati. Leading the parade was Jerry Springer, then mayor of the city, who took off his shirt and treated the crowd to double-bicep poses. The quality of competition at the Cincinnati Music Hall was high, “the best Mr. America contest yet,” observed one contestant. But the most significant service Sprague performed was to end the control of Bob Hoffman and the eastern clique over AAU bodybuilding and secure the affiliation of the International Federation of Bodybuilders, a rival organization headed by Joe and Ben Weider. The critical vote took place at the Cincinnati contest where, notes *Muscle Training Illustrated*, Sprague “consolidated a political punch that slipped the AAU ‘Old Guard’ a severe crack which changed the face of bodybuilding in America for all time.” The IFBB stole the grassroots organization of the AAU, enabling it to acquire hegemony over the physique world.

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strength culture fostered by German Americans and other ethnic groups in Ohio was having a national impact.

No less striking is Kim Wood’s role in Cincinnati’s strength tradition. After a football injury at the University of Wisconsin, Wood started bodybuilding, and in California he met Arthur Jones, inventor of Nautilus machines, the most revolutionary resistance training concept since the advent of weights. Cams and pulleys equalized stress on each phase of muscle movement. “Nautilus was high quality, high cost, and very technical,” observes Wood. He came to Cincinnati to promote the machines in what he regarded as an ideal market. “It was all part of the German culture basis. It was a cultural thing. Fitness became a big deal in America, and weightlifting became part of fitness, and it was integrated with American culture and was then no longer an ethnic thing.”76 In 1972 Paul Brown, founder and coach of the Cincinnati Bengals, asked Wood to set up a Nautilus program for his team. Then, through Brown’s influence, Wood was able to get into virtually all the pro-football teams and eventually many colleges and high schools. Other Ohio connections included the Cincinnati Reds, whose installation of Nautilus equipment coincided with their 1975 World Series victory, and George Steinbrenner, “an Ohio guy from Cleveland who bought the stuff for the Yankees. The teams that were using the stuff got results.”77

In the late 1980s, Jones sold Nautilus, and by this time Wood had enough money to start his own business, Hammer Strength, with Arthur’s son Gary and Paul Brown’s son Pete. With headquarters in Cincinnati and a large plant in Falmouth, Kentucky, the company focused on schools and the many gym chains that flourished during the 1990s. Wood explains that their machines, unlike the Nautilus, “had levers and didn’t rely on a weight stack. They were high quality, extremely durable at relatively low cost. For ten thousand dollars you could get three Nautilus machines or a room full of Hammer Strength machines.” By the time Wood and his partners sold their company in 1997, there were at least a dozen Hammer Strength machines in every well-equipped health club.78 Since then, he has amassed the largest collection of strength memorabilia east of the Mississippi, including the legendary dumbbell used by English strongman Thomas Inch in the early 1900s.

The most authentic link to Cincinnati strongmanism of yesteryear could be found during the 1970s at Denny Dase’s Drinking Place. Located near Riverfront Stadium, its proprietor, a 335-pound ex-football player, provided an active alternative to the vicarious athleticism his patrons enjoyed as fans of the Reds and Bengals. Dase funded numerous softball, bowling, basket-

76. Interview with Wood.
78. Darden, New Bodybuilding, 45–46; interview with Wood.
ball, and volleyball teams and several annual picnics. One of his patrons won a beer-drinking bout he staged by chugalugging three and a half gallons of brew in six hours. Dase himself set eating marks by downsing one and a half pounds of grapes in sixty-two seconds and five and a half pounds of ice cream in seventeen minutes. But his passion was arm-wrestling, a traditional barroom activity. With a ten-inch wrist and twenty-inch forearm, according to journalist William Speers, he had “never lost a spontaneous challenge.” Dase also sponsored a tournament that attracted a formidable body of men sporting muscle shirts, tattoos, and “lumpy, sweat-sheened biceps.” Between matches, “contestants guzzle[d] beer and [shot] whisky eschewing all accepted good training measures. And after their moment of struggle the battlers melt[ed] back into the crowd.” Speers estimates that about “200 bodies jammed into a room that is crowded with 50.”79 Though decidedly modern and lacking any trace of the German language, Dase’s bar lacked none of the spontaneity and camaraderie of its earlier ethnic counterparts.

Columbus, however, most vividly exemplifies Ohio’s ethnic association with its bygone strength culture. When Arnold Schwarzenegger told Jim Lorimer in 1970 that he would return to promote the sport, the latter was skeptical, not realizing how much goal-setting was part of Schwarzenegger’s makeup. During the next five years, he won nearly every contest he entered; he stopped to meet Lorimer on the way back from his last Mr. Olympia victory, in South Africa in 1975. He told Lorimer that he wanted them to host the 1976 Olympia in Columbus. “We shook hands,” Lorimer recalls, “but never had a formal agreement, and thirty-one years later we are still partners.”80 Roger Schwab called the 1976 event “A Time to Remember.” “As a veteran observer for over 15 years of major physique competitions and not necessarily prone to grandiose statements, I nevertheless can unequivocally state that the 1976 Mr. Olympia contest touched a standard heretofore unequaled.”81 For the next three years of hosting the Olympia in Columbus the magic of the Lorimer-Schwarzenegger touch drew even greater superlatives from contestants, fans, and pundits. Like Sprague explained his Mr. America successes in Los Angeles and Cincinnati, Lorimer cites showmanship. The duo hosted two more Olympias in 1981 and 1986, with the latter offering $120,000 in prizes, far exceeding Arnold’s initial goal.82

Meanwhile the Lorimer-Schwarzenegger collaboration expanded into other sectors as the latter became a cinema superstar. It was at Lorimer’s insistence that Arnold proposed to Maria Shriver, whom he had been dating

80. Interview with Lorimer.
for eight years. Then, in 1988, Lorimer, as a Nationwide Insurance executive in Columbus, invited presidential candidate George H. W. Bush to address a rally of 10,000 and for Schwarzenegger to introduce him. “Bush and Arnold got on very well,” Lorimer recalls, and Arnold offered to serve on Bush’s Council for Fitness and Sports if Bush was elected. As president, Bush appointed Arnold to head the council, and Arnold brought Lorimer on board. Six months later, “Arnold took me to the Oval Office to meet with Bush. The president remembered the day in Columbus and how the crowd thinned out after the introduction. It was the beginning of Arnold’s political career.”

But the boldest Lorimer-Schwarzenegger collaboration started in 1989 when they decided to organize the Arnold Classic. It began with a “bang,” noted Lonnie Teper, when “Hurricane Arnold swept through the normally docile surroundings of downtown Columbus.” With many extras, including Hans and Franz, zany characters from *Saturday Night Live*, who were given training advice from the Austrian Oak, it “set a new standard for physique show production,” reported Greg Zulak.

That the annual Arnold Classic should expand from a bodybuilding spectacle into the largest multisport competition outside the Olympics was an idea that evolved from the organizers’ political ties. Lorimer’s coordination of the Great American Workout, featuring fifteen sports on the south lawn of the White House in the early 1990s, gave him the idea of expanding the Arnold. The Arnold Fitness Weekend began in 1993 in the lobby of the Memorial Auditorium in Columbus with a few dozen exhibitors. By 2006, it had filled the Convention Center, with 17,000 athletes from 39 sports (including 14 Olympic sports), 600 exhibitors, 130,000 visitors, and millions more by televised links. Each year Lorimer added a new sport. The Arnold also became the site for an annual national weightlifting championship and the 2008 Olympic Trials. The yearly appearance of the Austrian-born Arnold, more than ever a celebrity as governor of the nation’s most populous state, served as a reminder of Ohio’s ethnic connections to physical culture and the extent to which it had become mainstream.

While Arnold represented a revival of Ohio’s strength tradition, Michael Francois, a local bodybuilder who won the 1995 Arnold Classic, was a product of this revival. Under the tutelage of Greg Greenzalis of Columbus, he packed on forty-five pounds of muscle in just over a year to become a national-level competitor. While knowing the importance of proper training and diet, Francois was also aware of the cultural underpinnings of his suc-

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83. Interview with Lorimer.
85. Presentation by Jim Lorimer, Mar. 1, 2007, Doubletree Hotel, Columbus.
cess. “Being in Columbus and around this type of atmosphere lent itself to me being able to focus on a career like this. There is such a background and wealth of knowledge in this area. . . . Winning the competition really allowed me to continue that tradition.” Francois was a beneficiary of the strength culture of Columbus, which, according to Stephen Albanese, “has become a Mecca for those who love sport.”

The Arnold Fitness Weekend has had important ripple effects. One example is Mike Davies, a former cheerleading competition organizer who trains fitness, figure, and physique women at Lorimer’s World Gym. “Columbus is the Mecca for figure and fitness girls,” he says. “There’s probably a hundred people in this gym who compete. I’ve trained seven out of the top ten fitness girls.” He has also trained thirteen Ms. Olympia contestants since 1991. At $25 per hour for eighty trainees per day in categorized groups of six to eight, Davies does better than make a good living. He has 370 trainees who come from all over the world—and an extensive waiting list to fill any spots that should become vacant. About 90 percent aspire to be professionals. For those who cannot train personally with him, he lays out his approach in a book entitled The Discipline of Competitive Fitness and Figure. In the estimation of Iron Man, “Davies is the guy who (after Jim Lorimer and Governor S) has practically single-handedly turned the sleepy little college town of Columbus, Ohio, into a lean mean fitness-competitor machine.”

Another spin-off of the Arnold Classic is Slater Stones, a budding business operated by Steve Slater, whose grandparents started a family hardware store in nearby Lancaster in 1946. The town gets its name from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the heart of “Dutch” country, from which so many early settlers came; Lancaster’s Germans left a lasting legacy in the speech, surnames, and presence of Lutheran churches. Although Slater’s iron game interest stems largely from his father, Jon, who played football for Woody Hayes at Ohio State, the ancestors of his mother, Carol Fenstermaker, were part of the first wave of Germans who crossed the Appalachians into Ohio in the nineteenth century. Originally a bodybuilder, Steve became interested in strongman events in 1998 while training with Knut Bjorvatn at the Cincinnati Strongman Club. When Bjorvatn returned to Norway, Slater purchased his concrete spherical balls, weighing 260, 300, 340, and 360 pounds. He had been going to the Arnold, and in 2001 he met Sandy Riedinger, proprietor of Beverly Nutrition, who suggested holding a strongman competition there.

88. Interview with Mike Davies, June 29, 2006, Worthington, Ohio.
90. David Contosta, Lancaster, Ohio, 1800–2000, Frontier Town to Edge City (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1999), 15.
91. Interview with Jon Slater, Apr. 11, 2008, Lancaster, Ohio.
They contacted Lorimer, but Terry Todd of the University of Texas was already putting together a team with legendary strongman Bill Kazmaier and David Webster, a pioneer of strongman events in the 1970s. Slater, with his background in strength and hardware became a valuable local connection, heading a group that has procured and stored the heavy equipment for the competitions since 2002.92

While making equipment for the Arnold strongman event, Slater started marketing the kinds of concrete balls and molds (with lead inserts) used in this and other contests, ranging from 23 to 586 pounds, and accoutrements such as True Logs and MonsterBells.93 It became an expanding venture, with business tripling from 2001 to 2008. "He has developed a niche market in which the big boys aren't playing," observes Steve's brother Jon.94 Slater Stones may never reach the stature of Nautilus or Hammer Strength, but it provides further evidence of the diversity, depth, and sustainability of Ohio's strength culture.

By this time any evidence of its ethnic origins is difficult to discern; it appears to have been swept away with many other expressions of ethnicity in the twentieth century. Most explanations for this loss dwell on the cultural vulnerability and assimilability of hyphenated Americans, the xenophobia of World War I, and the immigration quota and restriction acts that followed.95 Nowhere are the effects of this homogenizing more vivid than in the autobiographical musings of Kurt Vonnegut. "The anti-Germanism in this country during the First World War so shamed and dismayed my parents that they resolved to raise me without acquainting me with the language or the literature or the music or the oral family histories which my ancestors had loved." Likewise the inimitable H. L. Mencken, a son of German immigrants, wrote in 1928: "The melting pot has swallowed up the German-Americans as no other group, not even the Irish."96 By such reckonings all traces of ethnic cultural distinctiveness should have vanished.

That they did not, and appeared merely in a more generic form, is the thesis of this study of the ethnicity of Ohio's strength culture. Kathleen Conzen discerns this process by identifying patterns of change within the German American community.

93. For Slater Stones' full catalog, see http://www.slatershardware.com.
94. Interview with Jon Slater.
95. See, for instance, Cayton, Ohio, 143, 157; and Conzen, "Patterns of German-American History," 15.
German Americans constantly defended their difference by arguing that they wished to preserve certain values in order to make them part of a new and truly American culture, and they succeeded only too well. By the early 20th century, American schools and universities were purveying a higher culture little different from that of their German counterparts, the English-speaking elite was vigorously supporting theatrical and musical institutions of all kinds, and the newly emerging modern mass culture had taken to its bosom the leisure-time habits of German Gemütlichkeit.97

The cultural dynamics of German American assimilation are further addressed in Matthew Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color*, which shows the fluidity of ethnic identities and how such groups as the Celts, Slavs, Hebrews, Teutons, et cetera, in the nineteenth century emerged as white Americans in the twentieth. Jacobson shows how intertwined the prospects were of becoming American and Caucasian.98 A conflation of these identities and the removal of the stigma of foreignness was critical to status-seeking immigrants. "To be German and American was not to live torn between two worlds," argues Andrew Cayton, "but to build connections between them."99

The physical culture movement spawned by German Americans and embraced by other ethnic minorities in Ohio is compatible with the ideas presented by Conzen and Jacobson. While Wolfgang Helbich and Christine Totten have briefly recognized the connection between the muscular traditions of the turnverein and members of German American regiments in the Civil War and major league baseball stars of the 1920s, respectively, the iron game presents many examples of individuals with ethnic roots using their athletic prowess to attain a larger identity and contribute to what it means to be an American.100 This sampling of Ohio strength athletes includes sixteen of identifiable German (including Austrian) descent, seven Italian, four Scottish, three Bulgarian, two Irish, two Swedish, two Norwegian, two French, and one each Jewish, Lebanese, Syrian, and Spanish who transcended the ethnic group that initially defined them. All helped promote a physical culture movement for Ohio and the nation by bringing the lingering traditions of a bygone era to the present. As Kim Wood reiterates, "It started with the

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ethnic Germans and became a national fitness culture."101 Arguably the individual who has had the greatest impact is an Austrian who annually descends upon the state—as a deus ex machina—and allies with another non-Ohioan to impart and reinforce the ethnic tradition of the iron game. But Arnold Schwarzenegger, for all his foreign features, has come to symbolize American achievement, and Ohio can claim a share in his projection of bodybuilding into the larger fitness movement that began in the late 1960s.102 This integrative process is captured in Oscar Handlin’s famous remark: “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants of America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.”103

101. Interview with Wood.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Mike Davies, Louis DeMarco, Jim Lorimer, Larry Pacifico, Louis Simmons, Steve and Jon Slater, Ken Sprague, Kim Wood, and the Research Committee of Georgia College & State University in the preparation of this article.
I have always favored the enlargement of the sphere of women’s work and the payment of just compensation for it.

Salmon P. Chase, 1872

Kate Chase was said to be the most beautiful and the most intelligent woman of her age. Her father, Salmon P. Chase, is remembered today as Lincoln’s secretary of the treasury and as a chief judge of the U. S. Supreme Court. In his own time, Chase was considered one of the nation’s political giants; Abraham Lincoln described him as “one and a half times bigger than any other man” he had ever known.¹ Carl Schurz’s summary still echoes today: “More than anyone else he looked the great man. Tall, broad-shouldered, and proudly erect, . . . he was a picture of intelligence, strength, courage and dignity. He looked as you would wish a statesman to look.”²

Throughout his political career, Chase sought ways to better the position of African Americans. A man of deep convictions, he publicly and consistently advocated voting rights for African Americans as early as 1845. While his political affiliations often shifted, to the end of his life he was consistent in his advocacy of universal male suffrage for African Americans. While his

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lieutenants were negotiating for his election by the legislature to the U.S. Senate, Chase insisted that part of the “deal” would be the repeal of Ohio’s Black Laws, which discriminated against African Americans.³

Chase devoted much of his legal talent to creating a nationwide legal strategy by which slavery would be divorced from the national government and be solely dependent upon local government. His policy was summed up in his antislavery slogan: “Freedom National, Slavery Local.” As Harold Hyman noted, “for a tumultuous one-third of a century [Chase] was the antislavery crusaders’ premier legal strategist.”⁴

In spite of Chase’s egalitarian sentiments on race that our stereotypes suggest would be a hindrance to his political career, he was twice elected governor of the State of Ohio, twice elected to the U.S. Senate, and served as secretary of the treasury under President Lincoln. As Les Benedict has observed, Chase was a serious and important contender for the nomination of president of the United States in every election from 1856 through 1872.⁵ As chief justice of the United States, Chase is chiefly remembered for his nationalistic opinion in Texas v. White and his dissent in the Legal Tender Cases.⁶ His judicial reputation no doubt suffered from Felix Frankfurter’s conclusion that his commerce clause opinions were of no value to the modern era and the negative assessment of Chase’s chief justiceship by Frankfurter student and protégé Charles Fairman.⁷ Modern biographers have offered a significantly more balanced assessment of Chase.


4. Harold M. Hyman, The Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase (Lawrence, Kans.: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1997), 168. See also Michael Les Benedict, “Salmon P. Chase and Constitutional Politics,” Law and Social Inquiry 22 (1997): 459 (“Chase was the leading expositor of the Republican argument about the relationship between the federal government and slavery.”). At the time, he was known as the attorney general of runaway slaves and Chase was counsel in a variety of runaway slave cases, including Jones v. Van Zandt, 13 F. Cas. 1047 (C.C.D. Ohio 1843) (No. 7502); 46 U.S. 215 (1847); 13 F. Cas. 1054, 4 McLean 599 (C.C.D. Ohio 1849) (No. 7503); 13 F. Cas. 1056, 4 McLean 604 (C.C.D. Ohio 1849) (No. 7504); 13 F. Cas. 1056, 5 McLean 214 (C.C.D. Ohio 1851) (No. 7505); Birney v. Ohio, 8 Ohio 230 (1837) (involving Matilda); State v. Hoppess, 2 West L.J. 279; Driskill v. Parrish, 7 F. Cas. 1100 (C.C.D. Ohio 1845) (No. 4089); 7 F. Cas. 1093 (C.C.D. Ohio 1847) (No. 4087); 7 F. Cas. 1095 (C.C.D. Ohio 1849) (No. 4088); 7 F. Cas. 1068 (C.C.D. Ohio 1851) (No. 4075); Niven, Salmon P. Chase Papers, 1:162134.


6. 74 U.S. (7 Wall.) 700 (1869) and 69 U.S. (12 Wall.) 457 (1870).

Chase participated in some of the most important constitutional cases of his times, including authoring majority opinions in seven of the court’s major Reconstruction cases. This article explores the influence that Kate Chase may have had on her father’s dissent without opinion in the Fourteenth Amendment case of Bradwell v. Illinois.

**Context: The Slaughter-House Cases**

Chief Justice Chase came to the Supreme Court in 1864 without any judicial experience. Lincoln’s selection of him for chief justice has puzzled many. After all, Chase had been Lincoln’s political rival in 1860 and in 1864. Because of his political ambition, Chase had been a politically faithless member of the cabinet as secretary of the treasury. Further, Lincoln was not without choices. Two of his own appointees, Justice Samuel Miller and Justice Noah Swayne, were aspirants for the chief justiceship. But Lincoln was concerned with results, not politics. In spite of Chase’s lack of judicial experience, his view on a variety of issues concerning slavery, nationalism, states’ rights, and use of the president’s war powers were already a matter of public record. Lincoln’s reflection on how to pick a chief justice led to his well-known conclusion: “We cannot ask a man what he will do, and if we should, and he should answer us, we should despise him for it. Therefore we must take a man whose opinions are known.” Lincoln told New York congressman Augustus Frank that Chase was “sound” on the “general issues of the war” that might come before the court.8

As Professor Hyman has suggested, “more than any other, Chase . . . had long wrestled with both theoretical and practical aspects of race-driven labor law and with legal and constitutional theories of state-based federalism. Indeed, Chief Justice William Strong, Chase’s contemporary, believed Chase showed “great power” in constitutional law cases that developed from “legislation during or following the war.” Thus, Lincoln chose Chase over Miller and Swayne for such an occasion as the Slaughter-House Cases.9

At the time of Chase’s dissent in Bradwell, sitting members of the court included James Buchanan’s appointee, Nathan Clifford, the court’s senior justice. Clifford’s democratic principles and his relationship with Chase were congenial, but Chase’s antislavery and nationalistic views must have

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been an anathema to the “dough-face” Clifford.\textsuperscript{10} Also on the court was Justice Samuel Miller, a strong-willed appointee of Abraham Lincoln who viewed himself as the embodiment of reasonableness and proper judicial decision making. Though Miller at one time had great respect for Chase's ability, by the time of the \textit{Legal Tender Cases} he considered him a “domineering Chief.”\textsuperscript{11} Also on the court was Abraham Lincoln’s former campaign manager, the conservative David Davis, and California Unionist and War Democrat Stephen Field. Justice Noah Swayne was perhaps the only “true” Lincoln Republican on the court. Justice Ward Hunt had served on the New York Court of Appeals prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court. Finally, the court included Justice Joseph Bradley and Justice William Strong, both Republicans of Democratic antecedents whom President Grant had appointed in hopes of sustaining the government’s use of paper currency.

The story of the \textit{Slaughter-House Cases} is an often told one. Ultimately, a five-member majority composed of Justice Miller, Justice Clifford, Justice Hunt, Justice Davis, and Justice Strong refused to recognize a right under the privileges and immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment for butchers to pursue their trade in New Orleans without going through a state-created monopoly slaughter house. A four-member minority composed of Justice Field, Chief Justice Chase, Justice Bradley, and Justice Swayne dissented.\textsuperscript{12} One way of analyzing this decision is to note that all of the dissenters had explicitly endorsed and embraced the Fourteenth Amendment (Justice Field, Chief Justice Chase), had the type of political background to make it likely they endorsed the Fourteenth Amendment (Justice Swayne), or demonstrated familiarity with the antislavery theories that underlay the amendment (Justice Bradley). Alternatively, key members of the majority had either explicitly rejected it (Justice Miller), or had a political background making it likely that they would (Justices Clifford and Davis). While there is no evidence indicating that majority Justices Hunt and Strong opposed the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, there is also no evidence they supported it.\textsuperscript{13} When the \textit{Slaughter-House} decision was announced on April 14, 1873, Chase was seriously ill. Rather than writing a separate opinion, he joined that of Justice Field. Little is known about

\textsuperscript{10} For an account of Clifford’s background and his opposition to the Fourteenth Amendment, see Aynes, “Constricting the Law of Freedom,” 664–67.

\textsuperscript{11} For a summary of Miller’s background, see Aynes, “Constricting the Law of Freedom,” 655–65. Miller had only a rudimentary apprenticeship education in law, which may explain his seeming contempt for the use of legal authorities and his reliance on what he considered “justice.” G. Edward White, “Reconstructing the Constitutional Jurisprudence of Salmon P. Chase,” \textit{Northern Kentucky Law Review} 21 (1993): 41 (quoting Miller as saying of Chase that there was "no one against whom I would attempt to measure myself with more diffidence").

\textsuperscript{12} See Aynes, “Constricting the Law of Freedom” and articles cited, 628n7.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 655–78.
Chase's independent views of the case, except that his must have overlapped much of what Justice Field said in his dissent.

BRADWELL V. ILLINOIS

The Slaughter-House Cases set the stage for the Supreme Court's decision the next day in Bradwell v. Illinois. Myra Bradwell edited a nationwide law and business publication, the Chicago Legal News, and had studied law in her husband's office. She was an extraordinary woman whose newspaper columns reported cases, who wrote editorials advocating legal reform, and who often wrote legislation which was adopted into law. On August 2, 1869, at the age of thirty-eight, Myra Bradwell passed the Illinois Bar examination with “high honors.” However, she was denied admission to the bar by the Supreme Court of Illinois because of her gender, even though there was no provision in the applicable statute limiting legal practice to men. She sought review in the U.S. Supreme Court upon a theory which paralleled that of the butchers in the Slaughter-House Cases: because she was a citizen of the United States, the privileges and immunities clause protected her legal right to pursue the lawful profession of the law. Her counsel in the Supreme Court, U.S. senator Matthew Carpenter, was a noted member of the Supreme Court Bar who had also represented one of the parties in the Slaughter-House Cases. The court denied Bradwell's claim in an eight-to-one decision. For the Slaughter-House majority, speaking through Justice Miller, this was a simple matter. If the privileges and immunities clause did not protect the rights of male butchers to pursue their occupation without interference by a monopoly, then they could be logically consistent in concluding it did not protect Bradwell's right to pursue her occupation.

Three of the Slaughter-House dissenters, Justices Field, Bradley, and Swayne, apparently believed they had to explain how they could vote to uphold the right of the male butchers but deny Bradwell's claim under the privileges and immunities clause. Justices Swayne and Bradley both wrote concurring opinions. But it is Justice Bradley's concurrence that has attracted historical attention. Bradley justified the difference in his vote on the gender of the plaintiff; in lines that are now infamous and apparently provoked laughter in the courtroom from the spectators at the time, he wrote: “The

15. There is, of course, a way to distinguish those opinions. The majority might have argued that the butchers were not precluded from pursuing their occupation, they were only regulated through the monopoly. Hence, the majority could have logically voted to deny the claim of the butchers in the Slaughter-House Cases and still support the claim of Mrs. Bradwell. So, it may be the difference of gender, the difference of different occupations, or some other reason rather than consistency that motivated the majority's opinion.
natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life. . . . The domestic sphere . . . properly belongs to [women]. . . . The paramount destiny and mission of women are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the creator.”16 The lone vote dissenting from the denial of Bradwell’s claim came from the dying chief justice.

Chase had an active interest in the Bradwell case and is said to have “hoped” to be able to write a dissenting opinion.17 But during Chase’s last days his strength had “manifestly diminished.” Indeed, on the last day the Supreme Court was in session that term, Chase did something he had never done before: he turned the role of presiding justice over to Senior Justice Clifford. Though Chase sat on the bench, he rested his head upon his hands the entire day: “What thoughts oppressed him, or what shadow of the disaster so fast approaching drew its pall over his spirit, no man may know.”18

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHASE’S DISSENT

It is not unusual for a justice, particularly the chief justice, to “trim” his sails in order to maintain the authority of the court or to facilitate inner court relationships. Chief Justice Marshall is known to have sacrificed his own individual judgments to make opinions of the court appear unanimous.19 Whether influenced by Marshall’s example or simply the duties of the office, Chase apparently followed the same pattern. In his diary he indicated that “except in very important cases dissent [is] inexpedient.” These recorded views appear consistent with Chase’s actions on the bench. Of the 237 opinions he authored, there are only 11 dissents. These occur in only critical cases

16. Bradwell v. Illinois, 83 U.S. (16 Wall.) 130, 141 (1873). There were contrary examples. Iowa had admitted a woman to the bar in 1869, Michigan in 1871, and Maine in 1872. Karen Berger Morello, The Invisible Bar: The Woman Lawyers in America 1638 to Present (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 11–12, 37. After the Bradwell case, North Carolina admitted its first woman to the bar in 1878. Michael Kent Curtis, “Albion Tourgee: Remembering Plessy’s Lawyer on the 100th Anniversary of Plessy v. Ferguson,” Constitutional Commentary 13 (1996): 187, 192. In the subsequent opinion of Chief Justice Ryan, the Wisconsin Supreme Court reached a similar conclusion: “The law of nature destines and qualifies the female sex for the bearing and nurture of the children of our race and for the custody of the homes of the world and their maintenance in love and honor. And all life-long callings of women, inconsistent with these radical and sacred duties of their sex, as is the profession of law, are departures from the order of nature; and, when voluntary, treason against it.” In re Goodell, 39 Wis. 232, 245 (1875).


Chase thought of great importance. Thus, that Chase publicly dissent in *Bradwell* is a matter of some significance. That he dissented alone may indicate he considered *Bradwell* an especially important case. Given the state of his health, that he did not write an opinion takes nothing away from this analysis. The question for consideration is why did Chase dissent?

**CHASE’S VALUES**

While known among historians and legal scholars as a champion of slaves and African Americans, Chase is not necessarily thought of in connection with women's rights. By careful selection, one could make a case that Chase was a strong supporter of women's rights in the modern sense. As governor of Ohio, he had supported the reform of the property law to give married women control over their own property. He was a pioneer in the employment of women in government. Prior to 1862, only seven women had been employed by the U.S. government. But under his leadership, the Treasury Department was the "first government office to hire a large number of women." By 1865, 447 women were employed by the Treasury Department in the roles of copyists, currency counters, and clerks. In 1872, Chase wrote that he had "always favored the enlargement of the sphere of women's work and the payment of just compensation for it." When asked why he hired large numbers of African Americans and women Chase replied: "I gave them employment to be able to provide for themselves and their families."

Harold Hyman takes a familiar case decided by Chase, *In re Turner*, and calls our attention to a detail not often noticed: the name and person of the plaintiff, Elizabeth Turner, a "young person of color." In the words of Hyman, "To

22. Claussen, "Gendered Merit," 229, 230. The needs of the war for workers caused the rebellious states to adopt the same policy and employ a large number of women. Janet Kaufman, "Treasury Girls," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 25 (May 1986): 32. I am indebted to Jennifer E. Ayres Wright for calling this article to my attention; Donna M. DeBlasio, "Down from the Pedestal: Kate Chase, a Subtle Feminist" (M.A. thesis, Youngstown State Univ., 1976), 34. The terms of the employment are not clear. Citing 13 Stat. 22 (1864), Claussen indicates that women were paid less than men (230). However, Hyman writes that Chase's policy was "equal-pay-for-equal-work." See Hyman, *Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase*, 78.
24. Hyman, *Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase*, 78, 79. Hyman suggests that Chase's actions in hiring women and blacks hurt him politically with the conservative factions of both the Republican and Democratic Parties and male voters and that he knew his actions hurt his chances to be president.
Chase’s credit, free labor was color-blind and gender-neutral.” Hyman suggests that Chase believed many of the “wartime degradations resulted from customs and laws that sanctioned inferior rewards from labor for women and blacks” and that he used Elizabeth Turner’s case as a way to apply the “nobler standards” of the Thirteenth Amendment and the civil rights acts to correct the wrong. Indeed, Professor Hyman suggests that in Chase’s vision of the future of the Union after the war there would be equal rights for all people, without respect to race or gender. Chase’s opinion in In re Turner was the first case to shield women under the war amendments and the 1866 Civil Rights Act, and his dissent in Bradwell was the first Fourteenth Amendment case to seek to offer protection to women.

But a searching look into Chase’s life also shows values concerning women more consistent with Justice Bradley’s concurring opinion. Hyman notes that while Chase employed large numbers of women as clerks in the Treasury Department, none were employed in the more important and lucrative positions as revenue agents. Further, one of Chase’s key assistants indicated that Chase had “an inflexible rule . . . never to transact business with ladies.” An illustration of the paradoxical nature of Chase’s views is found in his stand on adopting a right to vote for women. Less than a month after the January 18, 1873, Bradwell argument, the rights of women was the subject of Chase’s thoughts. In a letter to his old antislavery ally Gerrit Smith, Chase wrote: “My opinions and feelings are in favor of Woman suffrage, but I would make haste slowly.”

Though votes for women were at least consistent with his motto of universal suffrage and universal amnesty, Chase nevertheless indicated that Susan B. Anthony wanted change “a little too fast.” In an undated letter to Smith’s daughter, Elizabeth Smith Miller, Chase wrote that he was in favor of “all things which will really improve the condition of women.” Among these he included “access to, and peaceful security in, all employments for which she is qualified by strength, capacity, and integrity.” With respect to

25. 24 F. Cas. 337 (C.C. Md. 1867) (No. 14,247). Hyman suggests that Chase may have held some special empathy for Elizabeth Turner because he too had served an apprenticeship and/or because she was from Maryland like Matilda, one of the runaway slaves Chase had unsuccessfully represented many years before. See Hyman, Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase, 124, 119.
26. Hyman, Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase, 73, 80, 81, 163.
27. Schuckers, Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase, 602.
28. S. P. Chase to G. Smith, Feb. 13, 1873, General Correspondence, box 27, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. I am grateful to James P. McClure for calling this letter to my attention and providing a typescript of it.
suffrage, Chase favored testing women's voting in a few states and indicated that he would vote to have Ohio try the experiment.

So Chase appears to provide us with a paradox: a man who opened up government employment to women but refused to conduct business with women; a man who privately supported women's right to vote but did not want to pursue it “too fast”; and a man who saw a traditional role for his own daughters and yet, put his daughter Kate in unconventional roles. Chase's ambiguous views were consistent with the ambiguous Republican Party National Platform in 1872. Acknowledging an “obligation” to loyal women of America, it promised only “respectful consideration” of their “honest demand” for “additional rights.” At the same time, the Republican Party declared that it viewed women's “admission to wider fields of usefulness” with “satisfaction.”

While the paradox may never be resolved, I want to suggest that the key to understanding Chase's views lies with two women, Kate Chase and Myra Bradwell. Kate Chase may be the key to explaining Chase’s advanced views on women, and Myra Bradwell may explain how he could consistently hold views similar to those of Justice Bradley and still vote to admit Bradwell to the bar. Chase's general views on equality could be logically applied to women as well as African Americans. It is therefore possible that his general views on equality naturally led to his views with respect to women. Yet this application was not inevitable, as is shown from the fact that many antislavery advocates did not embrace women's rights. It seems likely that Chase's relationship with his daughter Kate helped him take a further step in the application of his views that others were unable to take.

Catherine (Kate) Chase

It may be particularly important to note the tragedy of Chase's life, that he survived the death of three wives and five children. He was a single parent of two daughters he raised to adulthood, Kate and her half-sister Janet (Nettie) Chase. Chase's unique relationship with his oldest daughter is revealing. Born Catherine Jane Chase in 1840, she was a treasure reminding him of earlier losses. Though her mother was Chase's second wife, Kate was named after Chase's first wife, Catherine Jane Garniss Chase. This was also the name of his first child, who died in infancy.


During her first few years of life Chase read the Bible to Kate and taught her to read and to recite poems. Her favorite childhood story was about her father’s efforts to save the African American Matilda from being returned to slavery. As she grew, Chase played games of strategy, such as chess and backgammon, with Kate. Early in her life her father treated her “as his equal in years and understanding.” Sent to an all-girls’ school in New York at the age of eight, she learned French, German, history, literature, grammar, Greek, and Latin. Less serious studies included piano, elocution, dancing, and horseback riding. There is much to suggest that women educated in all-girls’ schools, as Kate did, develop more leadership qualities than she might have in a coeducational setting.

Intelligent, witty, dedicated to her father and his career, she impressed and charmed even staid men of power like Massachusetts’s stuffy Senator Charles Sumner and former U. S. attorney general Willard Wirt. In conversation and in letters, Chase and his daughter dwelt on politics. Chase often sent Kate copies of senators’ speeches and made sure she read the newspapers. While his correspondence contained paternal and paternalistic admonitions on the role of a young woman in society, he also shared with her news of battle, political speculation, and his hopes for the future. Chase was said to “go over his cases with” his oldest daughter as she was growing up, and “he delighted in her understanding” of the cases. It was suggested that eventually “she had become genuinely helpful to him” in his analyses of them. In his later career, Kate was his constant companion, often walking him from their home to his office; to the Senate, where she sat in the galleries; or to the Supreme Court, where she witnessed the arguments. She was also his horse-riding companion.

Relationships between fathers and daughters have always had the potential for a unique closeness. If Chase was devoted to his daughter, she was likewise devoted to him. “Rarely have the lives of father and daughter been so closely bound together. . . . Each played a major role in the life of the other.”

32. Virginia Tatnall Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott, 1901), 209–11; Ross, Proud Kate, 10, 37. See also Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 22.
33. Niven, Salmon P. Chase, 200; Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 212; and Phelps, Kate Chase, 75; Sokoloff, Kate Chase for the Defense, 296n8. At the age of eight, not seven as often reported, Chase sent Kate to be educated at Miss Haines’s school in New York City. Miss Haines was the sister of a onetime governor of New Jersey. When she was fourteen, Kate was enrolled in a school outside of Philadelphia. When Chase became governor of Ohio, Kate and Nettie attended the Esther Institute in Columbus.
34. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 211. See also Ross, Proud Kate, 10.
35. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 221.
She became “the pride and blessing” of his existence. This “solitary,” “austere,” and “reserved” man felt at ease with Kate, “as with no other human being.”

When even letters to one’s spouse often used a formal salutation, the normally formal, stiff, and awkward Chase addressed his twenty-two-year-old daughter as “My darling Katie.” Even after she was married, Kate responded in kind, signing letters as “Lovingly your child” and “Your devoted Katie.”

38. Niven, *The Salmon P. Chase Papers*, vol. 3: *Correspondence, 1858–March 1863* (Kent,
Chase’s official stations as governor, senator, and secretary of the treasury involved a number of social obligations with a customary female figure as a hostess. Close as he and Kate were, the political obligations of his career caused him to call on her to play public roles that gave her responsibility in a public light at an earlier age than she might otherwise have done. In the words of John Niven, Kate’s “growing maturity matched his maturing political career,” and her beauty, poise, and intelligence “made her a most useful if not indispensable adjunct to Chase’s career plans.”39 Thus, at the age of approximately fifteen, Kate became the female head of her father’s house in the governor’s mansion in Columbus, Ohio. As governor, Chase sent his oldest daughter to represent him on public occasions, such as delivering a pardon to a former Polish revolutionary. Like other strong women of that era who worked through their male relatives, Kate Chase eventually became a social and political force in her own right.

Indeed, Kate “knew intimately the strong men who formed the nucleus” of the Republican Party. She knew the party’s “aims and purposes and was in possession of its secret history contained in her father’s letters and journals and in her own memory of its inception and progress.” By the time she left the governor’s mansion, she had earned her own reputation as “an astute politician.”40 When Kate went to Washington with her secretary of the treasury father in 1861, she was his official hostess. With Secretary of State Seward’s wife being ill and withdrawn from society, Kate was “the first lady of the Cabinet.” Her “fame” surpassed “that of every woman of her generation in America,” and she obtained a “social prestige never before enjoyed by so young a woman.” Yet her role went beyond the social role allotted to women of the era. Chase valued her ability and frequently put her in positions of discussing subjects normally reserved for men. For example, after the Battle of Antietam in 1862 when he went to visit General Joseph Hooker to discuss army politics and military strategy, Chase took with him Col. James Garfield and Kate.41 Two years after her death, an assessment of

Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1996), 226 (Salmon Chase to Kate Chase, July 13, 1862). See also Phelps, Kate Chase, 226, reproducing a “My darling Katie” letter from her father dated May 4, 1869; Ross, Proud Kate, 203, 207.


40. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 212, 214; Niven, Salmon P. Chase Papers, 3:10n4. I am thinking particularly of the role Elizabeth Bacon Custer played in orchestrating the preservation of her husband’s memory (Shirley A. Leckie, Elizabeth Bacon Custer and the Making of a Myth [Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1993]) and LaSalle Corbell Pickett’s role in preserving the legend of her husband, Gen. George Pickett (Leslie Gordon, “Let the People See the Old Life as It Was”: LaSalle Corbell Pickett and the Myth of the Lost Cause [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2000]); Phelps, Kate Chase, 90.

41. Phelps, Kate Chase, 104. The Treasury Department was considered second only to the State Department. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 216–17; Niven, Salmon P. Chase, 307.
Kate’s life suggested that she enjoyed “a political power which no woman before or since her day has ever possessed.” By the 1950s, biographers would refer to her as “the most powerful woman in the United States.”

That political power came not from her unquestioned beauty but from her intelligence, political ability, and charisma. Kate Chase had the reputation of being “one of the most beautiful women” and, at the same time, “the most brilliant woman of her day.” In 1901 she was characterized as having had “one of the most astute and brilliant minds with which a woman was ever gifted.” Indeed, she had “a scientific knowledge of politics that no woman, and few men, have ever surpassed.” When journalist Henry Villard recalled her at the turn of the twentieth century, he referred to her as not only “beautiful” but also “gifted.” In addition to beauty and intelligence, she possessed “that rare quality of charisma.”

Kate took a vital interest in her father’s aspirations to become president of the United States. Married in 1863, in a wedding that drew international attention, to the wealthy former governor and U.S. senator William Sprague of Rhode Island, she was in a position to advance her father’s career. Sprague, reputed to be the wealthiest man in Rhode Island, was an early war hero. As governor, he personally led Rhode Island troops to help protect Washington, D.C., and in the first Battle of Bull Run had a horse shot out from under him. Kate and William Sprague were widely considered the two most eligible single people in Washington, D.C. As official hostess, she presided over social events designed to win her father allies and promote his career. She also functioned as her father’s private secretary, often managing his correspondence. There are suggestions that she was working behind the scenes with her father’s other friends to help promote his presidential ambitions in 1860 and 1864.

In 1868 Chase was a leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination until Ulysses S. Grant became a contender. Chase’s national prominence, his hard money stand, and his historical affinity for principles of the Democratic Party allowed him to then become a leading candidate for the 1868 Democratic nomination. Kate went to New York to coordinate efforts to nominate her father at the Democratic National Convention. She was consistently referred to as her father’s “campaign manager” at the convention. The press found her “active and visibly in charge” of the Chase

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42. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 216; Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 349.
44. Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 216. See also Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 349, 203.
headquarters. Never before had a woman played such a prominent role in the attempt to select a presidential candidate. Though unsuccessful, John Niven has concluded that Kate “played the hand dealt her with skill.”

Like Myra Bradwell, Kate Chase had crashed gender barriers of her own. During her prime in public life Kate was said to have had “a dominant influence over public men and the course of public events.” At a time when women were known by their husband’s name, Mrs. Sprague was widely referred to as “Kate Chase.” Evidence of her crossing of gender lines may be seen in the suggestion that her “intellect” was “naturally endowed with many masculine qualities” and that her father treated her “in all respects more as if she were a son than a daughter.” To at least one modern observer, Kate was a “subtle feminist.”

The story of Kate Chase and her father allows speculation about four ways Kate may have influenced her father’s views of the case. First, whatever his devotion to the conventional roles of women, he may have seen his daughter as an extraordinary person who could defy convention. It is not too much to speculate that Chase, like many another father, may have thought that his daughter deserved the right to function up to her abilities and not be rigidly constrained by gender roles, whether in politics, business, or even law had she so desired. If so, he may have been empathetic with someone, like Myra Bradwell, who had done likewise.

Second, Kate’s life may have helped him develop a political and philosophical view that, as he wrote in a private letter in 1872, led him to support “the enlargement of the sphere of women’s work.” One has a sense of this in Chase’s letter to Kate on women’s rights where he wrote about placing the government in the hands of women. He concluded: “Certainly I don’t see but you [Kate] and Nettie are as qualified to take part in [public] affairs as I was at your age.”

Third, his discussions with Kate about the law, about his

45. Niven, Salmon P. Chase, 431; Ross, Proud Kate, 202. Yet “there were boundaries even” for Kate Chase; as a woman she was not allowed to go on the floor of the convention and work among the delegates while the convention was in session. Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 214; Niven, Salmon P. Chase, 431. Such was the father/daughter relationship that when Chase learned he would not be nominated, his first question was: “Does Mrs. Sprague know and how does she bear it?” (432).

46. Phelps, Kate Chase, 286 (quoting the Philadelphia Record at the time of Kate’s death in 1899); Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 215. See also Sokoloff, Kate Chase for the Defense, 42; Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 6; Ross, Proud Kate, 202; DeBlasio, “Down from the Pedestal,” 2. While never identified publicly with the women’s suffrage movement, Kate had hosted a “parlor lecture” for suffrage advocate Julia Ward Howe (63). In an 1886 newspaper interview, Kate indicated she was sympathetic with the movement for women to vote and that she believed “they will do whatever they want to do; whenever they want to vote they will vote, and no power on earth will stop them” (Sokoloff, Kate Chase for the Defense, 267).

47. Ross, Proud Kate, 186.
cases as a lawyer and as a justice, may well have convinced him that women could successfully deal with the lawyer role.

Finally, there is the possibility that the father and daughter actually discussed the case together. Chase's letter indicating that he would dissent from the majority opinion in *Bradwell* was written from his daughter's home rather than his own. After so many long discussions about Chase's life work and ambition, it might not be too much to expect that in the discussion of his day's work the father might have discussed Bradwell's case with his daughter who counseled her father-lawyer on legal strategy, who influenced her father-governor's decisions on pardons, and who counseled him on matters of the Treasury Department.48 Whatever the impact, human nature suggests that Chase's view of *Bradwell v. Illinois* could not help but be informed by his love for and his experience with his extraordinary daughter Kate.

**MYRA BRADWELL AND THE TRUE WOMAN**

In spite of his relationship with Kate, one may still be puzzled that Chase could support Myra Bradwell's case, given statements in Chase's diaries and letters which reflect stereotypical, traditional, and restrictive stereotypes of gender. He was protective, referring to Kate as "naturally delicate" and worrying that coffee or tea might "derange" her nerves. Chase sought for her marriage to "a Christian gentleman who would be to you the affectionate protector you need."49 After receiving a letter from his daughter about difficulties with her husband, Chase responded: "Trust God, have faith in Christ, accuse no one but yourself, cherish every wifely sentiment whether now reciprocated or not. . . . Don't rebel, or let impatience be suffered in your thoughts. Make all happy around you."50

Similarly, in 1868 Kate had left Washington, apparently angry at her husband. Her father wrote that she had "sometimes forgotten that the happiness of a wife is most certainly secured by loving submission." On another occasion Chase wrote: "You must reflect, my darling, that there can be but one head to a family, and . . . that it is the wife's part after the husband chooses to act in any matter upon his own judgment without asking hers, to acquiesce cheerfully and affectionately."51 Sentiments like these make one wonder how

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49. Sokoloff, *Kate Chase for the Defense*, 76.
50. Phelps, *Kate Chase*, 226 (quoting S. P. Chase to Kate Chase Sprague, May 4, 1869).
51. Sokoloff, *Kate Chase for the Defense*, 156 (quoting S. P. Chase to Kate Chase Sprague, Aug. 9, 1868).
Chase could have simultaneously advocated an expansion of the sphere of women’s work. But Jane Friedman’s work on Myra Bradwell provides a way to resolve what at first might have appeared to be an inconsistency between Chase’s adherence to gender stereotypes and his dissent in Bradwell. Friedman, in examining Myra Bradwell’s life, outlines the nineteenth-century ideal of a “true woman.”

The view of “True Womanhood” embodied “four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.” Friedman indicates that while the modern reader might suppose Myra Bradwell had repudiated the cult of true womanhood, “in fact the contrary seems to be true.” Indeed Bradwell herself wrote of “the sweetness of true womanhood.” By 1869, when she sought admission to the bar, her children were thirteen and eleven, no longer needing close daily attention from their mother. Myra Bradwell did not pursue law as an opportunity to gain her financial and social independence from her husband. To the contrary, she wanted to work with him: “I acquired the idea [of studying law] from helping my husband in his office. I was always with him, helping in whatever way I could. . . . I believed that married people should share the same toil and the same interests and be separated in no way. . . . If they worked side by side and thought side by side we would need no divorce courts.” In spite of her business, political, and social accomplishments, Myra Bradwell still viewed herself as fulfilling the traditional role of a nineteenth-century woman, whose main province was dealing with the family.

This image of a “true woman” who could also engage in work activities that would break gender barriers both informs our judgment about how Chase may have seen his own daughter and also about how he may have viewed Bradwell’s claim. If this hypothesis is correct, then Chase could, consistently with his opinion in Slaughter-House, vote to uphold her claim without believing he was in any way compromising his traditional, more limiting values. Equally as important, he could view his own daughter’s life, which included marriage and the birth of three children, as consistent with the “cult of true womanhood.” Given his illness, which resulted in not only a lack of a written opinion but also a lack of diary entries and letters during this time, we cannot reconstruct Chase’s actual thinking or logic.

Professor Hyman suggests that Chase was “disappointed” that Bradley, Swayne, and Field—the other Slaughter-House dissenters—had concurred.

52. Friedman, America’s First Woman Lawyer, 37.
53. Sokoloff, Kate Chase for the Defense, 31, 76.
54. Friedman, America’s First Woman Lawyer, 37.
55. Ibid., 38–39; Niven, Salmon P. Chase, 424 (quoting S. P. Chase to Kate Chase Sprague, May 10, 1868); Sokoloff, Kate Chase for the Defense, 156 (quoting S. P. Chase to Kate Chase Sprague, Aug. 9, 1868).
56. By 1873, when Bradwell’s case was decided, Kate was thirty-three years old and the mother of two children.
in the majority decision in Bradwell. This was so because the majority opinion was “antithetical to Chase’s understanding of Christian doctrine and America’s history and constitutional law.” While Chase was too ill, “in body and spirit” to write an opinion, he made it clear he broke ranks not only with the majority but also with his fellow dissenters in Slaughter-House: “The CHIEF JUSTICE dissented from the judgment of the court, and from all the opinions.”

**AFTERWORD**

After an initial heart attack in 1870, Chase’s health had been in decline. By 1873 he had suffered from a heart attack, a stroke, chronic malaria, and diabetes. Just eighteen days after the court’s opinion was issued, on May 3, 1873, he died of a stroke at the New York home of his younger daughter, Nettie. Both Kate and Nettie were at his side.

Chase’s daughter Kate continued in an unhappy marriage to the former Rhode Island governor and senator William Sprague until 1882, when they divorced. The court returned to her the name “Chase,” by which the public had known her all along. Over the years she was an advisor on political strategy to such notables as James Garfield, Ulysses Grant, Chester A. Arthur, and John Hay. She was a behind-the-scenes strategist for Roscoe Conkling in the 1884 election. But never again was Kate to exercise the prominent role in American politics which she did while her father was alive. It was suggested that she “never recovered from the death of her father.” Kate Chase, the “most brilliant woman of her day,” died impoverished in 1899. She was buried in Cincinnati, Ohio, fittingly, next to her father.

Myra Bradwell went on to even greater successes. Even before the Supreme Court issued its decision in Bradwell, she had helped convince the legislature of Illinois to pass a statute that provided: “No person shall be precluded or debarred from any occupation, profession, or employment (except military) on account of sex.” By 1873, with the encouragement of

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57. Hyman reads much into the simple words. “In effect, Chase stipulated by his dissent in Bradwell v. Illinois that he still stood on the far broader ground of race-free and gender-free access to life’s opportunities, benefits, and hazards” (Reconstruction Justice of Salmon P. Chase, 165).

58. Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 273.

59. Phelps, Kate Chase, 213, 262, 286 (obituary from the Washington Evening Star); Belden and Belden, So Fell the Angels, 169, 275 (John Hay consulted Kate before turning down a position as the secretary to Secretary of State Seward.); Peacock, Famous American Belles of the Nineteenth Century, 215;

60. Friedman, America’s First Woman Lawyer, 28. This undoubtedly means that the case before the Supreme Court was moot. But it appears that the court was unaware of the Illinois statute.
Myra Bradwell, nineteen-year-old Altan Hulett became the first woman admitted to practice in the State of Illinois. Bradwell continued to follow the progress of women across the nation in gaining admission to law school and the bar, trumpeting their triumphs in the columns of the Chicago Legal News. She never took advantage of that statute, indicating that by the time the Supreme Court rendered its decision, “My business had acquired such dimensions by the time the barriers to my admittance to the bar were removed that I had no time to give to law practice, and I didn’t care to be admitted just for the privilege of putting ‘Attorney’ after my name.”

As soon as the Slaughter-House opinion was issued, Bradwell took “great pleasure” in praising Justice Miller’s opinion as being “confined strictly to the points at issue” and condemned Justice Bradley for the conflict between his dissenting opinion in the Slaughter-House Cases and his concurring opinion in Bradwell v. Illinois. Bradwell served as the publisher, business manager, and editor-in-chief of the Chicago Legal News, which “for at least two decades was the most widely circulated legal newspaper in the nation.” She served in that capacity for twenty-five years and edited 1,300 issues of the newspaper.

James Bradwell went on to become a member of the legislature, where he successfully advocated many of the reforms initiated by his wife in her newspaper columns. Their two children, Bessie and Thomas, both became lawyers. Apparently as a result of the behind-the-scenes prompting by her husband, the Supreme Court of Illinois and the Supreme Court of the United States, on their own motions, granted Myra Bradwell admission to their bars in 1890 and 1892, respectively. She died of cancer in 1894.

Justice Miller lived until 1890, removed from the court only by death. His memory is preserved in a eulogistic biography by Charles Fairman and a more thoughtful one by Michael Ross. Held in high regard by Felix Frankfurter, Fairman, and their associates, Miller is known today largely for his opinion on the Slaughter-House Cases, which, while not overruled, is regarded with virtual unanimity to have been incorrectly decided. Justice Bradley continued on the court until 1892 when he died. Though touted as one of the great justices by New Deal-era lawyers like Felix Frankfurter and his protégé Charles Fairman, by 1948 even Fairman could find no decision by Justice Bradley worthy of being included in his constitutional law casebook.

61. Ibid., 29.
62. Ibid., 30.
The Supreme Court continued on its path of restricting protections and national rights in *U.S. v. Cruikshank*, declaring the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional, supporting segregation and a variety of similar decisions. It was not until almost a century had passed, in *Reed v. Reed* (1971), that the Supreme Court used the equal protection clause (rather than the privileges and immunities clause) to accomplish what Chase might well have intended with his dissent in *Bradwell* when it held unconstitutional a state statute directing that only men could be administrators of probate estates.64 It may be that somewhere in heaven Kate Chase and Myra Bradwell both smiled knowingly at *Reed’s* adoption of their own and Salmon Chase’s principles.

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64. 92 U.S. 542 (1875); *The Civil Rights Cases*, 109 U.S. 3 (1883); *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); and *Reed v. Reed*, 404 U.S. 71 (1971).
Ohio, once part of the West, rapidly became a center for settlement and transportation as America continued to expand. Though not of the geographical size or population density of larger cities such as New York, Ohio cities such as Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus became hubs for industrialization and transportation even as the surrounding rural regions contributed significantly to the agricultural production of the United States. Columbus became Ohio’s capital city in 1816. Around the same time, the first buildings of what would become a large state penitentiary were located along the waterfront. Growing into one of the most significant penal institutions in the nation, the Ohio Penitentiary would occupy a central place in the state’s history for the next century and a half. Located on the corner of Spring Street near the Scioto River, the institution eventually covered twenty-five acres and held thousands of prisoners.

Early in its history, the penitentiary’s officials recognized that inmate health should be a primary concern in day-to-day operations. A physician was appointed, and his reports began to be included in the annual reports to the governor. These documents included aggregate information about the health of all incarcerated inmates. Because these inmates were drawn from all over the country, examining their health and health care opens a window into the medical history of diseases present in the United States from

The authors wish to thank the editor, two anonymous reviewers, Michelle Brown, Simone Caron, Joseph De Angelis, Haley Duschinski, Jeff Tatarek, and Debb Thorne for suggestions that improved the manuscript. We also wish to thank the archivists at the Ohio Historical Society and the Ohio State Library for help in accessing the materials.
1833 to around the turn of the century. This project’s goal is to examine the state of health within the penitentiary walls as it was reported by the board of managers, warden, and prison physician. This project encompasses several primary investigative questions: What infectious illnesses were being treated? What chronic diseases were present? What were the most common causes of mortality within the prison? How were female health issues addressed? How was mental health assessed and treated? Did the viewpoints and treatments of these health issues reflect trends in American medical care through time (such as the nineteenth-century focus on hygiene)? To answer these questions, this article analyzes quantitative and qualitative data to illuminate morbidity and mortality patterns within the Ohio Penitentiary for a seventy-four-year period between 1833 and 1907, ultimately addressing prison medical care in the late nineteenth century.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials for this project originated from two types of Ohio Penitentiary records. The first was yearly reports issued by the officers of the Ohio Penitentiary to the governor of Ohio for the years 1833–1907. Each contained a statement from the heads of the departments in the institution regarding the state of their area of supervision (e.g., chaplain, physician, and gasworks supervisor). This article specifically draws on the annual reports of the board of managers, warden, and physician; these constitute an incredibly rich source of data about the Ohio Penitentiary, the people involved in running the institution, attitudes about criminal behavior and even glimpses into broader American culture in the nineteenth century.¹ The basic report format was similar across years; however, the internal configuration of every section was left to the discretion of the prison official. Typically, each physician’s report included a written statement of the inmates’ health, deaths in the prison, and any other issues he wished to be present in the official record. Exceptions to this pattern were the reports from the years 1837–39, where the physician included only charts, no written report. Usually incorporated were summaries of illnesses treated during the year; some reports list by month the numbers of prisoners treated for specific illnesses, diseases, or trauma, and others list only yearly totals for the diseases. Occasionally, a reporting physician became disillusioned by this record keeping task and refused to include such lists, questioning their usefulness.²

¹. The themes addressed here represent a fraction of the data contained in the annual reports.
². From 1846 to 1848, H. Lathrop only included summaries of the information. As 1849 was the year of the cholera epidemic, a listing of illnesses treated probably seemed inconsequential since cholera took such a heavy toll on the institution. [State of] Ohio, Executive
These variations as well as variation in the fiscal year and the number of months reported necessitated only using part of the available data to incorporate as many years as possible into the study. The second source of data for this project came from the prison register, a book that held information on each inmate recorded by the institution clerk as the inmates entered into the Ohio Penitentiary. Data from this register were entered into a large database, and summary data about the inmates were utilized for this project.

Though the Ohio Penitentiary opened its doors in 1815, penitentiary records from 1815 to 1833 are difficult to locate. The prison register, from which the summary data were calculated, opened with prisoners incarcerated in 1833. However, these records included only prisoners still serving time in the Ohio Penitentiary at the time of the move to the new location in 1838, about 130 inmates. That move and fires at the penitentiary through the years may have resulted in loss of the earlier records. The end date of 1907 was determined by three factors. First, beginning in 1907 inmate height was no longer recorded in the prison register. It was subsequently recorded in another book, the Bertillon register. Since height was a major variable of interest, it was decided to use the microfilms only for 1907 and prior years. Second, the cost of copying the microfilms of both registers to record height also contributed to end-date choice. The final, and most important, factor, however, was the nature of the records themselves. All the records are handwritten; therefore, digitizing the records was not practical. Entering the data from the microfilms into a computer database encompassed three years and the labor of the first author and five research assistants. This also included repeated data cleaning and checking to produce a database that includes 37,154 individuals. This database represents all inmates recorded in the prison register from 1833 to 1907 and includes over sixty variables for each individual taken directly from the records. These data are combined with the qualitative data from the annual reports.

Temporal changes in medical terminology are evident in the annual reports, as American medical practice changed over the years covered by the study and...
some terms are completely different from those in modern medicine. For the purposes of this project, only those terms clearly identifiable as associated with or directly referring to the specific illnesses of interest were used in the analysis. Other terms in the reports probably refer to symptoms related to the various illnesses discussed in this article. Some terminology of the times seemed similar but in fact reflected different illnesses. For example, typhus fever referred to a different organism than the bacteria which causes typhoid fever, but sometimes the spelling of the two illnesses was similar. The authors have chosen to err on the side of caution in interpreting the terminology. This leads to a more conservative estimation of the prevalence of disease in the penitentiary rather than the potential for overestimation that could result from inclusion of diseases erroneously associated with a particular disease.

**BRIEF HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE OHIO PENITENTIARY**

The Ohio Penitentiary first opened its doors in 1815 as little more than a few buildings surrounded by a stockade, about a mile from the 1830s location. At that time, the prison was only 2,160 square feet in area. For comparison, it is roughly equivalent to today’s moderately sized house. By 1832, overcrowding necessitated a move to the Spring Street site on the east bank of the Scioto River. After prison officials studied other contemporary prison designs, the Ohio Penitentiary was built along the Auburn prison style, in which cells are built in a tier design. In July 1833, an outbreak of cholera among the prisoners temporarily halted work on the new penitentiary; at least a hundred inmates became infected and eleven died. Construction resumed in September, after the epidemic had concluded.

By 1837 the site was nearly complete, and the first 148 prisoners who occupied the penitentiary had to finish the construction. This new prison was twenty-five acres in size, with cell blocks five stories high and holding 1630 cells. The main cell blocks housed male inmates; the female department was a separate three-story area. Over the succeeding seventy years, rapid inmate population expansion resulted from the Ohio Penitentiary attempting to meet local as well as state and federal demands to incarcerate increasing numbers of offenders.
of individuals. Within a few years, the prison included more cell blocks, a hospital, kitchen, bakery, chapel, school, a printing and binding area, a state shop, and numerous other workshops.\textsuperscript{13} Stables and a storehouse were located outside the walls. The workshop areas occupied more of the space inside the walls than the living areas for the inmates and reflected the correctional attitude that hard work and spare living was the way to reform the convicted criminal.

The layout encompassed a row of cells along one wall, with workshops and other buildings located in a wide yard behind the cell blocks. As the Ohio Penitentiary grew, the cell blocks extended along two walls in an “L” shape. A single building served as the hospital and the kitchen; the hospital was located on the third floor, above the kitchen. This included wards for inmates needing hospital care, treatment areas, and a dispensary. The chapel and warden’s office were set into a central grassy area that also served as an exercise area for the inmates. Sewer and drainage pipes ran through the penitentiary, including a main sewage pipe that ran through two cell blocks.\textsuperscript{14}

By the late 1880s, there were five main cell blocks. Four five-story cell blocks contained seventy cells each, and one cell block contained forty-six. The 1890s plans delineated individual cells for women and mentally ill convicts, though this was not the case in earlier decades.\textsuperscript{15} Until 1864, insane convicts were kept wherever space allowed, and treatment and facilities were a constant problem for penitentiary officials. The ward eventually designed for insane inmates showed twelve cells (with a likely capacity of twenty-four individuals). Reports listed as many as thirty insane inmates treated at one time, with numbers as high as sixty-six for the year 1893.\textsuperscript{16} In spite of the construction of an asylum within the penitentiary walls by the 1860s, its small size ultimately precluded adequate housing and treatment of the insane.

Prisoner intake rose continually throughout the study period. The total number of prisoners to pass through the door went from 201 in 1834 to a high of 3,406 in 1897, after which the numbers decreased slightly. The prison became more and more crowded while no substantial changes in the layout were made (figure 1). At various times, inmates were bunked in large rooms converted from workshops into prisoner dormitories, most notably during

\textsuperscript{13} Workshops were built primarily for the manufacture of goods for sale outside the penitentiary and were often specific to outside companies that contracted for inmate labor to make their goods. \textit{Annual Report}, 1833–1907. A project with Ohio University economics associate professor Charlene Kalenkoski is underway to analyze inmate labor.

\textsuperscript{14} American Photo Lithograph, \textit{Ground Plan of the Ohio Penitentiary: Showing Drainage and Pipe System} (New York: American Photo Lithograph, 1890).

\textsuperscript{15} Mentally ill convicts are identified as “insane” in the penitentiary records; no differentiation was made as to type or severity of mental illness. For simplicity’s sake, this article will follow the same convention. \textit{Annual Report}, 1833–1907.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Annual Report}, 1893:6.
the 1849 cholera epidemic. After 1897, prisoner intake numbers declined, through the project’s end date in 1907.17

Popular sentiment of the society at large as well as prison officials held that the penitentiary and its officers were agents of rehabilitation.18 Through the years, this goal would not change substantially although certain time periods focused more on punishment than rehabilitation. The warden and his assistants were directly responsible for prison discipline and inmate punishment. Until a female matron was hired in 1845, female inmates were left largely to their own devices. The matron reported to the warden and directed the rehabilitation, labor, and discipline of female inmates. Prison rules established a strict conduct code for all inmates, mandating complete silence at all times and limited contact among inmates. For infractions against the rules, solitary confinement was the most commonly dispensed punishment. Other punishments described in a variety of prison related documents include the “hummingbird” and “ducking.”19 Through the study period, the penitentiary regularly employed a man directly responsible for the moral rehabilitation of the prisoners. This eventually merged with religious instruction and became part of the chaplain’s role. The chaplain also oversaw the library and, to some extent, collection of data about the inmates.

17. This decline may be due in part to the 1896 opening of the Mansfield State Reformatory, an intermediate institution between the Boys Industrial School in Lancaster and the Ohio Penitentiary.


19. An inmate undergoing the hummingbird was blindfolded and placed in a box containing eighteen inches of water. A nearby steam pipe was aimed at the inmate and turned on. A battery was then placed in the water and the inmate shocked. Ducking involved submerging the inmate in water. Simpson, Prisoners, 24.
PHYSICIANS

Between 1835 and 1907 the Ohio Penitentiary employed nearly thirty physicians (table 1). During the institution's early years, there was no official physician; instead, doctors were brought in from Columbus or surrounding areas as they were needed. Just prior to the move to the new Spring Street site, prison officials asked the Ohio State Legislature for a regular salaried physician position. It may have been the 1833 cholera epidemic that spurred the warden's request for a full-time penitentiary physician. Cholera cases outstripped the officials' capability to care for them, and all inmate labor ceased, which caused prison officials to raise the cry for a physician position. Little information exists as to how the physician was appointed; likely it was political. No information points to minimum qualifications or certifications required for the position. Most physicians appeared relatively established and were sometimes referred to as prominent in their field. During the first decades of the Ohio Penitentiary, the physician changed frequently. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, the appointment stabilized and became more long-term. From 1833 to 1856 there were thirteen doctors in twenty-two years, compared with fifteen between 1857 and 1907. On average, a physician worked at the penitentiary for 2.4 years, with several physicians in position for as little as part of a year. Others, notably Davis Halderman, Norman Gay, and J. W. Clemner, worked for spans as long as four (Clemner), five (Halderman), and six years (Gay). Two physicians, William Trevitt and Norman Gay, served two nonconsecutive appointments as prison physician. The earliest report to detail physician duties was the 1850 one, which listed three. The 1868 report also detailed the duties, separating them out into six responsibilities. For some years, the report listed seven. We have assumed that every physician through the study period performed his duties under the same basic rules, as a comparison of the rules throughout the years showed no significant changes.

Physicians were not resident at the prison. They were required to visit the penitentiary every day at least once and examine every sick or complain-

20. Physician names and dates of appointment were obtained from George Cole, “A History of the Ohio Penitentiary from 1850 to 1900” (M.A. thesis, Ohio State Univ., 1941), appendixes, cross-checked with the annual reports to the governor.
23. Norman Gay was employed a total of eight years as penitentiary physician, from 1867 to 1872 and again from 1882 through 1883. Annual Report, 1867–72, 1882–83.
24. A detailed examination of the physician duties is outside the scope of this article; however, most of the changes involved expanding the managerial requirements of the physician rather than changing his medical duties. For example, by the 1890s, the prison physician duties included supervising the assistant physicians and constructing their work schedules. Annual Report, 1833–1907.
Table 1. List of Physicians at the Ohio Penitentiary by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Physician</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Physician</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833–34</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1857–59</td>
<td>J. W. Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>M. B. Wright</td>
<td>1860–61</td>
<td>D. R. Kinsell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836–37</td>
<td>William Awl</td>
<td>1862–64</td>
<td>Starling Loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>J. G. Jones</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Starling Loving / C. E. Denig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>J. G. Jones / D. Wolfley / P. Sisson</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>C. E. Denig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>P. Sisson</td>
<td>1867–72</td>
<td>Norman Gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>P. Sisson / James Irons</td>
<td>1873–77</td>
<td>Davis Halderman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842–44</td>
<td>William Trevitt</td>
<td>1878–79</td>
<td>W. H. Drury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>William Trevitt / P. Sisson</td>
<td>1880–81</td>
<td>C. B. Ferrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846–48</td>
<td>H. Lathrop</td>
<td>1882–83</td>
<td>Norman Gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>H. Lathrop / William Trevitt</td>
<td>1884–85</td>
<td>C. R. Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>William Trevitt / J. B. Thompson</td>
<td>1886–89</td>
<td>J. W. Clemner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>J. B. Thompson</td>
<td>1890–91</td>
<td>V. H. Gorsline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>J. B. Thompson / B. F. Johnson</td>
<td>1892–95</td>
<td>W. T. Rowles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>B. F. Johnson</td>
<td>1896–99</td>
<td>F. S. Wagenhals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>B. F. Johnson / Albert De Lezinski</td>
<td>1900–03</td>
<td>Wells Teachnor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>John Dawson</td>
<td>1904–07</td>
<td>John Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>John Dawson / J. W. Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ing prisoner, prescribing treatment as necessary. The treatments included but were not limited to overseeing distribution of medication, performing surgical operations, and approving the diet of sick inmates. Physicians were also charged with record keeping, keeping track of deaths in the prison as well as maintaining a “Hospital Registry,” which served as the list of sick or complaining inmates.25 From these records, the physicians issued their annual reports. Physicians were also responsible for keeping a list of items needed for the medical care of inmates and asking the warden to purchase such items as he saw fit.26 The physician was also charged with oversight of diet for all prisoners as well as issuing instructions for the purchase of food-stuffs. The prison physician position included clinical work with patients as

25. The records of the individual physicians and the hospital registry have not been located as of this writing.

26. The penitentiary physicians at this time were always male; the only female official in the prison was the matron. Penitentiary nurses were also commonly male. Annual Report, 1833–1907.
well as administration of the medical and supply records and supervision of subordinates.

The prison physician was not the only individual responsible for inmate health. At any one time, he may have had one to three assistants, sometimes physicians in training. However, there is a complete dearth of information regarding these men and their roles, except for occasional listing of their names and an expression of gratitude from the physician in charge. One source indicated “day” and “night” physicians and stated that these men were at the prison hospital for their shifts. Nurses, often recruited from the male inmate population and trained, helped care for the sick in the hospital ward.

**Physician Reports**

At the close of the fiscal year, each penitentiary department head, including the physician, compiled data into an annual report. Issued to the Ohio governor, these reports were prefaced by statements from the board of directors/managers and the warden. Considerable variation existed within the reports; there was no standardization. Physicians could choose any format and include any information they wished, common elements being a written statement and summary tables with various forms of aggregate data. Some physician statements were brief and focused on inmate health. Others were utilized as vehicles to discuss issues physicians deemed important. One such report was issued by C. B. Ferrell, who discussed what he believed was the complete lack of usefulness of record keeping by the previous prison physician (W. H. Drury). Dr. Ferrell believed that these records were useless because they were not consistently kept and many inmates lied about their personal histories, thus rendering the task even more odious. Another physician, J. W. Clemmer, issued his 1887 report on the manner by which prisoners were executed and made a case for the use of electricity instead of hanging.

**General Health**

Penitentiary officials viewed inmate health through a number of different lenses. Though the structure of the reports varied somewhat over the seventy-four-year study period, several themes persist which demonstrate that

the penitentiary physicians were very much products of American culture and medical system. Physicians and wardens expressed their concern for inmate health as something required “by the laws of humanity as well as good policy.”\(^{31}\) The duty of officials was ostensibly to “do all in our power both to prevent disease and alleviate the sufferings of those unfortunate persons thus deprived of the sympathy and aid of their relatives and friends.”\(^{32}\) Prison officials, therefore, were responsible for the physical, mental, and moral health of hundreds of inmates. Physicians conducted cursory examinations of every inmate as they entered the penitentiary and noted overall health and health history. Morning sick call, mandated by prison regulations, ensured that sick inmates or inmates who self-identified as ill would see a physician. Prison doctors were not resident at the institution, and each had his own practice outside the walls. Inmates likely had more contact with the assistant physicians and nurses than with the prison physician himself.

Prison officials attributed inmate illness and death to the weak or broken-down constitution that the prisoners brought with them upon entering the Ohio Penitentiary. This poor constitution was linked to an intemperate lifestyle; one of “vice & dissipation.” More than one physician utilized this phrase in particular to refer to the inmates’ lifestyles. There was some recognition by the physicians that “not all men were of this class, but ills of the institution spring mainly from this source.”\(^{33}\) Dr. Halderman, physician for most of the 1870s, believed that the inmates were of an “inferior class.”\(^{34}\)

An often alluded-to belief was sometimes explicitly stated in the reports: physical health, more than just a result of poor lifestyle choices, was a reflection of moral health. Dr. C. R. Montgomery stated that many of the inmates were “brought up in sin and have inherited disease as well as acquired it.”\(^{35}\) Physicians also believed that mental constitution, separate from moral or physical constitution, played a role in who would fall ill or recover, especially during times when disease was rampant. One of the doctors noted that during the cholera outbreak of 1849 those who were more “cool, philosophic, and determined” held up better in the face of the disease than those who were “timid and irresolute.”\(^{36}\) These beliefs mixed current ideas of health and medical care with current thought in criminology and morality and

31. Annual Report, 1838:5. Although the quotations originate from the 1838 Board of Directors report, the sentiments are echoed throughout many reports.
32. Ibid.
33. Annual Report, 1876.
34. Dr. Halderman believed that the prison mortality rate was in part due to a free use of the pardoning power by the governor, which would prevent deaths from being recorded as occurring within the penitentiary walls. Annual Report, 1877:960.
represented the attempts of penitentiary physicians to reconcile changing notions of science with everyday practice.

**Aggregate Health**

Except for unusual cases, the structure of the reports did not allow for individual inmate health reports. Many physicians referred to “the health of the Institution”; this was always associated with a characterization of its nature. Examples include “good,” “not so good as the year preceding,” and “not different from the country generally.” Health in this sense became a totality, a summary of individual inmate illness and wellness experiences. This concept of the health as aggregate and belonging to the institution instead of to individuals first takes hold during the 1850s and probably reflected societal beliefs of the times. Nearly identical phrases or similar concepts are utilized throughout the remainder of the study period. The ubiquitous use of the phrase points to a larger concept held by the physicians and was more than simply a turn of phrase. They were responsible not so much for individual patients as for the health of the monolith known as the Ohio Penitentiary.

As stewards of a collective inmate body, the physicians often voiced unease with factors that they believed negatively impacted on overall inmate health. Nearly every physician devoted some space in the reports to either commending the warden for the good sanitation of the institution or pointing out areas in which sanitary improvements were needed. Even before the concept of fomites was widely accepted or understood, Dr. J. W. Hamilton described “wooden night soil buckets” that became saturated with waste and were perceived as a potential source for disease. His recommendation was to purchase metal buckets, which were easier to clean. The cleanliness of the grounds, hospital, workshops, and other areas of the prison was high on the priority list for prison officials. Large efforts were expended to keep the penitentiary “sanitary.” Sanitation was a preventative measure against innumerable diseases, especially cholera. Most of the associated labor was probably done by the inmates themselves, as chores ranging from whitewashing fences and buildings to dishwashing were noted in the reports. While surface contamination was thought to harbor disease, personal hygiene was not considered as important a factor in disease prevention. In-

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37. The 1900 report lists every prisoner treated by the physician and the illness for which he was treated.
40. For example, *Annual Report*, 1849.
individual inmate hygiene was largely neglected, and only a small communal bathing facility was provided for inmate usage.

Prisoner diet also began to concern the physicians. On the whole, physicians commended the warden for the abundant, good, “solid” food provided to the inmates. Only occasionally did the physician assert his limited authority to recommend changes to inmate diet. One account of a summer bout with an unknown illness among the inmates led the physician to suggest substituting wheat flour for rye, which he stated solved the issue. Scurvy found its way into the written summaries for the first time during the 1850s, though it was listed in the tables of illnesses treated as early as 1837. In supplement to his 1854 report, prison physician Dr. De Lezinski criticized prison officials for providing an inadequate diet. He offered suggestions for improving nutrition and warding off further scurvy outbreaks. Throughout the world, institutions such as poorhouses, asylums, and prisons struggled with scurvy and its effects. It is logical to assume that the penitentiary inmates’ diet was commonly fairly poor, despite official reports to the contrary. An eye toward the prison’s finances may have led wardens to cut costs wherever possible, and certainly foodstuffs would have been an excellent target for penny-pinching. In spite of this, entwined with concerns about poor diet and health were notions that a good diet combined with intensive work was good for inmates. As part of their sentence in the Ohio Penitentiary, inmates were required to work either in the workshops or outside the prison on a number of contracts (both state and private).

Included in some of the reports was an accounting of (work) days lost to illness, demonstrating that perhaps the interest in the collective inmate health did not stem from pure altruism. Rather, since the inmates were hired out on labor contracts, they were seen as a source of income for the penitentiary. Any impacts on collective inmate health could ultimately affect the institution’s bottom line. If inmates were too ill or too poorly nourished, they could not work effectively. This occurred most dramatically during the cholera epidemic of 1833. So many inmates fell ill that the penitentiary workshops had to shut down and no inmates could be sent out on other labor contracts, thus costing the penitentiary income.

41. Annual Report, 1854.
44. Nancy E. Tatarek is currently conducting an analysis of foodstuffs and expenditures on prisoner diet.
45. Annual Report, 1887.
Facilities

While new buildings or cell blocks were added during the study period, Ohio Penitentiary facilities did not undergo any significant renovations. Workshops, the hospital, kitchen, and other buildings were aging. By the late 1800s, the current incarnation of the prison was over fifty years old. The cell design and layout were from the 1830s. The cells were small: seven feet by three-and-a-half feet by six feet, nine inches. Though the prison officials decried this size, it did not substantially change over the duration of the study period. The prison population increased over time, further impacting the aging facilities (figure 1). In July of 1874, for example, 1037 men were imprisoned in the penitentiary, possibly leaving only thirteen cells vacant.

Bad ventilation was a constant theme as the Ohio Penitentiary began to age. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many illnesses were believed to originate in the air, especially bad or miasmatic air. Disease and death in the penitentiary were often ascribed in part to poorly ventilated, small, crowded cells that allowed the bad air to further stagnate. Several physicians, including Dr. Hamilton, who initially lauded the “efficiency of the Warden” for the excellent ventilation, mentioned the poor ventilation and possible solutions. Later in his report, Hamilton asked that the “poor” ventilation be improved through the addition of windows in various areas of the prison. Other aspects of prison facilities were also addressed as potential disease causing areas. The main sewer line ran throughout the prison, including underneath two cell blocks. As time passed and the line aged, prison physicians began to fear that leaks in the system might cause disease outbreaks. Occasionally they asked that a new sewer system be installed, a costly and laborious proposition.

Women’s Health

The brief statements about women's health do more to highlight treatment of women in the penitentiary than to offer insight on female health issues. For the most part, women and women’s health issues were sidelined. Until 1845 and the hiring of the first female matron, it is unclear who was in charge of the female prisoners. During that year and subsequently, the matron assumed full responsibility for the female inmates, and her purview ranged from labor to behavior to health issues. Her duties, however, did not appear to include any involvement with male prisoners. No details exist

to shed light on the qualifications of the matron or how she was selected. Occasionally in her reports, the matron mentioned health issues associated with her charges, which were most often common psychiatric illnesses of the times. Several matrons’ reports mention births, and in one case, a woman was allowed to bring her infant into the prison with her. If female deaths occurred during the year, they were most often reported in the matrons’ report and not included in the physician’s report or his death count. One matron’s report states that “no infant children remain in prison,” which brings up the question of how often infants were allowed to stay with their mothers and whether older children were also allowed to accompany their mothers into the penitentiary. No records have been found to date to shed light on this interesting issue.

**Illnesses Treated**

Consistently, the two most common medical complaints of the inmates listed by the physicians were diarrhea and dysentery. This trend began in the 1830s and lasted until the 1890s. In modern medical parlance, these are not “diseases”; they are symptoms of diseases. The records did not contain many hints about the possible cause of diarrhea and dysentery; however, speculation can link them to several factors. Likely poor sanitation and the inadequate sewage system within the walls exposed inmates to higher levels of bacteria, especially as the prison began to become overcrowded. The prison routine was such that every morning, inmates emerged from their cells with their drinking cups and night soil buckets in one hand, the other hand placed on the inmate in front of them as they marched, lockstep, to the morning meal. Certainly, diarrhea and dysentery can be physical responses to a wide array of physical illnesses, including cholera. The high levels of diarrhea and dysentery could also be linked to already undoubtedly stressed immune systems, triggered by differing causes, but treated and listed as the same by prison physicians. Diarrheal and dysenteric illnesses can also be linked to poor diet.

A different trend emerged in the 1890s, when the most common medical issues listed by the physicians were various wounds, which appear to refer to wounds occurring during an inmate’s time at the Ohio Penitentiary and

49. This inconsistency was discovered when comparing the physician-reported deaths with the deaths from the database for the year 1857: the physician listed nine deaths, and the database listed ten, one of which was female. *Annual Report*, 1857:221, 228.
not preexisting conditions. Wounds were listed as one of the major illnesses treated in the 1870s and 1880s but it was not until the 1890s that they superseded diarrhea and dysentery as the most common medical issue. Although not categorized as an “illness” by medical practitioners today, physicians at that time included trauma in the list of illnesses or diseases treated. This was probably because each required treatment, and to the penitentiary physicians, such a distinction was merely semantic. In all decades, wounds were listed by type: contused, incised, lacerated, and punctured. Separated out were gunshot wounds, wounds occurring from accidents in the workshops, and any wounds thought to be notable (e.g., “contused wound of abdomen”).52 Since only a brief description was put forth in the reports, it is nearly impossible to judge the severity of the wounds. Most could be assumed fairly minor; if a wound was major or progressed into gangrene or even death, it was listed as such in the reports.53 (Today gangrene would be categorized as a secondary medical problem as a consequence of trauma.) Some evidence in the reports pointed to inmates deliberately injuring themselves.54 However, the reasons for self-injury remain unclear. Certainly, avoidance of work would be a likely reason why an inmate might injure him- or herself; though the 1883 physician stated, “Some gave one reason for doing so and others gave other excuses.” Psychological issues might have been involved, but there were not usually indications of this in the reports. Inter-inmate conflict was rarely addressed unless it was severe, and the extent to which such conflicts factored into wounds treated is completely unknown. By the 1900s, La Grippe (influenza) and tuberculosis became the top medical concerns treated in the penitentiary (tuberculosis was already among the top causes of death and had been for many decades).

INFECTIONOUS ILLNESS

Because so little of what caused disease was understood by nineteenth-century physicians, disease in general and infectious disease in particular caused much dismay.55 Illnesses such as cholera, smallpox, and typhoid fever were subjects of great fear for physicians and lay people alike. What is now known as infectious illness occupied much of the penitentiary physician’s attention.

52. Annual Report, 1891:94.
55. “Infectious” here refers to illnesses caused by a biological organism. “Communicable” refers to those infectious illnesses passed between humans. There was a mention of “bedbugs and other insects” in the 1875 warden’s report. However, no further data were located, so this project focuses exclusively on communicable infectious illnesses as listed in the annual physician reports.
Fear of large-scale outbreaks drove physician requests to the governor for better facilities, including a place to quarantine ill inmates. Their reports often focused on measures (or lack thereof) to prevent infectious illness. The 1848 narrative was a stern warning to prison officials about Asiatic cholera, which was in its earliest epidemic stages. Dr. Lathrop’s warnings did not prevent infection, and in 1849 cholera struck the prison, killing 116 inmates. The reports early in the 1850s show an institution still reeling from the 1849 cholera epidemic, especially the 1850 report, which still made numerous references to the events of 1849. In 1850, all inmates received smallpox vaccinations to address possible infection by new inmates from Cincinnati, where the disease was then epidemic. This was the first time vaccinations were mentioned in the reports, though they may have been given earlier. Subsequently, vaccination became a routine part of the physician’s job, and occasionally the doctor not only vaccinated all incoming prisoners but re-vaccinated all incumbent inmates.

By the late 1860s, tuberculosis, also sometimes called “scrofula” or “the King’s evil,” began to weigh on physicians as the death toll from the disease continued to rise. “Scrofula seems to develop in every case that had been afflicted with it prior to confinement in the prison and in a few cases it has made its appearance in persons who were free from it prior to their imprisonment.” From this time on, tuberculosis was a constant concern for the Ohio Penitentiary physicians, warden, and even the board of managers/directors. The physician mentioned the effects of this chronic infectious illness in nearly all subsequent reports. Poor ventilation was blamed for fostering tuberculosis: “Blood becomes vitiated and digestion imperfect, supplying the elements for tubercular disease.” At least one report acknowledged that some inmates contracted tuberculosis while incarcerated; it is interesting to note that this statement originated with the warden, not the physician of that year. In fact, the physician stated that “most of the prisoners were diseased men before being sent to the penitentiary—with depraved habits of every kind.”

56. Vaccines were listed in the physician reports in 1863, 1864, 1866–68, 1875, 1880–82, 1894, 1895, and 1903. These were mostly likely all smallpox vaccinations, especially as several years denote “vaccinia,” which specifically indicates the smallpox vaccine. Annual Report, 1833–1907.
60. The warden stated, “It has been asserted (and is a fact) that more than half the time of convicts is passed in cells, and it is not to be wondered at that so many cases of consumption are not only engendered but culminate within penitentiary walls when consideration is taken of the ventilation of these cells.” Annual Report, 1883:33.
inspected the prison because of concerns with the high tuberculosis-related death rate over the preceding ten-year period, during which 125 inmates were recorded as dying from that disease.

Another infectious illness that emerged in open discussion in the reports during the 1880s was syphilis. Though listed as a treated illness in preceding years’ reports, it did not appear in the narratives of any prison physicians until this time. Doctor Montgomery in 1884 asserted that “at least 60% of the prisoners have had syphilis and have commonly neglected to continue proper treatment sufficiently long to be cured.” Syphilis was not connected with immorality in the reports, though the reason for this remains unclear. It was long thought of as a disease of a less than ideal lifestyle, but perhaps physicians simply took it for granted that this was true and did not bother to express it in their reports.

CHRONIC ILLNESS

The physicians’ terminology often described symptoms rather than naming actual diseases, probably because the practice of medicine was largely based on anecdotes and case reports. American medicine had not yet developed into the evidence-based practice of today. For that reason, it is difficult to pinpoint all the possible chronic illnesses that affected the Ohio Penitentiary’s inmate population. Certainly, infectious illnesses such as tuberculosis and syphilis were chronic diseases for which inmates were treated, as were debility, epilepsy, rheumatism, and dropsy. A myriad of other health concerns could have been chronic as well: bronchitis, colds, fever, lung disease, and heart disease, among others. Some reports list the numbers of teeth extracted; dental caries and abscesses are chronic afflictions and likely affected inmate dental health.

INSANITY

Another common thread that ran through the reports was concern with those inmates deemed insane. Inmates who were insane, especially violently so, were a significant issue. The dearth of facilities and treatment for these individuals were mentioned in many of the reports. No physicians’ reports discussed how the diagnosis of insanity was accomplished. Aside from trans-
fer to asylums outside of the penitentiary, no treatments were discussed. At least two physicians mention inmates who were “cured” of their insanity and released, either back into the larger prison population or out into society at the expiration of their sentence. Some physicians were not sympathetic to mental health issues. One warned that if mentally ill patients were treated kindly, inmates may begin to feign insanity. His proposed solution to this problem was that prison discipline as an inmate served time in the Ohio Penitentiary would determine the veracity of the illness. Another physician speculated some men were committing crimes because of their mental illnesses. Many doctors believed that mental illnesses, such as depression, could open the doors to physical illnesses because of weak constitutions, tying mental health to physical health and lifestyle choices.

The lack of proper facilities to house or treat insane inmates was noted over and over again by the physicians. Requests for a place to hold and treat them were peppered through the reports beginning in the 1860s. By 1864 a new building was constructed as an asylum. Only fourteen years later, the doctor noted that treatment for the insane inmates was inadequate once again. Based on some of the accounts, some of the suicides and homicides within the penitentiary walls happened because of mental health issues.

MEDICINE

Prison physicians rarely included information about specific medications used to treat inmates. However, three different physicians, for 1863, 1865, 1866, and 1900, each include a list of medications in the hospital dispensary. Some of the items in the lists included equipment, such as amputation tools, tooth extractors, and a galvanic machine (an electro-therapeutic device). The lists also included several reference books: a medical dictionary, a medical dispensatory, and Watson's lectures on physic. The reports

64. Annual Report, 1851:203.
65. Annual Report, 1875.
68. A dispensatory was a book which presented symptoms and treatments known to work in clinical settings and primarily focused on botanical remedies (http://www.eclecticherb.com/emp/historicalresearch.html). The lectures were given in England in the late 1830s by then famed physician Thomas Watson and continually reprinted as reference texts for physicians. Since it was listed in the prison hospital inventory, the volume must have been property of the institution and not among the personal possessions of the physician at the time. The text of ninety lectures included topics such as diagnosis and treatment of various ailments, causes of disease, identifying causes of death, and diseases specific to different parts of the body. Sir Thomas Watson, Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Physic, Delivered at King's College, London (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, published at various dates). No author or
do not mention consulting the reference texts; however, existence of these reference materials might point to a uniformity of treatment, at least until the mid-1860s.

Much of the inventory for the prison hospital did not include substances thought of as medications in the twenty-first century but did include substances very traditionally utilized in early American medicine, among them many different preparations of substances that would be defined as homeopathic today, such as various tinctures, extracts, and oils. The inventories listed materials primarily botanical in nature, such as herbs (e.g., arrowroot, goldenseal, and sage); seeds (black mustard, caraway, and fennel seeds); roots (black snake, valerian, and blackberry root); and flowers or seed heads (e.g., poppy heads). Chloroform and ether were also listed. Substances now thought poisonous were commonly used in medical treatments of the nineteenth century. Mercury, arsenic, ergot, and turpentine, listed in the inventories, were all common materials and reflected the most current medical beliefs. Although no direct evidence exists as to their usage in the penitentiary hospital, their presence in the dispensary suggests that treatments would have been consistent with the medical knowledge of the times.

MEDICAL TREATMENTS

From the very first reports, it can be clearly seen that prison physicians dealt with a variety of medical situations, ranging from acute to chronic, infectious to non-infectious disease. Infectious illnesses such as cholera represented a great unknown to early-nineteenth-century physicians, and as such, their concerns revolved around facing potential epidemics. However, since a large portion of the penitentiary was devoted to manufacturing, work-related emergencies were an ongoing source of medical issues. Managing fractures and wounds and performing amputations and other surgeries were a normal part of prison medical care. The 1852 report lists an operation for “tapping” for dropsy (the common term at the time for unspecified edema), an operation in which a trocar was inserted into the patient for the removal of fluid. There was no indication that anyone other than the prison doctors was performing the operations, though this may not have been the case. Therefore, unlike many of their counterparts, penitentiary physicians may have had to be surgeons as well as general medical practitioners.

In the late 1880s, a trend for a new type of medical practice called orificial surgery came into fashion. Its basic premise was that most ailments could

edition was given in the reports for either the medical dictionary or the dispensatory. Annual Report, 1865:260.
be cured by operating on some orifice of the body (nostrils, ears, anus, et cetera). It was specified to treat such varied conditions as constipation, dysmenorrhea, eczema, insanity, insomnia, tuberculosis, and vomiting.\textsuperscript{69} The annual report of 1889 listed sixty-seven “successful” surgeries performed under this rubric by the physician at the time, Dr. Clemner. However, the report gave no indication of the numbers of individuals this practice harmed. Perhaps coincidentally, 1889 was the last year Dr. Clemner was appointed as prison physician. Certainly his replacement was likely responsible for the better health of the inmates, as orificial surgery often caused more medical problems than it solved. Unfortunately, other than these brief glimpses into prison medical treatment, the reports offered little “best practices” to directly enlighten the modern historian as to medical care within the Ohio Penitentiary walls in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

**DEATH**

The very first official report of the penitentiary physician, issued in 1835, was a narrative that described illness during the year as well as detailing the six deaths that also occurred. This detail continues throughout the physicians’ reports, though in some reports deaths are summarized in tabular form. Several death descriptions contain detailed descriptions of internal organs, alluding to the possibility of autopsies. Such examinations were not regularly described in the reports and only briefly mentioned. The ultimate reasons for the post-mortem examinations were never stated. No one mentioned that penitentiary regulations demanded autopsies, and no state or local laws existed at the time regarding in-custody deaths. In 1877, Dr. Halderman commented that anatomical specimens were being taken from deceased inmates to start a pathological museum. He believed this was a way for the deceased inmates to pay their debt to society.

Legal executions began inside the penitentiary walls in 1885. One of the physician’s duties was to attend all executions, probably to pronounce the person dead and to record time of death. Often included in the yearly reports were accounts of the executions that had taken place during the year. J. W. Clemner, physician from 1886 to 1889, devoted a large portion of his 1887 report to legal executions. His discussion of execution as a scientific undertaking focused on the merits of death by electrocution as opposed to hanging.\textsuperscript{70}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70} The Ohio Penitentiary moved from hanging to electrocution as a mode of execution in 1896. *Annual Report*, 1896:10.
\end{itemize}
Infectious illness was consistently the greatest cause of mortality within the penitentiary. Tuberculosis and typhoid fever were nearly endemic in the inmate population, with tuberculosis always the most common cause of death. Tuberculosis did not engender the same fears that cholera, typhoid fever, and smallpox did, possibly because its symptoms were not as dramatic or immediate. Popular romantic notions of the tubercular patient may have led physicians to largely ignore tuberculosis as a factor in inmate death until the 1900s.

**Conclusion**

The physicians’ words and phrases illustrate that while each man was an individual, every physician operated within the contemporary American medical and cultural lexicon. This lexicon, though spanning seven decades, did not change substantially and offers modern historians a look into health conditions in a nineteenth-century institution. This century in the United States encompassed a drive by American medical practitioners to move the science of medicine ahead. Many believed the way to accomplish this goal was through the collection and analysis of health statistics. During the early 1800s, English actuary Edwin Chadwick began to advocate the usage of statistical methods to account for differences in mortality rates across different groups. The idea of collecting health and mortality statistics as a way to improve medical care spread to the United States, hitting its high point during the 1860s. The physician reports themselves, with their combined narrative and statistical tables, demonstrate that the Ohio Penitentiary physicians were attempting to follow this trend by collecting and presenting the statistics of their practice. Other, more fiscally motivated, reasons may have also existed for the publication of the statistics: the Ohio House and Senate controlled the budget, and justification for all expenses was certainly necessary. However, the themes that run through the narratives also demonstrate that the physicians were expressing modern medical trends in their practice.

Viewpoints of inmate health were closely tied to cultural and medical ideals. Health was often seen as a product of an individual’s lifestyle choices.

73. Bayatrizi, “From Fate to Risk.”
74. Cassedy, American Medicine, ix.
Hygiene and temperance movements of the nineteenth century indicate the popular drive to construct a healthy citizenry by aiding individuals to make the correct choices in life. Many believed that illness was a direct result of poor lifestyle; for example, cholera was often linked to intemperance. Infectious and chronic illnesses were seen as the result of a family or individual set of circumstances that resulted in a person contracting a disease. Ultimately, even Chadwick’s work linked morality and mortality and suggested that with a morally degenerate life came a higher mortality. Certainly throughout the reports there was a constant dialogue of poor inmate health as a direct result of poor lifestyle. Clearly many penitentiary physicians believed the immoral nature of their patients detrimentally affected their health and ultimately affected their mortality and morbidity.

Also inherent in Chadwick’s work was a focus on hygiene as a way to physical health. Language surrounding penitentiary sanitation threads its way through the physicians’ reports. Constant calls for better sewers, more sanitary conditions, and a larger bathhouse all reflect the views that cleanliness prevented disease, reduced death, and ensured good health. Dr. Lathrop warned the prison officials in 1848 that unless sanitary measures were taken, the prison would be vulnerable to attack from cholera. Many physicians closed their reports with a statement attributing the good health of the inmates in part to the sanitary nature of the penitentiary. Ultimately, the drive for hygiene translated into preventative medicine as opposed to curative medicine for many practicing physicians in the United States. However, this ideal did not translate into the penitentiary in the same way as it was seen in the non-incarcerated U.S. culture. This necessitated a curative attitude, as opposed to the preventative one they may have had in their practices outside the penitentiary walls.

In addition to this focus on institutional hygiene was a viewpoint of aggregate health, the “health of the Institution” so often mentioned in the records. Inmate health was rarely discussed on an individual level, and it can be assumed it was rarely conceived of in that way by prison officials. On a day-to-day basis, a physician in charge of the health of hundreds of men would perhaps not be able to view or report on his responsibility in any other way. Certainly the annual reports do not allow for any individual discussion of health (with the exception of the 1900 report).

The concept of prisoner health in the aggregate and as a result of a morally degenerate life absolved the prison physicians and officials of any ul-

76. Ibid., 47.
77. Bayatrizi, “From Fate to Risk.”
78. Cassedy, American Medicine, 108.
timate responsibility for the results of treatment or care. Though there are some exceptions to this, on the whole this was the most common viewpoint held by prison physicians and wardens. Supporting this idea was the common practice of obtaining pardons for gravely ill inmates so they could go home (known today as compassionate release). Though on the surface done for the beneficent reason of allowing ill inmates to go home to get better (or in some cases, die), there were perhaps other reasons behind the practice. Pardoning ill inmates meant he or she was not in official custody in case of death. Thus, such inmates did not need to be accounted for in any way in the official records, as they were pardoned prior to death and not the responsibility of the state. The physician in 1887 stated, “One reason for the number of deaths occurring within the prison may be found in the fact that, contrary to custom, the Governor has refused to pardon men who were about to die within the prison, unless they were likely to recover by reason of attaining their freedom.” Another reason behind the pardoning of very ill inmates might have been financial: perhaps it was simply less costly to pardon them rather than bear the continued cost of treatment and care.79

The official accounts of the board of directors/managers, warden, and physician did not offer any comment on this topic beyond the single sentence in the 1887 physician’s report. Some insight can be found within the annual message from the governor in the Executive Documents, however. After this message was usually included a listing of the pardons granted that year; each listing included the prisoner’s name, crime, sentence, any mitigating circumstances, and who recommended the pardon. For example, Patrick O’Donnell was pardoned in 1882 on the recommendation of the warden because he suffered from chronic gastritis, which resulted in a “general breakdown of the blood, with indications of pulmonary consumption.”80 Many of these pardons included phrases such as “imminent danger of death” or noted that the illness and danger to the inmate’s life were “certified by the physician.”81 According to these listings, the warden initiated the request for a pardon on behalf of ill inmates, likely in consultation with the prison physician. Unfortunately, we still lack clarity as to the exact origin of this practice and any reasons behind pardoning seriously ill inmates.

No evidence exists in the official reports to the governor, House, or Senate to show there was some penalty to the officials or institution for what might be considered higher than expected prison deaths. Prison officials held sometimes contradictory views: inmates were often inevitably in poor health.79

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79. Thanks to Simone Caron for this suggestion and many others that improved this manuscript.
80. [State of] Ohio, Executive Documents, Governor’s Annual Message (Columbus: State Printers, 1882).
81. Ibid.
health due to their lifestyles; yet it was the duty of the penitentiary to al-
leviate what suffering and give what curative assistance they could to their
charges. The reports did not construct inmate deaths as a failure of either
of the second precept or of the physicians themselves. It was the duty of the
physician to minimize deaths where possible; however, the unstated impli-
cation in the reports was that a certain number of deaths were unavoidable.
Some state governmental oversight (perhaps unofficial) must have been in
force necessitating explanation of high numbers of inmate deaths; other-
wise, prison officials would not have been so concerned, given their views
on inmate health.

From inmate deaths to treating the incarcerated ill, Ohio Penitentiary
physicians were responsible to the state for the health of a large number
of patients. It must have been a challenge to manage this high patient load
alongside their private practices. Still, as evidenced by their annual reports,
the physicians tried to practice the best way they knew. Each is a product
of a time in American medical history where methods were changing, new
practices coming into vogue, and old falling out of favor. Their words il-
\ustrate their close ties with the statistical thinking of the time and their
concern with sanitary conditions, insanity, and methods such as orificial
surgery reflect developments in American medical thinking. While prison
medical care may not have been ideal, clearly the physicians were involved
in evolving medical ideas.
On Memorial Day 1899, the residents of Youngstown, the burgeoning northeastern Ohio steel center, had a new place to spend their leisure time, when the Park and Falls Street Railway Company opened a new pleasure park at the end of its line. Originally Terminal Park, the amusement park was soon renamed Idora Park and grew into one of the area’s most popular attractions. Like other such parks springing up around the country in the early twentieth century, Idora represented one of the new forms of mass culture, attracting people of all classes and ethnic backgrounds. At the same time, these new parks transformed the landscapes in which they were built, offering residents of the community an escape from everyday reality. The use of electricity, thrilling mechanical rides, death-defying performances, and fantastic architecture were hallmarks of the modern amusement park. Not only did visitors experience the human-designed delights of the park, they often enjoyed more bucolic delights as well. Idora was adjacent to Mill Creek Park, Youngstown’s large metropolitan park, thus the natural and mechanical coexisted in one place. At the same time, the machines that transported people to the park (first, the trolley and later, the automobile) as well as the rides themselves were products of industry. Idora’s owners thus created a fantastic environment where, in theory, people could release their frustrations—in other words, the tensions caused by hard work could be relieved at play in this new amusement park. In an area where steel mills dominated the cityscape, Idora provided a different landscape, both figuratively and literally.
Youngstown, located in northeastern Ohio’s Mahoning River Valley, was a rapidly growing steel center at the turn of the twentieth century. Youngstown’s population increased from 45,000 in 1900 to 120,000 twenty years later. Iron production started early in the Mahoning Valley, when brothers James and Daniel Heaton erected what is believed to be the first blast furnace west of the Alleghenies, on Yellow Creek, outside of Youngstown, in 1803. Local deposits of iron ore, coal, and limestone fueled the Mahoning Valley’s ferrous industries in the early nineteenth century. The needs of the industrial revolution kept the area’s iron factories in business long after local resources were exhausted.  

Youngstown was a latecomer to the steel industry, with the first Bessemer process steel poured in the Mahoning Valley by the Ohio Steel Company in 1895, twenty years after Andrew Carnegie founded his Edgar Thompson steel mill in Pittsburgh. By the onset of World War I, there were several large plants in the area, including the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, Republic Iron and Steel, Brier Hill Steel (absorbed by Youngstown Sheet and Tube in 1923), and Carnegie-Illinois Steel (U.S. Steel). Despite its late start, Youngstown became one of the world’s leading steel manufacturers, earning the Mahoning Valley the sobriquet “America’s Ruhr Valley.” By the 1920s, Youngstown was second only to Pittsburgh in total annual tonnage of pig iron. 2 The massive steel mills altered the Mahoning Valley’s skyline, with the blast furnaces silhouetted at night against the orange, sulfurous emissions of the steel industry.

The tremendous expansion of industrial urban areas (even in smaller communities like Youngstown) in the early twentieth century meant that the built environment was greatly altered. Along with housing, industrial and commercial structures, and public buildings, edifices dedicated solely to entertainment also appeared. Amusement parks, with their often over-the-top architecture, were a new venue for mass entertainment that changed not only the built environment but social and cultural mores as well. The inspiration for the enclosed amusement park was the Midway Plaisance section of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, with its centerpiece, George Washington Gale Ferris’s gigantic wheel, powered by two one-thousand-horsepower electric engines. Paul Boyton, who attended the fair, fell in love with the Midway Plaisance, and, upon his return to Brooklyn, in 1895 opened Sea Lion Park at Coney Island, where he grouped together a number of amusements, including the Flip-Flap coaster (a loop-the-loop) and a Shoot the Chutes ride. Boyton’s success inspired George C. Tilyou to open his own amusement park

2. Ibid.
at Coney Island, Steeplechase Park, in 1897. By 1905 there were three amusement parks at Coney: Steeplechase, Luna, and Dreamland.³

Coney Island’s enormous success in attracting millions of visitors did not go unnoticed by the budding American entertainment industry. Thanks largely to Coney, amusement parks sprang up throughout the nation; Ohio alone had fifty-four by 1912 (ranking third, behind New York and Pennsylvania). By some estimates, there were about two thousand such parks in operation by 1920.⁴ Many parks were started by streetcar companies, hence they are known as “trolley parks.” Large cities like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Chicago had several parks vying for customers. Amusement parks were hallmarks of the new industrial, urban society, places where many people could meet to partake of a leisure activity and “embrace urban modernism.”⁵

Like many other industrial communities, Youngstown had its own trolley park. Idora Park (so renamed as a result of a contest and is supposedly a contraction of “I adore a park”) rapidly became a popular destination for those seeking respite from the unhealthy environment of industrial Youngstown from May through September. Located on the city’s south side, Idora mixed the thrill of the mechanical with the beauty of the natural. In 1891, through the efforts of Volney Rogers, Youngstown established the first municipal park in Ohio, Mill Creek Park. Rogers, a Youngstown attorney, was concerned that the growth of Youngstown threatened the natural beauty of the area. He was an avid outdoorsman and loved horseback riding; the incursion of industries like saw milling in Mill Creek Gorge, on the southwest side of town, served as further motivation to preserve that area. Rogers thus began a campaign in 1890 to protect what is now known as Mill Creek Park.⁶

Inspired by the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, Rogers consulted with Charles Eliot, one of the great landscape architect’s students, in the creation of the park. Much of the land is wooded, but there are also artificial lakes, picnic pavilions, golf courses, hiking and biking trails, stone bridges, and automobile roads. Urban parks, as historian Roy Rosenzweig writes in Eight Hours for What We Will, were “instruments of both social uplift and social control.”⁷

Olmstead and his partner, Calvert Vaux, also thought they were more than just lovely ornaments for industrial urban areas. They believed the parks were “a crucial antidote to the nervous, inhospitable city.” In fact, Olmsted saw urban parks as works of art and held a deep conviction that it was the duty of the “gentlemen” in a democratic nation to uplift and improve the character of the whole of society.

Volney Rogers, according to his biographer Bridget Williams, would have agreed with Olmsted. Even before he established Mill Creek Park, Rogers was concerned about the effect that urbanization, with its overcrowding and hard work in heavy industry, would have on Youngstown’s residents. He was especially worried about the impact such an existence had on public health. Rogers believed that without a healthful, alternative recreation, the working class might either turn to drink or “vent aggressions on their families.” He also felt that places like his lovely park allowed everyone in the community, not just the wealthy, to have access to fresh air and bountiful surroundings, thus democratizing leisure time activities. Rogers may have been paternalistic, but he always had the welfare of the entire community in mind when he created Mill Creek Park and genuinely believed that all citizens benefitted from recreational facilities like parks.

It was no accident, then, that in 1899 Park and Falls chose to locate its new amusement park adjacent to the already established Mill Creek Park. The two new south-side attractions, which greatly increased ridership on the trolley, easily made Park and Falls the most successful and profitable streetcar line in Youngstown. Idora started out as a small pleasure park, with a carousel, outdoor theater, dance hall, and picnic grounds among its attractions. By 1902, Idora had such proven appeal that park management added a $15,000 Ingersoll figure-eight roller coaster. The Ingersoll Company, which was located in Pittsburgh and operated similar rides in other parks, noted, “at no point is the toboggan better patronized than at Idora.” Although admission to the park remained free until 1974, the rides, dances, theatrical performances, and motion pictures charged fees. At the same time, the many free attractions, such as Sunday band concerts, novelty acts, and playgrounds,
gave working-class people access to Idora’s leisure activities, requiring only the nickel trolley fare out to the park.

Idora Park offered many leisure activities which contrasted greatly with descriptions of industrial Youngstown in the early twentieth century. John Fitch, the social analyst and author who interviewed hundreds of steelworkers prior to World War I for the *Survey*, the leading social-work magazine of its time, found conditions in Youngstown particularly odious:

> I talked with a man who lived with his wife and three other children in two rooms, for which he paid $7 a month. The other three rooms were occupied by a family of six who paid $9 a month. The house had running water but no toilet. I passed row after row of houses in Youngstown with outdoor privies and with hydrants in the yards. The houses in this section near the Brown-Bonnel plant of the Republic Steel Company were in bad repair generally, and garbage scattered about spoke eloquently of an inefficient board of health.14

The *Vindicator* also described the horrible conditions of working-class housing near downtown Youngstown:

> Putrid filth and squalor indescribable was found among the tenements and hovels along East Front, Boardman and Federal streets. . . . Little children were ill in huts besides which were vile, disease breeding accumulations of refuse. Many places which are homes for the poor people of the district were without any drainage and sanitary conveniences. Smoke and grime from the mills of the Republic Iron & Steel company hung over the section and the very ground which the committee walked over gave forth a sour odor as the result of the foul collections and the heat.15

Couple these images of living conditions with the dirt, smell, and smog generated by the mills themselves, and it is little wonder that people eagerly sought relief at places like Idora Park. These parks, while built by businessmen, certainly reflected the contemporary Progressive impulse to improve American society as a whole. This included not only molding urban areas into more healthful, aesthetically pleasing environments (one result of which was the spread of the City Beautiful movement, an effort in urban planning


15. “Wretched Conditions in Homes of the Poor; Up-to-Date Committee Visits Tenements,” *Vindicator*, June 24, 1909.
to build harmonious, classically inspired city centers) but also to find ways to uplift the masses of humanity trapped in low paying jobs and living in slums.\textsuperscript{16} While some viewed the working class as a source of discontent and unrest, many Progressives believed that the frustrations people felt could be channeled into more beneficial endeavors. The calming atmosphere of pastoral parks and the fun inherent in amusement parks were a part of the Progressive prescription for a better, safer, and healthier United States.\textsuperscript{17}

The beginning of the twentieth century also saw the emergence of mass consumer culture, including vaudeville, motion pictures, dance halls, spectator sports—along with amusement parks. Because of the critical mass of people required to make these enterprises successful, they were usually
connected with urban areas. Together with growing urbanization were expanding leisure time and a general overall increase in wages. These three phenomena meant that people had more free time, greater discretionary spending, and more access to goods and services—contributing to the modern consumer culture. Historian Lauren Rabinovitz believes that the amusement park “helped to constitute a modern subject fit for new urban industrial life.” Indeed, the amusement park was a perfect combination of industry often interfaced with the pastoral or natural; in some ways, this juxtaposition softened industry’s harsher, darker side.

Industrialization and the new technology it spawned directly affected the new leisure venues, amusement parks in particular. Even the trolleys that carried people to the parks were the products of technological advances. Beyond utilizing new modes of transportation and power, amusement parks and other mass entertainment venues also had a leveling effect, allowing people of different classes and ethnic groups to mix together in ways outside of the daily norm. Amusement parks also permitted the intermingling of men and women in a raucous atmosphere, far removed from everyday social strictures. Dark rides provided opportunities for covert necking, or “spooning,” while the roller coaster literally threw couples together in a very small space. As Idora’s manager Rex Billings noted, “rides which make girls hang on swains [are the] most popular.” Gary Cross and John Walton coined the term “playful crowd” to describe the multitudes of humanity that filled amusement parks in the heat of summer. Although referring specifically to Coney Island and England’s Blackpool resort, they stated: “Never before had so many gathered so often in such a concentrated space to play.”

Idora Park almost immediately became the city’s star attraction. In its inaugural 1899 season, the park saw a huge crowd of twenty thousand on one day, “which simply was a record breaker.” In fact, people were turned away at Central Square because they “could not secure car accommodations” on the trolleys. On Independence Day 1901, park management noted that

24. Ibid.
more than sixty thousand people came to Idora, with over thirty thousand coming out on the trolley and the rest by other means. In 1900, Youngstown had a population of forty-five thousand, so clearly the new amusement park drew not only city residents but people from miles around to Idora. Even in the early years, the park attracted group outings from communities in northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. For example, in August, 1901, over six thousand horseshoers, masters and journeymen alike, came to Idora from Pittsburgh; Cleveland; Beaver, Pennsylvania; and New Castle, Pennsylvania. Idora's support from the region thus ensured its success.

Many descriptions of Idora Park in its earliest years focused on the natural beauty of its location. In describing opening day 1900, the Vindicator reported that Idora was “bright as a smiling school girl . . . an ideal pleasure resort; conducted in a manner that will meet the approval of all.” The newspaper used other superlatives to describe Idora's pastoral setting: “one of the finest attractions in the state,” “one of the most beautiful sylvan spots in the country,” “great breathing spot of the city,” and “one of the most romantic spots that lies outdoors. . . . [T]he park is gifted by nature with every requisite to make up the most ideal spot for a day’s outing.” On opening day 1907, the Vindicator noted, “Never before has Idora been so beautiful in the garb of nature. Even mother nature has been improved upon by the handiwork of the landscape architects and the horticulturalists that Manager [Robert] Cunningham has employed to make beautiful the park by bloom of flowers and blossoms of flowers.”

Praise for Idora’s beauty was not limited to local newspapers. Following the annual horseshoers picnic, the Horseshoers Journal, published in Detroit, Michigan, had this to say about the park:

One of the most romantic spots that lies outdoors is Idora park. The park is gifted by nature with every requisite which goes to make up the most ideal spot for a day’s outing—rising hills and spacious lawns, great trees of oak and sycamore, scenery sufficient to provide the artist with a most beautiful picture and which enables the sightseer or picnicker to enjoy himself to the fullest as the balmy breezes sweep through the great oaks which stud the hillside. Deep ravines amid which the most delicious and healthful mineral waters have likely been discovered,

28. “Idora Park Theater Attractions,” “Big Crowd at Idora Park,” “Two Concerts at Idora Park on Sunday,” “Idora Park Made $5,000 This Season on Dance Pavilion,” all in Vindicator, June 2, July 5, 7, Sept. 19, 1900.
challenge the eye and claimed a visit from the 5,000 or more people who filled the great grounds during horseshoers’ day.\textsuperscript{30}

While Idora’s bucolic backdrop was a real attraction for its visitors, it took much more to keep people coming back. Amusement parks offered many kinds of leisure activities, ranging from vaudeville acts to fireworks. They also made liberal use of electricity—the very lifeblood of the amusement park. Many of these places came into existence, according to David Nye in \textit{Electrifying America}, because the trolley companies needed additional outlets for the electricity they generated. Nye notes, “To function during rush hour traction companies required power houses far larger than their average demand. . . . [A]t all times the power house required trained workers, regardless of how great the load.”\textsuperscript{31} The peak times for park visitation, however, were not during the rush hour— evenings, weekends, and holidays—therefore the trolleys could use their surplus power to accommodate park visitors. What could be better? Increased ridership out to Idora meant greater profit, with the added benefit that the park itself also used electricity.

In the early twentieth century, electricity was still a wonder for the average person. Inspired by the amazing success of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition and its innovative application of electricity, contemporary literature offering advice for the amusement park business highly recommended its liberal use to lure customers. To people used to the soft emission of gas fixtures, an amusement park aglow with incandescent lights must have seemed like a wonderful fairyland. More than that, even into the early twentieth century, electricity sometimes inspired fear as well as amazement. People were generally still wary of electricity’s power and nursed horror stories about it as a fire hazard. Nonetheless, amusement-park industry entrepreneurs found electric lighting an effective part of their “show.” When Dreamland Park opened on Coney Island in 1904, its centerpiece was a 375-foot-tall tower, studded with over a hundred thousand electric lights.\textsuperscript{32}

Idora’s owners read the same journals as their counterparts throughout the country and understood the admonitions to use incandescent illumination as a “come on.” From the beginning, the trolley company electrified the amusement park—and continually made improvements to the power system. In its second season, Park and Falls announced that it was planning to upgrade the lighting in the park: “Electric lights soon to be attached to

\textsuperscript{30} “Praised Bestowed upon the Master Horseshoers of This City and to Idora Park,” \textit{Vindicator}, Sept. 12, 1900.


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 122–28.
a direct light circuit.”33 After complaints by patrons, Park and Falls began adding more streetcars to the line, as well as building a double track to handle the increased volume of riders. By the 1902 season, trolley cars left the Diamond (Youngstown’s downtown Central Square) every three minutes for Idora Park.34

Around the park electric lights enthralled park patrons. During the high wire act of W. S. Davenport, the aerialist presented “grand pyrotechnics” with his “illuminated aerial bicycle act with myriad of incandescent lights illuminating his body.”35 One of the free outdoor attractions, Lotto, the Human Arrow, dove from a fifty-foot-tall electric tower into a net.36 When the new dance hall opened in 1910, the Vindicator noted that there would be “many electric lights.”37

Of course, electricity provided far more to the amusement park than illumination. It powered the mechanical rides unique to amusement parks. There were non-mechanical and steam powered predecessors to the roller coaster, carousel, and others, but electricity gave birth to the truly thrilling

33. “The Finest Attractions Ever Put on at the Popular Casino Are Here This Week,” Vindicator, May 23, 1900.
modern ride. The same is true for every other mechanical attraction; even the fun house needs electricity to power its gags and illusions.

While a number of amusement parks, for example, Conneaut, Pennsylvania’s Conneaut Lake Park and Sandusky, Ohio’s Cedar Point existed as recreational areas without mechanical rides, Idora Park was started with the intention of including some rides, the first being the carousel. Its nearby competitor Kennywood, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was more like Idora in that it also began as a trolley park, although it too was located on extant picnic grounds. Other nearby turn-of-the-century trolley parks included White City, Luna Park, and Puritas Springs in Cleveland and Summit Beach Park in Akron.38

Idora’s mechanical rides were the major draw for its patrons. Nearly each season brought new thrills that the park’s management eagerly advertised. In 1902, when Idora unveiled its first roller coaster, the Ingersoll figure eight, the Vindicator noted that this was one of the “fastest and safest” coasters ever; “men, women and children ride it.”39 The 1914 season brought a new roller coaster, originally known as the “Dip the Dips”; in 1923 it was reconfigured and renamed the “Jack Rabbit.” In 1920, the park replaced the Ingersoll figure-eight coaster with a new one called the “Firefly.” Introduced in 1930, Idora’s “Wildcat” roller coaster proved to be the most popular attraction until the park’s closing in 1984. Coasters offered the greatest thrill for the patrons, and because of their popularity, no amusement park was successful without at least one.40

David Nye points out that rides like the roller coaster were the “logical counterpart of the new industrial factory.”41 It should be no wonder that roller coasters resembled the industrial built environment—the inspiration for the modern coaster was the Mauch Chunk switchback railway in Pennsylvania. This was originally developed to transport coal from the quarry on Mount Pisgah to the canal at Mauch Chunk. When the mine was abandoned, the residents of Mauch Chunk converted the railway into a scenic ride, with steam powering the cars to the top and gravity carrying them to the bottom.42 Thus, the amusement park’s most popular attraction had its origins in industry.

Roller coasters parodied the very transportation that brought many patrons to the park—the trolley. As early as 1904, author Edward Slosson noted

38. Francis and Francis, Ohio’s Amusement Parks in Vintage Postcards.
41. Nye, Electrifying America, 131.
42. Adams, American Amusement Park Industry, 14.
the resemblance between the streetcar and the roller coaster in an article, “The Amusement Business,” in the *Independent*. Like the trolley, coasters road on tracks, jostled the riders, and swayed and turned. The roller coasters merely exaggerated the trolley experience, adding steeper hills and more seemingly dangerous curves to heighten the thrills and chills riders anticipated in delicious terror as they stood in line awaiting their turns.\(^{43}\)

Even the superstructure of the roller coaster mimicked industrial architecture—most specifically the blast furnace’s skip car. Located on the side of the blast furnace, a skip car hauls the raw materials (iron ore, coke, and limestone) to the top of the furnace for charging. The track for the skip car resembles the lift hill of the roller coaster, including the chain drive. Park patrons who lived and worked in steel towns like Youngstown saw the blast furnaces that loomed over the city day in and day out. The Idora Park coasters were a relatively safe version of a very dangerous part of work in the mill.

While roller coasters appealed to the human desire for excitement and life on the edge, other rides catered to different kinds of fantasies. Dark rides, besides being the perfect place for romance, also transported riders to another realm. Many of these had vignettes scattered throughout their tunnels to either scare or delight riders. In 1915, Idora opened a combination dark ride and water ride, the “Panama Canal,” capitalizing on the popularity of the 1914 engineering wonder of the world. The “Panama Canal” married a simulation of boating through the canal locks with exotic vignettes inside of the tunnel. This was supposed to transport the riders from their everyday existence to the lush panorama of a tropical paradise while at the same time showing off the latest American triumph.\(^{44}\) The *Vindicator* described this new ride:

> Standing right in the center of the park activities the mountains that have been built around and over the Panama Canal add greatly to the scenic effect. This is heightened by the great wheel which, driven by electricity, keeps the water flowing through the canal with a steady current. The current sends the gondolas around a winding course of 1,000 feet and then the “lock” is reached. Here the boats are drawn up an incline plane and shoot suddenly down into a broader expanse of canal that might be termed “Gatun Lake.” This is the culmination of the ride which weaves in and out a number of tunnels providing ample amusement and diversion.\(^{45}\)


\(^{44}\) Shale and Jacques, *Idora Park*, 27.

Idora remodeled the “Panama Canal” for the 1923 season, adding to the fantasy dimension of the amusement park. Instead of transporting riders to faraway Panama, it now brought them to the homegrown fairytale land of Oz. The canal and gondolas stayed, and the park replaced the tropical scenes with episodes from the much beloved L. Frank Baum Wizard of Oz books. The last water ride / dark ride at Idora debuted in the 1930 season, the “Rapids,” which replaced the “Wizard of Oz.” This one utilized boats and tunnels but at the end had a large hill that deposited the riders in a big splash of water. Dominating the ride was a huge replica of a windmill, known as the “Old Mill,” which had water cascading down its front and was brilliantly lit at night. This ballyhoo (in carnival slang, the come-on show) for the “Rapids” was much larger and more ornate than any real wind or water mill, especially one that might have powered a nineteenth-century factory. Idora thus continued to maintain its fantastic atmosphere only a few miles from real factories powered not by water but electricity and fossil fuels.

Other rides also contributed to building a sense of the unreal, an escape from the ordinary. No park was complete without a carousel; the beautifully carved wooden horses had only a passing resemblance to real-life horses, not to mention the other more fanciful creatures sometimes found on these machines, such as the hippocampus (an incredible concoction of an animal with a horse’s body and a marine animal’s tail). While early-twentieth-century American cities still included horse-drawn traffic, riding a carousel horse was a completely different experience. The carousel spun its riders in fast circles, something nearly impossible in real life. At the same time, the ever-present band organ contributed to the fantasy experience with rau-cous music. Yet the carousel also represented a part of an agrarian landscape that by the 1920s was fast disappearing, as the nation urbanized. The horses served as a reminder of rural and small-town life, but the horseless carriage was the wave of the future. Carousel horses might be one of the few equestrian experiences future generations would ever have.

Idora had three carousels in its eighty-five-year existence. The first one opened with the park itself in 1899; it was replaced in 1911 and again in 1922. The last machine was an exquisite Philadelphia Toboggan Company ride known as PTC #61. The brightly lit, fantastic ride with its ornately carved horses and two large chariots was certainly one of the most popular and prominent Idora attractions until the park’s very end—indeed, it was the park’s iconic image and the first carousel listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The look and feel of the carousel contributed to the unreal sensation of the amusement park.

Not only did the rides assist in transporting patrons to another world, but other park structures transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary. The dance hall, an Idora staple beginning in its inaugural season, was one
of the most popular non-ride attractions. Amusement parks throughout the nation usually had structures expressly for dances, no matter the size of the park. Dancing proved so popular at Idora that Park and Falls decided to build a newer, grander facility. Opened for the 1910 season, the new dance hall—later called the ballroom, far more befitting this remarkable building—proved just the ticket for Idora’s eager dancers. The style of the building itself was something not seen before in industrial Youngstown.

Although many significant new buildings representing the city’s growing importance appeared in the early twentieth century, most of them were in the prescribed Beaux-Arts classicism that dominated the contemporary City Beautiful movement. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of American architects were trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. The École emphasized the architecture of ancient Greece and ancient Rome, often freely mixing decorative elements of both, as well as incorporating axial arrangements and symmetry. Italian Renaissance architecture, with its reliance on classical forms, was also a source for Beaux-Arts architects. Beaux-Arts classicism grew in popularity because the elegance and symmetry of its design adapted especially well to monuments and important civic structures, like courthouses, libraries, schools, government buildings, and banks. The connection with ancient civilizations was also important to Americans, who saw their nation as the New World version of the democracy of ancient Greece and the republican governments of pre-Empire Rome and the Italian Renaissance city-states. Neoclassical architecture spoke volumes about what Americans thought their important buildings should say to the world.46

Mahoning County’s 1910 Courthouse and the 1907 Stambaugh Building, a skyscraper, are both Second Renaissance Revival, while the 1910 main building of the public library is Neoclassical Revival. These stately, symmetrical structures contrast greatly with Idora’s new dance hall. Angus Wade, a successful Youngstown architect, designed Idora Park’s newest attraction. The dance hall-cum-ballroom was not a typical example of Wade’s work. At about the same time that he was working on the dance hall, Wade designed the brand new home for the Youngstown YWCA. Located near downtown Youngstown on West Rayen Avenue, the YWCA is a Neoclassical Revival

46. Some of the best known American advocates of Beaux-Arts classicism were Daniel Burnham and the firm of McKim, Mead and White. Beaux-Arts classicism, which can be applied to several different styles like Neoclassical Revival and Second Renaissance Revival, was seen as particularly appropriate for monumental structures and important buildings like courthouses, city halls, banks, and schools. Beaux-Arts classicism’s best known and influential manifestation was in the White City section of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which reflected the taste of lead architects Daniel Burnham and John Root. Gelerner, History of American Architecture, 198–207; Stephen C. Gordon, How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory Form (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1992).
structure, a far more typical early-twentieth-century public building than the Idora Park Ballroom. At the same time, Wade was also supervising architect for the Second Renaissance Revival Mahoning National Bank skyscraper on Central Square, which was designed by Detroit’s Albert Kahn (architect of Ford’s River Rouge plant and the General Motors headquarters building). These two public buildings reflected the taste for the symmetry and dignity of classicism that permeated American architecture of the period.

The Idora Park Ballroom was very different in design. This building was a confection of onion domes, ogee arches, and turrets; an eclectic blend of the Moorish and Byzantine Revivals—all illuminated by hundreds of electric lights. An open air porch surrounded the ballroom and was equipped with awnings to protect dancers in inclement weather. Upon its June 20, 1910, opening, the Youngstown Telegram commented, “It is one of the most handsome buildings ever erected in a park. . . . [W]hen lighted with electric bulbs on all the cornices and towers at night, it is both picturesque and brilliant.”

The inspiration for the Idora Park Ballroom was most likely Coney Island’s Luna Park. Opened in 1903 by Frederick Thompson and Elmer “Skip” Dundy, Luna’s architecture was a fantastic concoction drawn from Byzantine and Islamic models. The fad for Orientalism in the early twentieth century found expression at Luna Park and its many imitators. Indeed, Thompson referred to Luna as an “architectural Oriental dream.” Angus Wade and Idora’s owners clearly desired to bring a sense of wonder to the Youngstown playground. The Idora Park Ballroom’s fanciful architecture indicated that it was a place where everyday cares and troubles could be danced away on sultry summer nights. Wade let his imagination run free and abandoned the obsession with classicism in favor of a building that conveyed to park-goers that they were not in the oppressive city—at least for a short time.

Unlike many amusement parks, Idora Park did not have a natural place for its patrons to engage in the healthy activity of swimming. Some, like Coney Island in New York and Euclid Beach Park in Cleveland, were located on bodies of water. Idora did not have that advantage, so its owners built and opened a swimming pool in 1924, furthering the illusion of a place far removed from the city. Built by the Youngstown firm of Heller-Murray Construction, the 210-by-160-foot pool was oval shaped and surrounded by a 20-foot-wide sand beach. At its deepest point, the pool measured 10 feet, 6 inches and had a diving tower in the center. The semi-circular Georgian Revival bathhouse sat behind the pool. The pool was a huge hit, especially

since Mill Creek banned swimming in its lakes at about this time because
the local Board of Health believed they were becoming too polluted.49

Idora’s management exploited the search for improved health with
its pool. In its advertisements, the park boasted that the “water was pure
enough to drink” and that patrons could go “swimming in drinking water.”
In truth, this was not merely boastful hype; Idora circulated its 1.2 million
gallons of water through its filtration system every twenty-four hours.50 The
park even managed to get a sanitary engineer to assure patrons of the wa-
ter’s purity: “The pool water . . . is as safe for drinking as it is for bathing.”51
The white sand surrounding it enhanced the illusion of the pool as a natural
body of water. Thus, inhabitants of an inland industrial city could feel like
they were picnicking by the sea—or at least a very clean lake. The built en-
vironment again trumps nature; if there isn’t a body of water in or near the
amusement park—construct one.52

Not only did Idora’s owners remake the landscape of their own property,
they also tried to fit the surrounding properties, and the park patrons, into
an acceptable mold. Generally, owners and operators of early-twentieth-
century amusement parks tried to appeal to the widest clientele possible,
while at the same time touting them as wholesome environments fit for the
whole family. To that end, park management announced that Idora “will
be conducted on the highest plane of respectability and moral cleanliness.
Parents may send their little ones out for an afternoon’s amusement with the
assurance that they will be carefully looked after and supplied with clean,
wholesome entertainment.”53

Idora’s owners were highly indignant when rumors circulated (it was
never stated who was doing the rumor-mongering) that the park was not
living up to its press, “No Liquors on Grounds” [is] printed on large signs
at the park entrance and will greet the people as they enter the grounds.
While this is a fact well known to all who have visited . . . the contrary re-
port (which has been maliciously circulated by some) is believed to be true

49. Shale and Jacques, _Idora Park_, 45–46; “Redecorated Idora Ready to Open Season Sat-
urday,” _Vindicator_, May 21, 1938.
50. Shale and Jacques, _Idora Park_, 45–46; advertisement, Idora Park Beach, _Vindicator_,
May 27, 1925.
52. The pool operated until the end of the 1948 season, when Idora’s owners decided to
close it for several reasons: there were two racial discrimination lawsuits already filed against
Idora over accommodations at the park’s roller-skating rink, and park management decided
to avoid any legal challenges over the pool. The city of Youngstown also had
six municipal pools, so Idora’s was also not really necessary to accommodate the population.
Kiddie Land, designed expressly for the baby-boomer generation, opened on the site of the
pool in 1951. Shale and Jacques, _Idora Park_, 79.
by many living in remote parts of the county." The concern over the sale of alcoholic beverages reflected the prohibition movement that was taking hold throughout the nation. Youngstown, with its rapidly expanding immigrant population, faced its share of challenges from those supporting prohibition. There were numerous efforts to close saloons and strictly enforce Sunday antiliquor laws. Youngstown’s Civic League was a major force behind temperance measures, as Ohio prohibition advocates tried to achieve their goal through local option. Prior to World War I, Idora was located in Youngstown Township, not within the incorporated city—and the township was dry. Thus, the park’s owners were justifiably concerned that should law enforcement believe alcohol was being sold on its grounds, there could be legal ramifications resulting in closure.

In an effort to maintain the standards deemed acceptable by early-twentieth-century middle-class social norms, Idora’s owners filed a complaint against William H. Glenn’s “place,” located just outside the park’s entrance. Glenn operated a saloon and gambling operation: “In open defiance of the law slot machines are maintained there, it is claimed, and intoxicating liquors sold. The chief patrons of the place are said to be young boys who can go there and drink and gamble without the risk of detection that they run in the city.” Glenn’s place, only open in the summer, was “meant for those who are not satisfied with the clean entertainment of the parks.”

Two years later, Glenn turned around and filed a suit against Park and Falls asking for an injunction against the alleged blocking of Ward Avenue, which formed the eastern boundary of Idora. Glenn and his partner, James P. O’Malley, claimed that some years previously the street railway company had built a fence in the rear of Idora’s theater, which encroached on eight lots owned by the two men on Ward Avenue. According to the injunction, the trolley company ostensibly built the fence to protect people getting on and off the street cars, but it really existed to eliminate the “stores and amusement places which are outside of the park and from which the company gets no percentage of the profits of patrons of Idora Park.” As a result of the injunction, a month later, Idora moved the fence. Eventually, Idora obliterated Ward Avenue as the park purchased property, doubling its original size to fourteen acres by 1915.

54. “Field Day Outing of Sunday School of Mahoning County June 21,” Vindicator, June 9, 1900.
57. In 1906 the Mahoning and Shenango Railway and Light Company took over all the traction lines in Youngstown, including Park and Falls. Despite the merger, Park and Falls retained its own identity and name (Shale and Jacques, Idora Park, 20).
As if Glenn’s saloon was not bad enough, Idora’s owners were also distressed by the presence of “La Neta, Queen of the Muscles Dances,” aka “The Girl in Red.” La Neta entertained customers in summer 1907 by performing “the dance that Little Egypt danced” while people rode by on the trolley to Idora. The provocative entertainment (by late Victorian or Edwardian standards) was a variation on a belly dance. Adjutant Webb of the Salvation Army threatened to “put her and her naughty, naughty show out of business.”  La Neta did eventually leave town, much to the delight of Idora’s owners, who were no doubt relieved that the hootchy-koochty dancer would no longer plague the sensibilities of middle-class park-goers. The wholesome atmosphere and landscape Idora provided remained unsullied by La Neta and her scandalous performance.

Idora’s owners succeeded in making their park a family-oriented place. In this respect, it was similar to Euclid Beach Park in Cleveland, whose owners, the Humphrey family, insisted on high standards of morality, cleanliness, and sobriety.  By challenging and prevailing over the more risqué competition, offering exciting rides, and designing attractive surroundings, Idora was a destination for city residents and regional audiences. An important part of the allure, the “come-on,” was the amusement park’s architecture. Amusement industry impresario Frederick Thompson believed architecture was the best way to lure customers into the park. In an article for *Everybody’s Magazine*, he stated,

>To create a carnival spirit, a showman may use other means than ballyhoos—which means the sample shows on the outside, with the patter of barkers—bands, freak shows and free circuses. I use architecture. . . . The scenery of a comic opera suggests the spirit and the environment of the piece, and the scenery of . . . an amusement park must do the same if the place is to score what in theatrical parlance is known as a “hit.” Straight lines are necessarily severe and dead. They have no right in the place of honor of a great outdoor show. The very architecture must be in keeping with the spirit of the carnival. It must be active, mobile, free, graceful and attractive. It must be arranged so that visitors will say, “What is this?” and “Why is that?”  

Idora’s owners understood this quite well. They built their park on this very premise, combining the natural with the built environment. Their fantasy world contrasted with the everyday reality of the dirty, smoky, stench-filled industrial city. Parks like Idora were places for working people to channel their anxieties from labor and urban living into a more uplifting activity. It was an affordable, bucolic place that also had exciting, even dangerous, rides that provided park-goers, particularly young men, an outlet for their energies. People came to Idora anxious to partake of its pleasures, joining the spirit of the park, where all was “speed, light, gaiety, color, excitement.”

63. Ibid.
According to Gary Orfield, the most racially segregated cities and those the NAACP found most difficult to reform were older, formerly industrial metropolises where smaller, independent suburbs hemmed in the central school district. Orfield added that in 1996 these factors appeared in combination with intense housing segregation in Illinois, Michigan, New York, and New Jersey, making them the most segregated states.¹

Dayton, Ohio, fits Orfield’s description of an older, formerly industrial metropolis where racial segregation persisted despite many efforts for change. In 1960, it had a population of about 260,000 residents who lived within its fifty square miles. Two decades later, the city’s population had dropped to about 190,000, largely because industries such as Frigidaire, Dayton Tire, and National Cash Register moved their production facilities away from the city, taking with them most of the area’s manufacturing and related service jobs. Although the city lost middle-class residents steadily throughout the period, the 1976 racial desegregation of schools was not the significant reason for the drop in population. At any rate, racial segregation in housing persisted. In 1988, Douglas Massey found the housing patterns in Dayton and its suburbs to be the third most racially segregated among the fifty largest metropolitan areas in the United States. According to Massey, the metropolitan areas with higher levels of racial segregation than Dayton were Cleveland, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois.²

Because Dayton fits the typical image of a midwestern formerly industrial center, the story of the efforts to implement racial desegregation in the schools illuminates how such programs rose and fell in the Midwest. To illustrate these shifts, this article will have three main parts. The first is a brief explanation of how racial segregation began in the city and how conditions in Dayton related to those in some other parts of the country. The second discusses the various factions, the roles they played, and the process leading to the successful integration of the schools. The conclusion will offer some descriptions of how those programs unraveled in subsequent years.3

RACIAL SEGREGATION IN DAYTON

Dayton had a long history of racial segregation. In 1849, before the events surrounding the U.S. Civil War ended slavery, the Dayton school district opened a school for black children supported entirely by free African American taxpayers. The practice changed in 1887, when the Ohio General Assembly adopted a resolution saying that regulations about education had to apply to all children regardless of race or color.4 According to R. W. Steele, former president of the Dayton Board of Education, this legislation did not lead to the racial desegregation of Dayton schools, because black parents did not ask to move their children to schools with white children.5

Steele’s observation about Dayton was true for most northern states. According to Davison Douglas, when the legislatures in northern states enacted laws prohibiting the exclusion of black students from public schools, school administrators assigned children to separate schools because the children lived in separate neighborhoods. Thus, when school officials created residential attendance zones and so-called neighborhood schools, their policies made the schools racially segregated.6

In Dayton, officials could easily maintain racial segregation because the city had an intensely segregated residential pattern. In part, it resulted from personal choice as white and black immigrants from southern states moved into Dayton between the world wars, searching for work in automobile factories, in the airplane industry, and at the National Cash Register Company.

In addition, the federal government encouraged segregation. Fearing the decline of housing values in racially integrated neighborhoods, the Federal Housing Authority required covenants forbidding sale to African Americans from 1910 to 1950. It made such restrictions to protect the organization from losing money from the mortgages it insured. Recognizing that changing neighborhoods resulted in decreased property values, the FHA asked for the covenants in deeds on all homes in Dayton except on the west side of the city. Because the Great Miami River divided the city from north to south, it separated the races as well.7

When the school board decided to build schools to serve specific neighborhoods, it created segregated schools. Further, as the racial composition of neighborhoods changed, the board maintained segregation. For example, after African American families moved into the attendance area for Garfield School in 1918, the school board converted a two-story frame house behind the brick school building to a school for African American children. When the parents of a black child sued in 1922, the Ohio Supreme Court decided the board should allow the child to attend classes in the brick structure. Because the legal decision did not require the school board to change the status of all students, the parents of other African American children had to complain before the board would allow them to attend the brick school. Most black children remained in the frame house.8

In the 1930s, the NAACP began its legal campaign to end racial segregation. NAACP lawyers appealed to various southern state courts, arguing that state governments had not abided by the 1896 Plessy doctrine of separate but equal because schools for white children received far more financial aid than did those for African American students. By 1946, the NAACP had changed its strategy, after officials realized that seeking to equalize state support for segregated schools reinforced legal separation. As a result, the organization began to file a series of cases with the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that racial segregation was unconstitutional.9

The NAACP won a decisive victory on May 17, 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court released its decision in a set of cases called *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Although this brief opinion stated that legal segregation violated the Constitution, it left many questions unanswered,

especially in northern schools, where segregation followed residential patterns rather than state law.¹⁰

Shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in Brown v. Board, Charles Francis, the president of Dayton’s chapter of the NAACP, wrote a letter to the superintendent of Dayton’s schools asking him to end racial segregation in schools. Replying to Francis’s request, Superintendent Robert French wrote that some racial mixing of students took place when attendance boundaries changed. As for teachers, French replied that Dayton’s African American teachers taught in all black schools. Although he protested that his administration never segregated schools, the district opened a new school, Dunbar High School, in 1962 with a nearly all black staff and a pupil enrollment that was 99.6 percent African American.¹¹

Three different series of events forced the Dayton school board to move toward racial desegregation. The first was that the city underwent some brief civil disturbances. The second was that the NAACP continued its legal campaign with an unbroken line of successful cases that expanded the definition of racial desegregation. The third was the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act, which empowered the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to force school districts to begin racial desegregation.

The first event, a local civil disturbance, took place on September 1, 1966, after white men riding in a car passing through the west side of Dayton shot an African American man as he stood in front of his apartment. Because National Guard soldiers quelled any violence within hours, the tumult was more threatening than destructive. Because of Los Angeles’s recent riots, Dayton’s mayor created an ad hoc citizens committee and asked the members to explore ways to reduce the threat of violence. At same time, the Ohio State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights asked the Dayton Committee on Civil Rights to study the issue. As the committees prepared their reports, a second disturbance broke out on the west side of town in June 1967, when a nationally known activist, H. Rap Brown, spoke in Dayton.¹²

The second event was that NAACP lawyers won an unbroken series of cases that expanded the requirements for desegregation. In 1968, in Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, the court decided that school districts had to do more than offer children the freedom to enroll wherever they wished if few children took advantage of the opportunities. Attendance policies had to remove all racial discrimination, and statistical evidence had to

verify the extent of the desegregation. In *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education*, in 1969, the court refused to allow school districts found guilty of segregation to wait until every possible appeal ended before they acted. These school districts had to implement desegregation while the appeals process unfolded. Finally, in the 1971 *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education*, the court decided that a school district would have to transport children to distant schools if necessary to bring about racial desegregation.\(^{13}\)

Most important for Dayton, the NAACP turned on northern schools in 1972. Since states such as Ohio had laws forbidding racial segregation, NAACP lawyers called attention to the actions of school boards and officials in state departments of education as the equivalents of the legal statutes found in southern states. In *Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver, Colorado*, the NAACP lawyers showed that the members of the school board had mandated segregation by building schools in neighborhoods where the residents were of the same race. When housing patterns changed, the board manipulated the attendance zones to maintain racially separate schools. Further, to keep some schools black and others white, the central office assigned teachers of one race to specific buildings. As a result, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed that these official acts created legally segregated schools in the same way that state constitutions mandated segregation in the South.\(^{14}\)

The third event was the passage of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act, which warned that no person could suffer discrimination in any program receiving federal financial assistance. Further, this legislation gave the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare the authority to define racial discrimination and punish those districts where the department officials found it by ending the federal support. Armed with this authority, HEW officials pressured the Dayton superintendent to desegregate the schools in the same ways it had brought about massive and rapid racial desegregation throughout the South.\(^{15}\)

Despite the threat that the federal government would force racial integration, the Dayton Board of Education resisted calling for racial desegregation of schools. In August 1967, the board issued a statement promising to include more instruction in areas such as black history. In addition, it supported measures that would bring about racial integration of housing as the means to change the racial composition of the schools.\(^{16}\)

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Although the board did not call for racial integration, it moved to change schools. In 1968, Robert French retired as superintendent after serving twenty-one years, and the Dayton school board members hired Wayne Carle to replace him. Once Carle accepted the position, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare pushed the Dayton school board to accept racial desegregation.

HEW began a compliance review in 1969 because the Dayton schools assigned all of the black teachers and principals to schools where 92 percent of the enrollment was African American. It set a deadline of the beginning of the academic year of 1970–71 to desegregate the teachers. Acting under this external pressure, the school administrators joined a task force with members of the Dayton Classroom Teachers Association, later known as the Dayton Educational Association. Although the situation threatened to become contentious because older teachers resisted reassignments, the administration adopted a pattern of middle schools and assigned the teachers to these new buildings in ways that enhanced racial integration. In addition, the administration offered inducements such as release time to teachers who would volunteer to transfer. As a result, the proportions of teachers and principals within each building matched the district-wide ratios of 30 percent black staff and 70 percent white staff. Most important, the district did not release teachers, as did some southern communities.17

As Wayne Carle brought about the racial integration of the teachers, he had support from two sources and opposition from two others. Backing came from a federally funded program of community stabilization and from an effort by Catholic parishioners in the Dayton area to desegregate parish schools. Resistance came from a group of African Americans that local residents called black separatists who directed Model Cities, another federally funded program, and from Dayton school employees who resigned their positions and ran for election to the Dayton Board of Education.

First, the 1966 civil disturbances led to the creation of a program to stabilize a neighborhood adjoining the streets where the trouble began. Although the section called Dayton View had been home to middle-class families, it had become a neighborhood in transition in the 1960s as African American and Appalachian families moved in. Using a variety of federal funds, Joseph D. Wine resigned his position as city commissioner and began a project to stabilize the area. Central to this effort was a program called Multiple

Motivation that brought together a Catholic elementary school, a Jewish day school, and five public schools in an effort to provide quality education. With consultants from the Kettering Foundation, the schools adopted a model called Individually Guided Education that was supposed to combine individual work with team projects in efforts to build curriculums on students’ interests. Although these efforts did not have the lasting beneficial effects the supporters hoped, the participants built enthusiasm for the racial integration of schools and Wayne Carle’s efforts. 18

Second, the Dayton area Catholic schools sought to bring about racial integration of its parish schools at the same time as Carle tried to reform the public schools. The process began in November 1967, when members of two Dayton city parishes asked the superintendent of the Dayton area Catholic schools to create the De Facto Segregation Committee to study racial segregation in Catholic elementary schools in Dayton. In this case, “de facto segregation” meant that the segregation occurred without a policy forcing children into racially separate schools. When the report found racial segregation among Dayton’s Catholic elementary schools, the superintendent sent the report to the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Board of Education. Although this central board approved a policy of open enrollment to alleviate racial segregation, it asked the Dayton area Catholic schools to set up a task force to consider the committee’s recommendation to consolidate the Catholic schools in Dayton. 19

Ultimately, the archdiocesan task force rejected the committee’s recommendation. Nonetheless, while the debates continued, a local television personality, Phil Donahue, enlisted parents to begin an exchange program of white students from Ascension Church, located in suburban Centerville, with African American children from St. James in Dayton. For two years, white suburban parents drove their forty or so children into Dayton to attend the school with the black children. In exchange, about the same number of African American students went to the Centerville church school. When costs of travel proved too much, white children withdrew, and the program continued with few students until 1974. 20

Although the Catholics in Dayton did not reform their own schools, they proved to be allies for Superintendent Wayne Carle as he worked to bring about racial desegregation in Dayton’s public schools. The community activists in Dayton View joined the Catholics in supporting Carle; however,
he encountered opposition from black activists working in a community control project that began after the civil disturbance.

The origins of the community control effort began in 1966 when the U.S. Congress approved and U.S. president Lyndon Johnson signed the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act. This allowed cities to submit proposals for rehabilitation plans. Although the legislation required that residents take part in the planning and operation of the programs, it did not require racial integration.21

The city officials worked with some residents of West Dayton to prepare proposals for Model Cities funds to initiate a project that would improve housing and increase employment and services in the area. Once approved, the city conducted an election in the area to form a planning council. Once in place, the council turned to a group of militant young African Americans who called themselves FORCE, an acronym for “Freedom, Organization, Rights, Citizenship, and Equality.” Members of this organization campaigned against desegregation, arguing that black people had to control their own schools and community. Contending that racial integration weakened African Americans, they petitioned the school board to allow black parents to make the decisions for the schools in black neighborhoods.22

It appears ironic that the federal government would support two programs serving different parts of Dayton that took opposite positions about racial desegregation. In Dayton View, the white activists sought racial integration. On the west side, the black activists supported continued and increased segregation. In this way, two federal programs appeared to cancel each other out. According to Christopher Bonastia, such contradictions in federal policy happened during years when Richard Nixon was president because the officials in such areas as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development felt differently about the need for racial desegregation than did many of the politicians who directed the department.23

The experience in Dayton was not unique. African American activists in other cities sought Black Power in 1968. For example, Dionne Danus claims that the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. caused black activists who had sought racial integration in Chicago to change their direction and follow the ideals of Black Power. According to Danus, the activists sought community control of schools in African American neighborhoods.

Jack Dougherty noticed the same type of shifts in Milwaukee, where some African Americans turned away from integration as a goal and preferred neighborhood schools and the racial segregation they implied.24

In addition to the resistance from the so-called black separatists in the west end, Carle faced opposition to racial integration from two people who disagreed with the liberal actions of the school board. In 1968, they sought nominations to run in the city school board election. Because Ohio’s school board elections are nonpartisan, the practice before 1969 was for the All Dayton Committee (ADC) to select candidates. When the ADC refused to nominate these disgruntled individuals, they started their own political party, Serving Our Schools (SOS), complete with membership dues, campaigns to solicit contributions, and members organized ward style. Despite the resistance from the ADC, the SOS succeeded in seating three members on the seven-member board in 1969. These three opposed any innovation that the new superintendent and the remaining, more liberal, four board members suggested.25

As the conservative school board party gained strength, the board’s more liberal members tried to advance racial desegregation. For example, in April 1971, the school board admitted to maintaining segregated and unequal educational opportunities for African American students. In their statement, the board members asked the Ohio State Department of Education to recommend a course of action. In reply, the state department suggested forming a community advisory committee to determine a reasonable course of action.26

The Dayton school board formed an advisory group called the Committee of 75, whose members recommended that the board initiate action to form a desegregation plan that involved the city and the surrounding suburbs. Arguing that the U.S. Supreme Court decisions implied that quality, integrated education should be available to everyone in the metropolitan area, the advisory committee’s report added that consolidation of suburban and urban schools was essential so that people could not run from the changes.27

When the school board received the committee’s report in December 1971, there had been another recent election, and the conservative organization, SOS, had won a majority of seats. At the last board meeting before

the new members took office in January 1972, the liberal members, who would soon leave, adopted resolutions in line with the recommendations of the Committee of 75, calling for countywide school desegregation. To enlist community support, the superintendent wrote to 435 religious leaders, asking them to make personal witness on behalf of the racial desegregation of schools. With two exceptions, the clerics refused to discuss the issue. A spokesperson for an ecumenical council replied that the organization had set up a task force to consider the issue; however, a Presbyterian minister claimed that all social divisions were unchristian, and a Baptist minister declared that any racial mixing was immoral.28 When the newly elected SOS members took their seats in January 1972, they formed a majority and reversed the motions to proceed with desegregation. The local branch of the NAACP responded by filing suit in federal district court.

The racial segregation of the schools was the important issue in the subsequent school board election campaigns of 1973 and 1975; however, the liberal candidates did not clearly or forcefully take a side. Instead, they based their campaigns on specific educational issues, such as the need for more guidance counselors. The conservative candidates, though, made racial integration the issue, calling the liberal candidates “members of the party” for busing.29

Despite the liberal candidates’ unwillingness to speak out in favor of racial desegregation, newspapers characterized campaigns as heated. The 1975 school board election started in the midst of controversy because the courts had ordered the schools to begin desegregation. Unfortunately, on September 27, 1975, a lone gunman shot and killed Charles Glatt, a consultant from The Ohio State University, while he was working on a desegregation plan. The September and October election speeches and debates did not take place, in efforts to defuse the emotional atmosphere surrounding the threatened school busing program.30

In the 1975 election, SOS retained its majority on the school board. Its members came to dominate school affairs, and they controlled school affairs in Dayton until 1980.31 In the meantime, though, they lost the court battle that led to a program of cross-district busing for racial balance.

According to Paul R. Dimond, a lawyer who worked with the NAACP, Superintendent Carle and the liberal board members opened the school files to the lawyers, enabling them to fashion a case against the school board. Dimond claims that Carle went through a sort of conversion to integration in this entire process, which also caused him to reconsider his Mormon faith. The result of his actions was that the board refused to renew his contract, and his church excommunicated him.32

Filed on April 18, 1972, *Brinkman v. Gilligan* asked that state officials fashion a metropolitan solution to desegregate schools in the city of Dayton and its suburbs. This request upset parents in the surrounding towns of Oakwood and Kettering who attended school board meetings to complain about the possibility of their children going to Dayton’s schools. This was a false alarm. In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the case of *Milliken v. Bradley*, on which the NAACP lawyers patterned the metropolitan aspect of the Dayton case. In addition to halting a string of victories for the NAACP, the justices decided in that case not to merge students from suburban school districts with students from Detroit, Michigan, unless lawyers could show that officials had drawn the district lines to cause racial segregation. The justices decided that the constitutional violation occurred when any official act created segregation. Thus, the segregation caused by white families moving out of the cities was legal.33

Although the decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* limited the extent of the racial desegregation, this 1974 judgment was consistent with the *Brown* decision made twenty years earlier. In 1954, the justices ruled in *Brown* that segregation by force of law violated the U.S. Constitution. As noted, some civil rights advocates, such as the Catholics in Dayton who pressed for racial integration, interpreted the 1954 prohibition of de jure segregation, or segregation caused by laws, as prohibiting de facto segregation, or that caused by other factors, such as residence patterns. The court did not make such a ruling. For the NAACP lawyers, the case in Detroit was an effort to expand the *Brown* decision to make it impermissible for one school district to serve African American students and a contiguous school district to serve white students. In *Milliken v. Bradley*, the U.S. Supreme Court justices said segregation among school districts was legal unless lawyers could prove the residents of the different communities had not chosen to live in segregation.34

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34. Readers seeking an explanation of how subsequent decisions were influenced by the *Brown* decision might begin with James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).
And although *Milliken v. Bradley* ended the metropolitan aspect of the Dayton case, the effort to desegregate Dayton schools continued from 1972 until busing began in 1976, with appeals going on until 1985. During the process, U.S. Supreme Court justices heard the case twice. Despite the complicated legal arguments, the plans for district-wide desegregation were simple. When John Finger Jr., the court-appointed master, set about creating a plan of busing for racial balance, he paired the schools that the board had constructed on each side of the river. Thus, for example, he had an elementary school on the west side send some students to a school on the east side, and he made the east side school reciprocate. Because most of these schools were about four or five miles apart, rides were short even when buses had to move through neighborhoods to pick up children.35

On September 2, 1976, the school doors opened in Dayton and the buses rolled to begin what the then chief of the U.S. Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division called one of the most successful programs of racial desegregation in the country. The marks of success were clear: There was no violence. Student attendance was high. On the first day, about 75 percent of the enrolled students attended classes. On the subsequent days, attendance rose above normal levels. Furthermore, there was no evidence of people leaving the city to attend schools elsewhere.36

Other cities enjoyed successful desegregation plans when Dayton schools integrated its students. For example, Dallas, Texas, and Flint, Michigan, started schools the same year with new plans for racial desegregation. In none of those cities did protestors engage in violence to disturb the process. After the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights analyzed the experiences in twenty-nine cities, its members declared in their 1976 report that desegregation would work when the many sectors of the community cooperated in planning, advertising, and implementing the plans.37

**THE END OF RACIAL DESEGREGATION**

Parents in Dayton tended to support racial desegregation ten years after busing began. For example, when the local newspaper surveyed parents in 1986, about 67 percent of the black parents approved of the busing plan, although only 15 percent of white parents agreed. These poll ratings changed by 2001. Answering an identical newspaper survey, about 53 percent of the

black parents felt the desegregation should end, and white parents continued to disapprove, with about 84 percent of them replying that desegregation efforts should end.\(^{38}\)

The movement to end racial desegregation began in 1986 when the U.S. Supreme Court decided in *Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia*, that school districts could dismantle such programs.\(^{39}\) Surprisingly, several cities that took advantage of the court's decisions, such as Dayton, had enjoyed successful implementation of school desegregation. In fact, Dayton was the last Ohio city school district under court-ordered racial desegregation when officials ended its program.

The end came on April 15, 2002, when representatives of the Dayton Board of Education, the Ohio State Department of Education, and the local chapter of the NAACP signed an agreement to release Dayton from legal requirements to enforce racial balance. Although some of these officials were white, the NAACP officials and most of the school board members were black. When newspaper reporters asked the African American officials for comments, they repeated many of the complaints of people who had resisted racial desegregation twenty-six years earlier. For example, they said that they did not think that the academic achievement of black students increased with desegregation, and it appeared to them that the threat of attending schools outside familiar neighborhoods caused white families to move to suburban communities. Thus, they concluded that the era for litigated desegregation had ended.\(^{40}\)

Although the enforced desegregation may have ended, the facts of segregation did not cease. For example, in 2003, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission received a report from Amergis, a consulting firm contending that Dayton had lost about 4 percent of its households between 1994 and 2000, yet the percentage of children eligible for federally supported lunch programs increased by 9 percent. In Dayton schools, more than 57 percent of the students were non-Asian minorities. In surrounding suburbs, however, population growth was smaller, but the percentage of school-aged children was much higher. More important, almost none of the children in those suburban communities qualified for free lunch or came from non-Asian minority families.\(^{41}\)

At the same time, racial segregation increased among Dayton schools.

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For example, in May 2004, a Dayton newspaper reported that since 2000, six elementary schools enjoyed increased white student enrollments, while seven other schools had increased enrollments of black students. Worse, the schools with the increased African American enrollments exceeded the district average percentage of students receiving free lunch. Thus, the move toward neighborhood schools has aggravated racial and economic segregation of students.

More important, the problems that attend racial segregation have increased in Dayton. For example, in 2004, Dayton City Schools scored at the bottom of the Ohio State Department’s achievement measures for the third consecutive year. At the same time, its enrollment declined from 22,500 students in 2000 to 20,586 in 2003.42

Dayton continued its downward spiral as the community rejected an increase in tax support for the schools in 2006. This was the finding that a strategic support team from the Council of Great City Schools made when its members came to Dayton to review the condition of the schools in 2008. The team had visited in 2002, and in its report from that visit, it praised the plans Dayton school board members made and predicted they would meet success. Six years later, the strategic support team found a city school system in disarray. Academic performance had slipped even further. Worse, school officials lacked any plans to correct the situation. As a result, the Dayton school officials did not have reasonable ideas of what interventions they could use to improve student academic performance.43

The school officials who sought the end of racial desegregation would have been correct if they asserted that desegregation had not been completely successful in Dayton. It was never completely successful; its benefits were always relative. For example, a study completed by Steven Rivkin and Finis Welch uses sophisticated statistical models to show that school desegregation increased interracial contact, improved academic achievement, and advanced labor-market outcomes for African Americans across the country. Rivkin and Welch’s important point is that the improvements took place despite persistent racial gaps in academic achievement, earnings, and teen pregnancies. Thus, while racial integration did not solve all problems, it improved many factors that made life difficult for African American children from low-income families.44

In 1976, Dayton public schools enjoyed success in desegregating its schools. Nonetheless, by 2002, school officials blamed the enterprise for problems it did not cause. For example, although school officials claimed the desegregation of schools made people leave the city, it was not the primary cause of suburban sprawl. Two points made this clear.

First, when Amergis conducted its study, the authors did not contend that the city schools drove away the middle-class students by busing children for racial balance. In the eyes of these investigators, the culprit was the State of Ohio’s financial system, which pitted local governments against each other as they offered tax reductions to lure businesses and industries from surrounding communities. The result was that middle-class residents left the city to move to the areas that offered better deals.

Second, Dayton’s school enrollments continued to drop after busing ended. If people left city schools to avoid racial desegregation, the end of busing should have stopped or reversed the trends. It did not.

When Dayton school officials sought an end to court-ordered racial balance, they blamed the desegregation plan for not ending the problems African American students encountered in schools. In this regard, it is important to note that racial integration was not a magic cure, leading to success for all students. Nonetheless, as Rivkin and Welch point out, the programs tended to bring about relative improvements. Although there was no careful study in Dayton to determine the impact of desegregation, it is reasonable to assume that the tendencies Rivkin and Welch found on a national level applied to the local situation.

Although many studies showed that racial segregation caused problems for African American students, a national team suggested that increased racial segregation would improve Dayton’s schools. As noted above, the Council of Great City Schools’s strategic support team recommended in 2008 that Dayton school officials increase their commitment to neighborhood schools by ensuring that all students attend school buildings in their neighborhoods and that parents come to the buildings to enroll their children. The support team may have wanted to capitalize on a policy already in place by trying techniques to encourage parents and teachers to work together to enhance student performance. Unfortunately, this did not work when the school board tried to racially desegregate the schools. It was not clear why the support team thought it would work under conditions that increased racial segregation.
Like many female abolitionism and women’s suffrage activists in the mid-nineteenth century, Antoinette Brown (1825–1921) feared marriage’s potential limitations on her personal ambition. Many feminist activists of the nineteenth century campaigned primarily for women’s legal rights. Brown believed in the holistic equality of women in marriage, motherhood, and career, with equal pay for equal work. She also advocated shared domestic responsibility, including housekeeping and childrearing.

Brown later married Samuel Blackwell, a fellow abolitionist and suffrage advocate, who affirmed her pursuit of holistic feminine equality (intellectual, spiritual, and legal) and domestic egalitarianism (marriage, motherhood, and career). Because Blackwell respected his wife’s work, her career flourished throughout their marriage. They both remained at home with their children on several occasions, and he shared equally in domestic responsibilities. She often sent her children to stay with relatives, permitting freedom for career travel. Marriage did not impede Antoinette Brown Blackwell’s career; rather, it offered additional support for her work.

Raised in the burned-over district of New York, Congregationalist Antoinette Brown received tremendous encouragement from her family to pursue education. Her parents enrolled her in a coeducational school as a teenager. She later saved her own money to attend Oberlin College, known prior to 1850 as Oberlin Collegiate Institute, one of the most progressive universities in the country because of its abolitionist views.

While Oberlin sanctioned equality for African Americans, its women’s and men’s programs existed separately, and Oberlin did not offer women access to
the same education as men. The college claimed openness to coeducation, yet women's curriculum was limited to literature, art, and culture. Women were held to a higher standard of conduct than male students. In accordance with social propriety, women were not permitted to speak in mixed company.

Denied opportunity to speak even in class, Brown and schoolmate Lucy Stone (1818–1893), a Garrisonian abolitionist and progressive women's rights activist who would later become Brown's sister-in-law, established a literary and debate society where they “learned to stand and speak.”¹ Eventually permitted to participate fully in classes by Charles Finney, the president of Oberlin College and a prominent Second Great Awakening revivalist who had evangelized Brown's father, Brown and Stone pursued public speaking opportunities: Brown a pulpit for preaching, and Stone a podium for advocating abolitionism and women's suffrage.

After completing her Ladies' Degree Program in 1847, Brown remained at Oberlin to attend theological classes, in spite of discouragement from family, colleagues, and even Stone. Oberlin awarded her neither credit for her coursework nor a diploma upon completion of the program in 1850. She was restricted from delivering a commencement speech, though elected by her classmates to deliver the graduation address. She was also not ordained upon completion of coursework, although male graduates were offered ordination.

Instead, Brown pursued preaching opportunities and ordination after coursework, facing ardent opposition to her right to speak publicly as a female. Perpetually denied a pulpit because of her gender, she advocated for women's rights as an avenue for opening the pulpit to women. She participated in women's rights conferences and speaking tours, during which she encountered many belligerent male clergy and insulting newspaper reporters.

These speaking tours led her to the Congregational Church in South Butler, New York, which took particular interest in her. The church had been without a pastor for some time and had even previously called a black pastor and a seminary student pastor, demonstrating their openness to nontraditional leadership, even if motivated by desperation. South Butler called her as their pastor in 1853, and she became America's first ordained female minister. She struggled to find a minister to perform her ordination; even former Oberlin professors refused to participate for fear of social stigma. Moreover, even friends of Brown's, like Stone, hesitated to attend the ordination for fear of negative association. In a ceremony officiated by Lee Luther, Brown was ordained in 1853. Those opposed to her ordination denied its legitimacy, though newspaper coverage often referred to her as Rev. Antoinette Brown.

While her ordination was recognized at least in name by newspaper coverage, her ministry was not regarded with the same respect. Several entries announce her itinerant preaching engagements but also mention her pleasant appearance, which would never have been included in a description of a male preacher. She pastored South Butler for more than a year but later left the ministry due to personal theological crises related to infant damnation and her confusion regarding human agency versus divine providence.² At the suggestion of Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, Brown labored among the poor in the slums of New York City in 1855.

Brown and Stone challenged one another to never marry, for fear that marriage might impede their careers. Brown repeatedly refused proposals of fellow Oberlin student James Tefft, citing the importance of her career. In correspondence with Stone, Brown's letters often share inner conflict regarding desire for marriage and vocational ambition. Stone repeatedly refused the proposals of Henry Blackwell, who eventually sought Brown for guidance to win Stone's heart. Brown had met the Blackwells, a well-known abolitionist family and supporters of women's rights, through Stone and had formed a close friendship with Henry's brother, Samuel. Shortly after Stone married Henry, Brown refused several marriage proposals from Samuel because she feared marriage would end her public career, but with the encouragement of her family and his, as well as of important personal influences such as Greeley and Stone, Brown married Samuel Blackwell in 1856.

Antoinette Brown Blackwell continued campaigning for women's rights, fully supported by her husband. She retired for a season after the birth of their first daughter. After their second daughter died, she returned to public speaking to cope with her grief. In total, she delivered seven children, of whom five survived. She vacillated between public life and domestic responsibility for the rest of the century, seeking, but not sensing, acknowledgement for her ministry, public career, and intellectual achievements until the end of her life. She conducted scientific study of gender differences and published intellectual works on the distinctions and similarities between men and women.

Brown Blackwell viewed suffrage as one component of greater equality for women. Her career as public speaker, wife, and mother demonstrated her conviction that no woman should have to choose between public and private life; they were not mutually exclusive. Stone's primary critique of Brown Blackwell was her continued association with the church, which openly tolerated slavery. In response, Brown wrote to Stone: “And you are afraid I am getting bigoted exclusive and narrow minded. No no I am not—I am not at any rate I think so. One thing is certain I am not afraid to act as

my conscience dictates no matter what the world may think. . . . Actions speak louder than words and at present I cant act in such a way at least as to vindicate myself. But dont think too hardly of me dear sister ‘wait a bit’ and see.” 3 Conservative women tagged her as “liberal,” while progressive activists labeled her “conservative.” Though often criticized for moderate views, she died a heroine of women’s rights activists.

In 1879 Oberlin decorated Brown Blackwell with the diploma for her theological coursework she had earned in 1850. Significant debate had occurred within the Oberlin community concerning women’s suffrage and coeducation throughout the mid-nineteenth century, culminating in the 1870 Oberlin Women’s Suffrage Debates, which critiqued Oberlin president James Fairchild and Principal of the Female Department Marianne Parker Dascomb’s advocacy for traditional female roles and ultimately paved the way for equality for women in the Oberlin community. Oberlin also awarded Brown Blackwell an honorary Doctorate of Divinity in 1908. She contributed through various suffrage organizations and voted for the Republican ticket in the 1920 election, a year before her death.4

In the nineteenth-century world into which Brown Blackwell was born, “separate spheres” most commonly described the place of women. Women were viewed as the mothers of the republic, whose superb morality would purify the nation. From the home, women effected change through religious nurture of their husbands and children, but public life remained strictly the sphere of men.5 Women, however, held competing positions regarding their place in society; conflict between pretended submissiveness and enacted agency is particularly revealed in their writings.6

Conservatives believed women should be busy at home and that any education or other edification of a woman must primarily serve her family and secondarily those in need through humble, silent benevolence. Sarah Hale’s Godey’s Book of Women recounts the lives of dozens of ordinary women. Hale was one of the most outspoken advocates of women in the private sphere, as


was Catharine Beecher. However, Hale’s book has received much criticism for being a private way to be public without stigma.7

Progressives observed no limitation to a woman’s sphere, redefining femininity to incorporate public enterprise for the betterment of the society—a republican womanhood, where true iniquity was silence in the face of injustice.8 Margaret Fuller paralleled America’s moral decline to Europe’s, advocating for women’s rightful place alongside of men in patriotism and morality.9 When Alexis de Tocqueville visited America, he was shocked at the inequality between men and women, labeling this inconsistent with American democratic and freedom ideals. A primary effect of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention was refinement of Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence into the Declaration of Sentiments: “All men and women are created equal.” Progressives transformed women’s “sphere” from physical to spiritual.10

The Second Great Awakening both distracted women from pursuing formal career opportunities and facilitated their changing status. While the primary benevolence and reform activists were women, this lay service distracted many women from pursuing formal ministerial careers. However, amid urgings for benevolence and reform activism, which consequently incited the founding of Oberlin Collegiate Institute in 1833 as a training school for reformers, many women became publicly involved, supporting temperance and abolitionism, caring for widows and the poor, and correcting the evils of prostitution. Even among conservative circles, societies for benevolence and reform received acceptance.11 Advocacy moved from speaking in private homes to speaking in public places and churches, at which point outcry escalated, birthing the women’s rights movement. To


Angelina (1805–1879) and Sarah Grimké (1792–1873) spoke publicly for abolitionism in the 1830s and were booed from many platforms, disqualified by gender from addressing mixed company publicly. Angelina married and stayed at home with her family, and Sarah emerged as an early women’s rights speaker and author, often using language of slavery to describe the plight of married women. Abby Kelley Foster (1811–1887) also received tremendous public ridicule for her activism. Some of the harshest critics of women’s public activity were male clergy and other women.\footnote{Karin Gedge, \textit{Without Benefit of Clergy: Women and the Pastoral Relationship in Nineteenth-Century American Culture} (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).}

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, women’s educational opportunities widened. Schools and seminaries for girls opened, allowing separate education for women. These schools eventually offered separate but equal education, in which women studied the same curriculum as men. By early midcentury, select schools admitted both men and women. Even in coeducational universities, women were rarely allowed to speak during class; they submitted to harsher codes of conduct and were educated for the purpose of improving their marriage and motherhood.

In Oberlin’s Ladies’ Degree Program, women studied literature, art, and foreign languages but were not offered “male” curriculum, like theology. In 1837, four women were admitted to regular degree programs, including Stone. Brown and Lettice Smith were the first women admitted to the theology program, in the late 1840s, but admitted as “Resident Graduates” rather than degree-seeking students. Women were encouraged to maintain traditional gender-segregated education until the 1870s.

Women’s education existed primarily to equip them as future wives and mothers, not national leaders. Ronald Hogeland has argued that Charles Finney possessed two ulterior motives for admitting women into Oberlin: expeditious marriages for male students seeking pulpits and social balance for male sanity. Finney sympathized with male students who were expected to be single during education but married before taking a pulpit. Studying with female students helped male students select their future brides, whom they might marry before seeking first appointments; an educated wife could serve her husband’s ministry effectively. Moreover, exclusively male academic environments often facilitated unbearable sexual tension and
unrealistic expectations about women and marriage. By living and learning
with them, female students balanced male students’ perspectives of women
and provided them an informal laboratory for interacting with the opposite
gender. While these arguments border on conspiracy, they may not exag-
gerate popular notions of women’s utility to men. Stone keenly perceived
Oberlin’s priority for men, labeling women’s education a “female append-
age” to the larger aims of the institution.14 The study of gardening, how-
ever, transcended societal limitations of women and intellectualism. Many
women were publicly hailed for their publications on flowers. Even Sarah
Hale wrote books on flowers and encouraged women to study botany.15

Educated women often networked through literary societies, which inad-
vertently equipped them to address public audiences, formulate arguments,
and critique existing arguments. Mary Kelley has attributed the significance
of the “literary domestics” to foundations of the women’s rights movement.
Female authorship expanded significantly in the early to mid-nineteenth
century. Women’s publications remained an effective platform from which
to promote the women’s rights movement. Magazine circulation also con-
tributed to decreasing cultural differences among social classes among
women. A few women had begun publishing scholarly writing toward the
turn of the nineteenth century.16

Before settling with families, many educated women sought teaching ca-
careers. At an 1853 State Teachers Convention in Rochester, New York, Susan B.
Anthony addressed the crowd:

None of you quite comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which
you complain. Do you not see that so long as society says woman is
incompetent to be a lawyer, minister or doctor, but has ample ability
to be a teacher, every man of you who chooses this profession tacitly
acknowledges that he has no more brains than a woman? And this,
too, is the reason that teaching is a less lucrative profession as here men
must compete with the cheap labor of woman.17

Ideas in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America,” Journal of Social History 6.2 (Winter 1972–73):
166–71, 172.
15. Annie Merrill Ingrams, “Victorian Flower Power: America’s Floral Women in the Nine-
16. Kelley, Learning to Stand and Speak, 21–26, 55; Kelley, Private Woman, viii, 112, 269,
335; Hewitt, “Women’s Activism and Social Change,” 26; Lerner, Feminist Thought of Sarah
Grimké, 32–34; Sherry Lee Linkon, In Her Own Voice: Nineteenth-Century American Women
Essayists (New York: Garland, 1997).
Teaching propounded a rare occupational opportunity to women, and the scarcity of educated teachers and ministers created significant need for educated persons, particularly on the frontier.18 Women raised on the frontier were often encouraged to pursue education by their parents and mentors and challenged through adolescent experiences to lead ambitious lives.

A key ingredient for the social acceptability of women from all perspectives was propriety. Women gained acceptance in the benevolence movement and moral reform due to their respectability.19 Aggressive reformers did find audiences, but moderate, well-tempered reformers did so much more easily. Brown Blackwell excellently delineates the success of moderate activism. Chided for her conservative convictions by fellow reformers Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony, she espoused a moderate platform, advocating holistic rights for women alongside legitimatization of marriage and motherhood.20 Margaret Fuller also advocated mutual respect and love in marriage, viewing marriage as intellectual companionship.21

Brown Blackwell also maintained a fairly conservative appearance, compared to activists like Amelia Bloomer (1818–1894), editor of the Lily, who popularized a knee-length skirt over broad pantaloons, “bloomers.” Bloomer contributed significantly to the women’s rights movement and actually introduced Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony in 1851. Brown Blackwell and Stone wrote about bloomers often in their letters; Brown Blackwell insisted upon propriety and Stone upon comfort and liberty.22

Because revivalism, increase in education, and collective energy facilitated a ripe season for advocating women’s rights, many unmarried women activists feared marriage would occlude any future career or ambition. They feared lost opportunity and confinement to their homes. While most literary domestics tended to be married to accomplished men, they sought legitimization of their public place. Many identified themselves with historic figures like Joan of Arc as foremothers, seeking ancestral connection to further validate their contributions. A man’s future was secure, but, once married, women enjoyed no future outside of domesticity.

Brown and Stone seemed at an advantage for future success because of their college education, regardless of Oberlin’s intent in offering that education to them. They certainly reinforced each other’s commitment to singleness, which was challenged by family influences. Brown’s mother, Abby Brown, penned to her daughter: “Is there no young man at Oberlin who

18. Kelley, Learning to Stand and Speak, 30; Lindley, “You Have Stept Out of Your Place,” 93; Zink-Sawyer, From Preachers to Suffragists, 66–68.
strikes your fancy? Or with so many new and interesting things to do are you just too busy for beaus? Never forget, Nettie, that there is no finer happiness for any woman than to make a home for some good man.” 23 Their progress as educated activists thus far solidified their dedication to singleness for their cause. In 1847, Brown wrote to Stone:

Well Lucy so you think more than ever you must not get married. I am glad of it for so do I too. Let us stand alone in the great mortal battlefield with none but God for a supporter. . . . Let them see that woman can take care of herself & act independently without the encouragement & sympathy of her “lord & master” that she can think & talk as a moral agent is privileged to. Oh no don’t let us get married. I have no wish to. 24

The next year, Brown’s letters to Stone continued mutual exhortation: “Do not fear my getting married. I have neither opportunity nor inclination at present to take such an irredeemable step & have so little confidence in such a plan for either of us that I am glad to respond most hartily to your emphatic dont DONT DONT & send it back like an echo to yourself.” 25

Their early letters reveal a fear of disconnection with ancestors and descendants. Brown indicated fear of having no one to care for her in old age. Stone received word that she contemplated adopting children after settling into a pastorate, to which Stone responded:

Nette dont D-O-N-T, when you “settle as a pastor” take any children. It will seem just like an old clucking hen, who shows her setting propensity, without having any eggs to the merriment of all the roosters, and the same of all the hens, I would a great deal rather let you have one of my children to take care of you, when you are old. Not that I think you would not make as good children as one, alone can. Indeed I think you would do far better than the majority with two, but the fact that God has made father’s as well as mother’s necessary to the existence of children, is conclusive evidence, to my mind, that the influence of both is necessary to their best development, and whatever comes out of your hands ought to be best. 26

Their correspondence revealed not only fear of isolation but also the assumption that Stone would one day have children. Equally committed to monastic pursuit of suffrage, Stone also assumed a future as mother. This cognitive dissonance became increasingly more evident in their correspondence as time passed.

During her theological education, Brown occupied much time planning and anticipating her career. She intended to collect a strong reference library, pastor a congregation, and better society. Brown frequently received criticism for these ideas; a single woman could never financially thrive independent of a husband. She struggled to find employment but managed to raise her own financial support for Oberlin tuition and board and continued living as a single woman, independent of her family’s financial support. In consideration of how a husband might affect her future, she penned to Stone:

> It may be you will ask as some others have done why I cannot with great profit and propriety take a husband into the establishment to assist in lightening my responsibilities. Well in the first place I could never expect to find a man who would sympathize with my feelings and acquiesce in my plans. And it would require nothing less than a miracle to make a man of talent and heart who would be willing to be a coworker in such efforts. 2nd we can do very well without the husband. Lastly such a personage would threaten the overthrow of all or many of my arrangements or else the matrimonial alliance would have to be placed on a different basis from the common; and on the whole it is deemed entirely expedient. 27

Brown and Stone feared husbands’ interference with, if not obliteration of, their ambitions. Drawing largely from private Blackwell family papers, Laura Kerr narrated James Tefft’s pursuit of Brown during their studies at Oberlin. Kerr’s biography is the only source that mentions Brown’s relationship with Tefft. However, Brown does write to Stone about being in love earlier than her relationship with Samuel Blackwell, which may add credibility to Kerr’s account. Before graduating, a weeping Brown rejected Tefft’s proposal: “You can’t understand. . . . There is not room for marriage in my life, James. I have dedicated myself to God, James. . . . It would not be fair to you, James, for how could a woman at the beck and call of her congregation give her husband and children the attention and love which make up a true marriage?” 28

Determined to diligently serve the greater cause, Brown and Stone grap-

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pled with their desire for companionship. In late 1849, Brown wrote to Stone: “My heart remains crowded full of things I want to say and have no one to say them to.” Brown in particular expressed feelings of isolation and a desire to be truly known and understood by another. She even espoused the idea of marriage as a harmonious partnership toward a greater cause. Upon hearing of the engagement of their Oberlin schoolmate Mercy Loyd in 1848, Brown wrote to Stone: “I am not prepared to regret as you do the engagement of Mercy Loyd. From what I know of her it seems to me she will do as much good in that relation as in any other & probably more. Certainly if she has a husband worthy of herself there is no reason why this should not be so. She would not lecture as you will or do anything else which cannot be much better accomplished by the aid & Sympathy of a husband.”

In 1850, discussing a classmate’s intention to live at a boardinghouse, Brown opined: “She is poorly fitted to contend with an unsympathizing world alone and I wish most heartily there was somebody who would appreciate and love her and was worthy to be her husband but I don’t know whether she will ever find such an one. There is no bondage in real marriage notwithstanding legal disabilities.”

Brown and Stone primarily objected to a married woman’s lack of legal rights. Married women were stripped of all property and savings and had no legal protection from marital abuse or rape. Stone often invoked slavery language in discussion of marriage: “’Tis next to a chattel slave, to be a legal wife.” Their letters contain desire for companionship and support, conflicted by overwhelming fear of powerlessness in a man’s world. Stone’s August 1849 letter to Blackwell carried this notion best:

It seems to me that no man who deserved the name of MAN, when he knows what a mere thing, the law, makes a married woman, would ever insult a woman, by asking her to marry him. It is horrid to live without the intimate companionship, and gentle loving influences which are the constant attendant of a true love marriage—It is a wretchedly unnatural way of living, but nothing is so bad as to be made a thing, as every married woman now is, in the eye of Law. Nette let us get down these laws, and then marry if we can. We could do so much more good, in a natural, than in an unnatural position—My heart aches to love somebody that shall be all its own. I have not yet reached the place where I need no companionship as you have.

29. Brown Blackwell to Stone, Henrietta mansion, almost 1850, and Brown Blackwell to Stone, Oberlin, Dec. 1848, both in Lasser and Merrill, Friends and Sisters, 64, 46.
Six years later, Stone wrote to Brown with the same concerns, which she considered pivotal to the entire discussion of women's rights:

Paulina Davis has written me, that she wants the marriage question to come up at the National Convention. . . . And yet it is clear to me, that question, underlies, this whole movement and all our little skirmishing for better laws, and the right to vote, will yet be swallowed up, if the real question, viz, has woman, as wife, a right to herself? It is very little to me to have the right to vote, to own property &c. if I may not keep my body, and its uses, in my absolute right. Not one wife in a thousand can do that now, & so long as she suffers this bondage, all other rights will not help her to her true position.32

Brown and Stone actively campaigned for suffrage throughout the early 1850s, including holding office and speaking at Woman's Rights Conventions, which returned their campaigns to Ohio in 1851 (Akron), 1853 (Cleveland), and 1855 (Cincinnati).33 No longer a “would-be-but-cant-priest,” after Brown was ordained by the Congregational Church in South Butler, New York, in 1853, she served as their pastor for over a year. Lee Luther, who officiated her ordination, affirmed the women’s rights movement as advocated by reformers and also affirmed Brown's educational qualifications for ministry.34 In the same year, Brown was booed from the stage repeatedly by a mob of angry clergymen at the World's Temperance Convention, described sympathetically in the New York Times: “First day, crowding a woman from the platform; second day, gagging her; third day, voting she should stay gagged.”35 In response, Temperance women formed their own convention, the Whole World's Temperance Convention of 1853.36 Brown refused to appear at the new convention because holding office was limited exclusively to women.

32. Stone to Brown Blackwell, Walnut Hills, Ohio, July 11, 1855, in Lasser and Merrill, Friends and Sisters, 144.
34. Brown Blackwell to Stone, Henrietta, Aug. 4, 1852, in Lasser and Merrill, Friends and Sisters, 119; Lee Luther, A Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel: A Sermon Preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Miss Antoinette L. Brown, at South Butler, Wayne County, N.Y., Sept. 15, 1853 (Syracuse, N.Y.: Luther Lee, 1853); Zink-Sawyer, From Preachers to Suffragists, 123.
Every wound strengthened Brown's resolve to act. At Horace Greeley's invitation, Brown published a series of women's rights articles for the *New York Tribune*, later published as *The Sexes throughout Nature* (1875). She continued touring, encountering both acceptance and rejection, which she often relayed to Stone: "Our Baptist minister won't hear me speak. He went out of the grove twice Monday when I talked. Nice isn't it?"38

Moreover, Brown securely maintained her moderate platform, never conceding to legal divorce, though both Anthony and Stone supported legal divorce. Controversy over separation and divorce in abusive marriages had surrounded woman's rights gatherings since the early nineteenth century, considerable attention to which originated at the Seneca Falls Convention and the Woman's Rights Convention in 1848. The conservative position allowed for legal separation but denied either spouse future remarriage. Progressives wanted full legal divorce with the right to remarry. Most progressive women's advocates had completely separated from organized religion; most resented Brown's desire to open women's rights conventions with prayer. Brown's faith compelled her to oppose granting full divorce rights, but she did participate in advocating the Women's Property Rights Act, intended to bolster a woman's legal rights within marriage. She received encouragement from writers like Elizabeth Wilson, who presented scriptural arguments for the equality and accountability of men and women. Though Wilson represented a rigidly conservative position, Brown admired her scriptural approach to women's rights.39

Resolve, however, could not satisfy Brown's loneliness. She wrote to Stone in 1854: "When you have been for a year in a place where there is not a mortal person for whom you feel a real affinity, and yet, are a sort of public property for all, with the delightful anticipation of a twin year to follow, you will realize how welcome a letter or the face of a friend would be." Without immediate relational support, Brown fortified her self-reliance: "What hard work it is to stand alone! I am forever wanting to lean over on to some body, but no body will support me, and I think seriously of swallowing the yard stick or putting on a buckram corset, so as to get a little assistance some how, for I am determined to maintain the perpendicular position."40

Brown's admirable ambition to overcome loneliness through commitment to the work challenged her. Her allowance of this inner conflict to

influence her understanding of marriage and associated possibilities ultimately led to a fundamental transition in her view of marriage and relationships between men and women. This transpired even as she strengthened her resolve for a career and against marriage, and it reached greater maturation when Stone decided to marry.

In 1855, Stone announced her engagement to Henry Blackwell. She admired his family and his advocacy for women’s rights and abolitionism. His sister Elizabeth was the first female physician in the United States, and his sister Anna was a well-known author and artist. Both women attended the 1850 Worcester convention and heard Brown and Stone speak. Stone wrote to Brown of Henry Blackwell’s attractiveness and sympathy with “all the things nearest [her] heart.”

Yet at the 1855 Woman’s Rights Convention, held in Cincinnati, Stone spoke of marriage as entering into a “civil contract” of slavery even though her wedding vows had been customized to grant joint ownership of property, and Stone became the first woman to keep her maiden name. Stone’s misgivings toward marriage recurred in an 1855 letter, in which she asked Brown to officiate the ceremony:

The day is not set . . . . But when it is fixed—I will write you, so that you may think of me, and fancy if you can, what of thought and feeling goes on, under the surface. If the ceremony is in N.Y. we want you to harden your heart enough to help in so cruel an operation, as putting Lucy Stone to death. But it will be all according to law, so you need feel no punishment. I expect however to go to Cincinnati & have the ruin completed there.”

After Stone’s wedding, Brown and Anthony expressed doubt regarding the likelihood of her continuing career: “What do you and Susan mean, but such little sentences as, ‘the world needs you’ &c. Do you think I am likely to forget that the least service is needed? When you see me listlessly on my oars, heedless of the heavy throbbing of Humanity’s tired sick heart, then it will be time to stab with such little insinuations—As yet I do not deserve them.”

Stone’s letters to Brown revealed the beneficial possibilities of marriage. Namely, she expressed a sense of belonging and companionship that intrigued

Brown: “For just as when the soul first wakes up to the full consciousness of a love that will last, forever, and color all its future, then, solitude becomes so imperative a necessity, scarcely less does the same need of being alone with the one only loved, exist, when law, and custom first give you to each other.”

Brown met Henry Blackwell’s brother Samuel during her South Butler pastorate. Samuel Blackwell and Brown developed a close friendship and often corresponded. He supported her ministry and frequently attended her sermons and public lectures. Within months of Stone’s wedding, he professed his love for her. Her refusal to give an answer reflected her ambivalence regarding marriage; when Tefft had proposed, she immediately refused, but she appeared to be considering Samuel Blackwell’s proposal.

Samuel Blackwell came to New York in August 1855 for her answer: “It could always be like this, Nettie. Just you and I together.” She confessed her love for him but harbored guilt for potentially abandoning her profession and ministry. He reassured her of his support of her holistic womanhood: “There is a foolish patience in the Blackwells, Nettie. A foolish patience, but you will have to reckon with it, for I will wait for you, just as Henry, strong-willed and reckless as he is, waited for Lucy.” With no answer to his proposal, she returned to the slums of New York, continuing her work among the poor, yet her longing for companionship became unbearable.

Uncertainty that she would be able to pursue her career after she wed kept her from answering definitively, while she seemed equally determined to find support from her friends and family for accepting the proposal. She received encouragement from his sisters Ellen and Marion: “Lucy and I have so long wished this might become a reality.” Horace Greeley also encouraged Brown to accept: “I am a fanatic in my devotion to marriage. I do not know that it increases our prospect of usefulness, but certainly it enlarges our horizon of life and increases our opportunities for usefulness. . . . You do not tell me your husband-to-be is the brother-in-law of Lucy Stone. If so, he will be still more valuable in my eyes than as brother of the Misses Blackwell and your husband!”

With the approval of Stone, the Blackwell family, and important colleagues, Brown accepted Samuel Blackwell’s proposal. Her anxieties comingled with excitement as she imagined her future as a married woman. Brown penned to her fiancé:

You asked one day if it seemed like giving up much for your sake. It will not be so very hard to have a dear, quiet home with one’s husband to

45. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 180.
love and be loved by, with his big heart full of sympathy and an active spirit ready to cooperate in everything good. Now you may sigh for a more domestic wife, but merely to preach on Sundays or to go lecturing once in a while will not be so bad, will it, my dearest dear? And now remember to tell Lucy that I like your name much better than my own and have no wish, no possible wish, against having it added.48

Brown demonstrates her moderate propriety through her mental integration of public activism with marital responsibilities as well as through her combination of her own last name with Blackwell’s. For her, marriage and career were not mutually exclusive.

Antoinette Brown married Samuel Blackwell on January 24, 1856. In their courtroom wedding, officiated by her father, a Congregational deacon, they declared joint ownership and inheritance of their estate. Upon news of her marriage, many newspapers offered their opinions of the women’s-activist-turned-wife. Amelia Bloomer cajoled in the Una:

A report got abroad a few weeks ago that the Reverend Antoinette Brown was married. Of course editors made merry over the occurrence and indulged in many witty sayings and grave prophecies. They seemed to think as a matter of course that she would take the place usually usurped by a man as head of the family. The poor husband was looked upon as a miserable victim of wrong, while the wife was held up as a tyrant who would hold tight reigns over those placed in subjection to her. . . . If man is the strong vessel, should he not be able to bear up under as great a weight of happiness and comfort as is enjoyed by the weaker sex? We cannot imagine what cause he can have for complaint if placed in the easy pleasant position which ordinarily falls to Woman’s lot!

Brown Blackwell found humor in such articles, as did her husband. She described his reaction to such editorial sarcasm to her father, “Nothing really angers Sam—unless it is bigotry and intolerance.”49

As a mother of five, Brown Blackwell frequently retreated from public life to care for her family. The Blackwells had seven children, two of whom died in infancy. Their living children included Florence (b. 1856), Edith (b. 1860), Grace (b. 1863), Agnes (b. 1866), and Ethel (b. 1869). Many, including Anthony and Stone, criticized Brown Blackwell’s seeming retreat into domesticity. In fact, so many women’s rights activists were occupied with

48. Ibid., 181.
49. Ibid., 183.
childrearing that the 1857 Woman’s Rights Convention was cancelled. Brown Blackwell and her husband shared responsibility of the children when one or the other required travel, and they traveled as a family whenever possible. The Blackwells employed a housekeeper, whose help proved indispensable with the children. Brown Blackwell admired Stone’s domesticity and often sent her daughters to learn from her. When necessity demanded, she also sent her children to stay with one of their aunts for a season, granting her freedom for lecture tours, on which she sought additional opportunities to preach in any church that might invite her.

Samuel Blackwell adamantly supported his wife’s return to ministry after the birth of their first daughter. She cautiously entreated his support of her returning to preach, and he responded, “My dear, I should very much mind if you didn’t.” She remained at home after terminally ill Mabel was born, in April 1858, until her death four months later. After busying herself at home to cope with her grief, by March 1859 she decided to return to ministry: “I am trying to decide what to do about preaching. Now is the time for me to be ‘up and doing.’ I am in good health and spirits and ready to work if the place to work in would manifest itself.”

Brown Blackwell sought funding for an itinerant speaking tour and later for a standing Sunday sermon at Metropolitan Hall but failed to raise sufficient funds. To rebuild her name recognition, she resumed women’s rights speaking tours with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Cady Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, as a more radical group with more aggressive tactics. In disagreement with Cady Stanton and Anthony, Stone formed the American Woman Suffrage Association.

Refusing to officially align with one particular woman’s rights organization, Brown Blackwell maintained ties with Cady Stanton, Anthony, and Stone even as their differences over legislation granting voting rights to African Americans but not women divided their organizations. Neither group flourished in the 1870s or 1880s, forcing them to reconcile in 1890 as the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

Brown Blackwell continued preaching and lecturing regularly from 1859 to 1860. Uncommitted to a local church pulpit since leaving South Butler in 1854, she followed Greeley’s suggestion to preach in the rented Metropolitan Hall on Sunday evenings. She considered her women’s rights advocacy to be preaching the gospel of equality and an extension of her pastoral ministry.

51. Lasser and Merrill, Friends and Sisters, 170.
52. Kerr, Lady in the Pulpit, 207.
During one of these preaching tours, Olympia Brown invited her to speak at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Her message inspired Olympia Brown, already an admirer of Brown Blackwell, to pursue ordained ministry. Olympia Brown viewed Brown Blackwell’s marriage as an interruption to her important women’s rights work, saw no immediate successor to Brown Blackwell’s legacy, and acted accordingly herself. Olympia Brown was ordained in the Universalist Church in 1863.\(^{54}\)

The Blackwells moved often for economic and pragmatic reasons. Toward the turn of the twentieth century, Brown Blackwell took up the pen, writing primarily on scientific differences between men and women, concluding they were “different but equal.” Brown Blackwell, interestingly, also concluded that African Americans were “different but equal.”

It is hazardous to rely altogether upon an \textit{à priori} dogmatism, learned or unlearned, which forces one to set up the assumption that the Creator has been driven by partiality to model an unbalanced, unsymmetrical humanity. . . . No theory of unfitness, no form of conventionality, can have the right to suppress any excellence which Nature has seen fit to evolve. Men and women, in search of the same ends, must co-operate in as many heterogeneous pursuits as the present development of the race enables them both to recognize and appreciate. . . . On the same principle let every girl exercise mind and body fearlessly, with wholesome vigor and in due proportion. She is not porcelain to be easily broken, nor are the adjustments of her nature so weakly put together that they can be readily disturbed. . . . Let every woman comprehend fully that inactivity is death! . . . We shall certainly find that men and women differ, not so much in the degrees of ability which they manifest, as in the different modes in which they expend their energies, physical and mental.\(^{55}\)

She did not encounter the acceptance as an intellectual for which she had hoped from either the Blackwell family or Stone. Elizabeth Blackwell often criticized Brown Blackwell, both for her intellectual pursuits as compromising her role in women’s suffrage and for her method of parenting. Neither Elizabeth Blackwell nor Lucy Stone commended Brown Blackwell’s intellectual works in their many publications.

Throughout her career, Brown Blackwell espoused a moderate, respectable position. Contrary to most other women activists, she had not abandoned

\(^{54}\) Olympia Brown, \textit{Acquaintances, Old and New, among Reformers} (Milwaukee: S. E. Tate, 1911), 26–27.

her commitments to the church or personal faith. She maintained conservative views on divorce and progressive views on a woman’s right to marriage and motherhood alongside a career, though she acknowledged the necessity of granting prominence to one role or the other at times. Enduring criticism from the Blackwell family women and her fellow suffragists, she persisted in her convictions. One of the most significant contributions of her career may be her advancement of the acceptance of women in ministry among women’s rights activists. In 1875, the American Association of Women praised the efficacy of women in the pulpit, legitimizing Brown Blackwell’s moderate position and views of the holistic equality of women.

In 1878, Brown Blackwell refused the presidency of Vassar College to return to congregational ministry, after being recognized as a minister by the Unitarian Church. In 1879, Oberlin conferred the degree she had rightfully earned in 1850. In 1888, Stone and Brown Blackwell spoke at the fortieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, where Brown Blackwell immortalized their Oberlin debate society as the first women’s rights club.56

At the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Brown Blackwell delivered her “Landmarks” speech, exhorting women to reach for their full potential, though this may be “little less than desecration to lavish this brightness and loveliness upon the unappreciated public.” She continued, “We have learned that a woman need not lose her modesty, her private worth, or her homely virtues because she has gained a wider outlook, and because she has learned that her field of work may be as broad and helpful as she can make it in the service of any human interest.”57 At the same gathering, Stone delivered her “The Progress of Fifty Years” speech, advocating distribution of responsibility by giftedness rather than biological classifications; she died later that year.

Brown Blackwell served as pastor emeritus at All Soul’s Unitarian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey, from 1908 until her death in 1921. Also in 1908, Oberlin, in recognition of her accomplishments, granted Brown Blackwell an honorary doctorate of divinity. By 1909, Stone’s daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, convinced Brown Blackwell, age eighty-four, to write an autobiography to preserve her legacy. In 1918, the House approved the Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the Anthony Amendment, and Brown Blackwell cast her vote in the 1920 presidential election. She eventually gained recognition as a significant contributor to women in education, in ministry, and in scientific scholarship, as well as women’s rights.

Understandably, Brown Blackwell feared the potential sacrifice of her individuality and career if she married. Her experience at Oberlin substantiated her fear that men promising progressive gender cooperation and equal opportunity often succumbed to public pressure for traditional gender roles. Moved by her own desire for companionship and witnessing the marital bliss of trusted friends, she married Samuel Blackwell, a fellow abolitionist and women’s suffrage advocate. His affirmation of her pursuits created a strong foundation for her continued activism, and his sympathy for domestic egalitarianism established a precedent of mutual respect and consideration. Their correspondence reveals a sincere love for each other and respect for each other’s contributions to society.

Because of his respect of her work, her career flourished throughout their marriage. Had Samuel Blackwell not supported her cause or her career, Brown Blackwell could easily have remained sequestered at home as wife and mother. Their marriage provided companionship and intimacy, the paucity of which had long burdened her. He granted leverage for touring or remaining at home according to her convictions. Though he co-owned a hardware store with his brother, he faithfully patronized her lectures and sermons.

Samuel Blackwell has been described as patient, quiet, and even somewhat submissive to his wife’s career. He is not depicted as harsh, authoritarian, or even argumentative. He respected her, and they saw their marriage as serving their greater cause. Any other husband may have subverted Brown Blackwell’s future, but Samuel Blackwell appreciated her conviction and encouraged her to pursue every ambition. Biographers like Kerr over-romantically portray Samuel as a catalyst for his wife’s work. However, documentation does not support his initiation of encouragements for her to return to work nor of an increase in her working after marrying him. His contributions lie primarily in affirming and encouraging her.

Perhaps the most salient critique of Brown Blackwell’s career being unhindered by marriage grows from her seasonal retirements to care for her family. Had she never been married, she would most likely not have had children. Unfettered by child care, she would have been available for any volume of traveling for lectures and sermons. Unconcerned for a husband or children, she could have participated more fully in the women’s rights movement.

This critique may present a valid argument, but its merits are insufficient in light of counterevidence of Brown Blackwell’s hypothetical potential as a single activist as well as of Samuel Blackwell’s support of her career and its time demands. First, nothing can guarantee she would have maintained a busier schedule as a single woman. Many activists, including Anthony, reported fatigue from the grueling travel schedules and took sabbaticals for personal recuperation. Moreover, her vacillation between ministry and
activism may have presented sufficient challenge to her future had she not been associated with prestigious activist families like the Blackwells. Second, marriage to Samuel Blackwell provided much-desired companionship and encouragement. Even after building a family, his equal participation in housekeeping and childrearing allowed her liberty to pursue her career as she desired. She enjoyed financial stability and connection with an established American family. Opting to remain at home on occasion was her personal choice, rather than the result of involuntary constraints.

From the beginning of her philosophical development, Brown Blackwell campaigned for egalitarian cooperation between the sexes. While at Oberlin, she developed working friendships with male students and professors and pursued preaching opportunities alongside them. While most of her fellow activists were women, she worked closely with Finney, Greeley, and the Blackwells.

Brown Blackwell's initial fear of marriage may have been rooted more deeply in fear of a certain type of husband than in marriage itself. She wisely chose a husband whose understanding of the marriage covenant matched hers and whose support energized her commitment to promoting equality and opportunity. Marriage did not impede her career in any way that it might not have been constrained otherwise. It offered her an opportunity to continue her career; amplified her commitment to her convictions; and supported her financially, physically, emotionally, spiritually.
“In the late 1600s and early 1700s,” writes José Brandão, “few places were more important to the French than Michilimackinac” (xxvii). This book is a valuable new collection of sixty-two carefully edited documents—most previously unpublished—concerning this important outpost of empire in the heart of the pays d’en haut. Focusing on the fur trade, which dominated life for the French voyageurs, Ottawa and Wyandot Indians, and military commanders who spent time here in this period, these expert translations make this complex time and place accessible to an English-speaking audience.

The book opens with an overview of the place of Michilimackinac in the history of French colonial activity in North America. José Brandão’s efficient introduction orients the reader to the setting and characters—Native and European—in this history. Especially helpful, the introduction contains a succinct overview of the legal system of New France as background for understanding the contracts, depositions, testimonies, and petitions that comprise the bulk of the collection.

The documents are presented in simple chronological order. Each is introduced only by a short title and presented without detailed summary or context. To be sure, this choice sometimes creates difficulty, and the reader occasionally wishes that more thorough introductions had been provided for the individual documents, since most deal with unfamiliar characters and mundane events whose significance is not immediately apparent. However, the editorial comments contained in the endnotes to each document
solve most problems and are thoroughly helpful. Reflecting Brandão’s mastery of the period, they range from detailed biographical information on nearly every person mentioned in the documents, to geographical orientation, to helpful notes on translations and unfamiliar aspects of fur trade and law referenced in the documents. The only minor fault is that the notes are placed at the end of each document; they would be even more convenient at the foot of the page.

The translations were the work of Joseph L. Peyser. As in his other translations, Peyser worked to preserve as much of “the flavor” of the originals as possible (xvii). This brings the reader as close to the original French documents as possible, and the approach makes sense. At the same time, the reader should not expect a smooth and easy read in Edge of Empire. Since one potential use of this book will be in undergraduate classrooms, professors will need to help students with what remains a pretty “foreign” language from the colonial past.

For the most part, these documents are not about big or dramatic events, and one does not emerge from this collection with a clear narrative about Michilimackinac in these years. What these documents do extremely well, however, is reveal details of everyday life in the fur trade. They reveal texture, such as the complexity of a fur trader accounting for his packets of furs. Or a wayward son gambling away his father’s furs in a Michilimackinac tavern. Or a contractual agreement disrupted by an Indian war. Rather than events, these documents valuably give us themes, including hierarchy and social class in the fur trade world, gender relations, violence, and Indian-French relations. And in a larger sense, they reveal New France’s effort to extend legal order and administration over a distant hinterland and its self-interested inhabitants. They shed new light on the ways French imperialism was improvised at the periphery.

Edge of Empire is a collaboration among Mackinac State Historic Parks, the French Michilimackinac Research Project now directed by Brandão, and the late Peyser. This is the first of several volumes planned; future works will concern diplomacy and other aspects of history and culture. Here’s hoping the project continues—these document translations are extremely valuable for scholars and researchers and may prove useful in classrooms, too.

ROBERT M. MORRISSEY
University of Tennessee

John R. Dichtl’s thoughtful and perceptive examination of Catholic community on the midwestern frontier adds a valuable dimension to the history of religion in the early republic. Dichtl works from inside the Church—largely from the viewpoint of the Catholic clergy—to assess the growth of Catholicism in the Ohio Valley. He contends that the trans-Appalachian frontier functioned as a middle ground on which Catholics and non-Catholic communities interacted and coexisted on more equal terms than were possible in eastern cities. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, scattered frontier settlements, the small Catholic population, and the scarcity of churches and clergy (who were overworked and underpaid—if paid at all) shaped good feelings between Protestants and Catholics. Along with the challenge of ministering to the far-flung and often penurious frontier faithful, the Catholic clergy saw an opportunity in the West to capitalize on this religious toleration to establish a Catholic identity that seemed problematic if not impossible in the East.

The frontier experience, however, did not lead to a democratized Catholic church. Catholic clerics increasingly turned to eastern bishops and Rome for guidance on challenges and difficulties that issued from the frontier. A shortage of supplies of ritual and devotional materials, lapsed church members discouraged by the absence of churches and infrequent contact with clergy, mixed marriages, the challenge of converting Protestants to the faith, and establishing schools and nunneries forced the Catholic bishops “to invoke standard techniques of establishing authority. . . . [T]raditional responses eventually worked better in maintaining authority, preserving the faithful, winning converts, and elaborating the institutional presence of the church” (180–81).

Ultimately, the frontier had an ironic and contradictory effect on Catholicism. In the 1780s and 1790s, Catholic leaders in the Ohio Valley worried about “appearing too foreign in the American context”; yet the West seemed fertile ground on which the Church might take root and grow through proselytizing and conversion (145). It was precisely the amicable relationship between Catholics and Protestants and their proximity to one another on the frontier that presented an opportunity to church leaders to engage, educate, impress, and convert non-Catholics. In the early nineteenth century, church leaders became more emboldened and aggressive in their efforts to define a distinct Roman Catholicism. Enhanced Catholic uniqueness in the Ohio Valley, however, alarmed Protestants who were increasingly alienated from and posed a doctrinal challenge to the Church in the 1830s and beyond. The Ohio Valley middle ground became a battle ground between Catholicism and Protestant denominations that paralleled sectarian tensions in the East.

The strength of Dichtl’s work—its clergy-oriented perspective—also constitutes a weakness. Non-Catholics and Protestants who occupied this
cultural and religious middle ground hover in the background of his narrative. He contends that the frontier offered a variety of “contact points” on which “kinetic interactions” between Catholics and non-Catholics, laity and clergy took place. Yet the problems faced by the Church clergy overshadow and at times eclipse any sustained analysis of Catholic-Protestant relations and negotiations in backcountry settlements. Nevertheless, Frontiers of Faith enriches our understanding of the Catholic community on the frontier and is a fresh and much welcomed addition to U.S. religious history.

MICHAEL A. MORRISON
Purdue University


“We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up” (1). Abraham Lincoln wrote this line in an 1859 biographical sketch at the behest of fellow-Illinoisan-Whig-turned-Republican Jesse W. Fell. Fell requested biographical information from Lincoln to share with some Pennsylvania friends who were curious about the Illinois lawyer, now famous for sparring with Stephen Douglas in a series of nationally reported debates. Fell was particularly interested in the fourteen years Lincoln spent in Indiana, the subject of William E. Bartelt’s new book “There I Grew Up”: Remembering Abraham Lincoln’s Indiana Youth.

Lincoln’s father, Thomas, moved his family from Hardin County, Kentucky, across the Ohio River to Perry County (later Spencer County), Indiana, in 1816. The Lincolns, Bartelt writes, moved partly to escape the corrupting influence of slavery, which divided Baptist churches in their Kentucky community and adversely affected free-laborers like Thomas, who competed with slaves for “hired out” jobs. Indiana was a frontier wilderness, added as a state the year the Lincolns arrived, and it was there that Abraham Lincoln spent his youth and cultivated the “rail-splitter” image so engrained in the mythology of the sixteenth president.

During his time in Indiana, Lincoln bore many hardships of pioneer life: his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, succumbed to milk sickness in 1818, because their cow had feasted on a poisonous plant, and he was forced to exchange difficult work for formal education. It was this last hurdle, along with the early lack of a public school system, that stoked Lincoln’s desire to learn. He became, as his stepmother Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln recalled, “diligent for Knowledge”; the young Lincoln read every book he could acquire, often at the expense of whichever odd job he was working at the time (66).
Bartelt relies on a variety of sources for this study, including early Indiana state records; contemporary newspapers; Lincoln’s own writings; and a number of interviews with Lincoln family members, neighbors, and residents of Indiana. Much of Bartelt’s information comes from a series of interviews begun in 1865 by William Henry Herndon, Lincoln’s former law partner, who dedicated his later life to recovering the details of the president’s youth. Herndon’s interviews confirmed Lincoln’s devotion to reading but also revealed a compassion for animals, an ambivalence toward women, and an apparent early political fling with Jacksonian Democrats. Bartelt’s book is richly detailed with illustrations, photographs, documents, and even samples of Lincoln’s poetry; the author displays a knack for tracking down obscure details about the president’s earliest years. That said, this study is weakened by the author’s general lack of an overarching thesis. Simply put: why, in the context of the mountainous collection of Lincoln historiography, is it important to know about Lincoln’s Indiana years? While Bartelt reveals a number of fascinating details about Lincoln’s youth, he seems unwilling to make a concrete statement regarding the ultimate significance—politically, intellectually, socially, or otherwise—of this period in Lincoln’s life.

The book’s formatting is also a bit jarring at times: Bartelt reprints whole pages of original text from Herndon’s interviews, for example, complete with their sporadic punctuation and spelling. Given that many of these interviews focused on mundane details, a careful summarizing of the information would have made for a smoother reading experience. These points aside, Bartelt’s study is a nonetheless impressive recovery of a period in Abraham Lincoln’s life that the president himself regarded with fond remembrance, and in this respect it deserves a place on the bookshelves of Lincoln enthusiasts.

Jarret Ruminski
University of Calgary


Lincoln and the American Manifesto provides a probing and present-minded account of the political and religious thinking of America’s most famous wartime president. In so doing, it also offers a provocative, if oversimplified and often redundant, intellectual biography of the nation.

Not one to shy away from a fight, Allen Jayne challenges the scholarship on multiple fronts. He begins by taking on recent historians who have “engaged in an ascending order of criticism of the American Revolution” and “condemned the Founders’ prudential compromise with slavery” (13). Building on his earlier work on Thomas Jefferson and the Enlightenment, Jayne
praises the Declaration of Independence’s “all-inclusive” “deistic idealism,” demonstrating how it established a moral standard—a manifesto based on natural laws—around which democracy could eventually be fulfilled (14–15). From here, the author draws a mostly direct line from Jefferson and his intellectual brother Thomas Paine through the Unitarian Transcendentalist Theodore Parker and ultimately to Abraham Lincoln. Jayne thus challenges numerous historians (Garry Wills, Alan Guelzo, John Diggins to name a few) who have suggested that later in life Romanticism or personal conversion led Lincoln back toward orthodox Christianity. Instead, in this very readable and highly sympathetic account, Jayne attempts to show that heterodox religion (defined as a rejection of original sin) and the Declaration of Independence remained Lincoln’s “ancient faiths” from youth to death. The book ends with a lawyerly dissection of the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln's Second Inaugural, suggesting that even these public invocations of a providential God were mere political pandering or even subtle digs at mainstream Christianity.

Jayne’s lack of cynicism allows him to explore the enduring nature of ideas and belief systems, underpinning them in refreshing, at times even informative, ways. Unfortunately for him and other scholars, however, Lincoln left no diary or long exposés to provide access to his personal confession or broader political thought. Consequently, the book’s case is, at best, circumstantial, often based on hearsay or a highly subjective parsing of text. The author’s unabashed skepticism and ironically Manichean worldview also obscures the subject more than it illuminates it. À la Peter Gay, Jayne sees the Enlightenment and Christian belief as almost always at odds with one another, the former always right, the latter generally wrong. Doing so rejects a significant amount of recent scholarship showing that Christian theologians—especially in Anglo-American circles—were quite comfortable with Enlightenment ideas and particularly with the concept of natural law. It also neglects the fact that secular worldviews could be, as Jefferson previewed and later Social Darwinists evidenced, at least as exclusive as religiously inspired ones.

More problematic, an overly reified understanding of nineteenth-century religious culture undermines some of the book’s central contentions. In Jayne’s text, Catholicism and all Protestant denominations are pretty much the same, both hopelessly wed to Augustine’s concept of original sin and thus incapable of accepting the idea of human-led moral improvement. Such a theology might have informed the faith of Lincoln’s ancestors; it did not, however, dominate the religious culture of Lincoln’s America. In the wake of the Revolution and early-nineteenth-century Awakenings, most northern mainstream theologians and practitioners had moved away from Jayne’s archetypal Christian, a Calvinist consumed by predestination. Instead, Methodists, Baptists,
and even many Presbyterians offered millennial-inspired visions that urged individuals and communities towards God-guided but human-driven moral improvement and social uplift. Contrary to Jayne's view, human progress was a mantra shared by all. At best, Jayne demonstrates that Lincoln was not an orthodox Calvinist, but then again, by midcentury few American Christians were. Judged by this standard, Lincoln's political and religious thought may not have been nearly as countercultural as Jayne would have us believe. Indeed Lincoln's eventual greatness as a political leader and orator might derive from not just his commitment to Jeffersonian natural rights but his ability to transcend and translate them to an eclectic but essentially Christian people looking to find meaning in a hellish war.

BRIAN SCHOEN
Ohio University


Few letter collections reveal the complexities of life during the Civil War like the correspondence of the Evans family. This volume of 254 epistles relates the struggles, sorrows, and successes of one Ohio family who grew closer together despite the trials and separation of war. Nearly two hundred letters recount the sometimes strained yet always loving relationship between authoritarian Andrew Evans and his dutiful but independent-minded son Sam, whose military service enabled him to demonstrate his manhood and emerge from his father's shadow.

Brown County, directly north of the Ohio River, was Democratic territory. But as patriotic War Democrats, three of Andrew's sons joined the Federal army. Still unmarried at age twenty-eight, Sam, the eldest son, operated the family flour mill, worked as a blacksmith, and assisted with farm chores. Convinced that duty to country outweighed family responsibilities, Sam left home without telling his father and enlisted in February 1862. After learning that illness had confined him to a field hospital almost immediately after leaving, Andrew rebuked his son for his rashness. Sam shortly vindicated himself by reporting his experiences during the Battle of Shiloh, including a detailed account of his killing several Rebels and being grazed by a ricocheted bullet. The father-son relationship progressed smoothly until May 1863, when Sam became an officer in an African American regiment. In no uncertain terms, Andrew reproached his son for taking "a degraded position" (143). Undeterred, Sam defended himself in several letters and related his satisfaction in commanding such disciplined and capable troops.
Over the course of the war, Sam’s persistence, together with events at home, helped transform Andrew. His frustration with local Copperheads and opposition to the gubernatorial candidacy of Clement Vallandigham drew the attention of county unionists, who nominated the respected “Squire” for state representative. Winning office in 1863 and 1864, the long-time Democrat switched allegiance to the Union party. By February 1865, Andrew’s political conversion was complete, and he informed Sam that he wholeheartedly supported the Thirteenth Amendment. After the war, Sam worked five months in the Freedmen’s Bureau, and Andrew even espoused his willingness to support black suffrage, a position that most likely cost him reelection in 1865.

In addition to unfolding the stories of Andrew and Sam Evans, the letters contain much other fascinating material. While letter collections often relate the perspectives of soldiers in camp and on the battlefield, few published primary sources reveal life on the northern home front in such rich detail. Interesting topics include conflicts over local politics, anxieties over the draft, the disturbance caused by Rebel marauder John Hunt Morgan, and the importance of religious beliefs in coping with death (four of Andrew’s eleven children died between May 1862 and January 1866). Both military and social historians of the Civil War will find this book essential reading. Indeed, anyone interested in the human drama of history will benefit from being reminded how personal experiences altered ideologies and shaped relationships for both soldier and citizen during the Civil War.

SEAN A. SCOTT
Papers of Abraham Lincoln


Christopher Phillips’s exploration of the life of William Barclay Napton through a wealth of primary sources provides a startling glimpse into the self-southernization of a northerner in the territorial West leading up to and following the Civil War. Phillips chronicles the life and times of Napton through Napton’s personal journals, kept intermittently for fifty-eight years, and correspondence to his wife, Melinda. Within the journals, Napton recorded his time spent at the College of New Jersey, later Princeton University, his transplantation to Virginia and adoption of its culture and Jeffersonian values, and his settlement and life in Missouri.

Phillips highlights the “private civil war” fought by Napton, who severed ties to his modest Yankee roots and adopted southern values, including pro-slavery and states’ rights doctrines both personally and politically.
The discussion of his life in New Jersey in the first chapter portrays a cocky youth eager to distance himself from the perceived inferiority of the inhabitants of his hometown. Once he graduated from college, Napton embarked on a journey south that would prove an ideological as well as geographical transformation.

Following college and into his intermittently successful law career punctuated by appointments and elections to Missouri’s state supreme court, Napton held Democratic political views that created difficulties in the rapidly turgid political climate facing southern secession and impending Civil War. In the context of his own life experiences in his position as a Democrat and a state supreme court judge, Napton recorded the challenges faced by Missourians in dealing with the secession crisis and the slave-statehood debate over Kansas.

Napton’s cultural transformation from his northern New Jersey roots toward a southern ideology provides a vital historical perspective to this geographically sectional issue. The rich primary source materials allow the reader access to the private thoughts of this self-made southerner. His southern estate, Elkhill, complete with a vernacular and whimsical library addition, encapsulated his ideal of a southern-style plantation, including a large slave force, in the New West. Phillips keys in to his ultimate failure as a farmer: “Napton’s farm never managed to produce enough to support his large family” (52).

Following the start of the Civil War, the two older Napton sons enlisted in the Confederate army. Their enlistments, along with William Napton’s Confederate leanings, motivated home invasions and interrogations by the Missouri Militia, forcing Napton to bury some of his journals and records and question his ideology. Phillips focuses on his self-examination toward the end of his life: “He lamented that his ambitions had not been realized enough to provide his children the advantages he had intended for them” (113).

Phillips’s familiarity with the Napton family and interweaving of anecdotes with established historical fact provide an interesting and thought-provoking telling of one man’s personal history within a larger historical context. Napton’s self-motivated cultural transformation in a rapidly changing political and social time in American history mirrored the consequences faced by a splintered nation. Through The Making of a Southerner, it is possible to understand the struggles of a nation within the microcosm of one man.

C. W. RUDAWSKY

For twenty-four years, this reviewer has taught U.S. history survey courses. On the first day of the semester, students learn why the course is divided at 1877. This involves a quick overview of the election of 1876, when Samuel G. Tilden, a Democrat, the man who won the popular vote, lost the presidency to the Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes. Most students remember the 2000 presidential election and usually perk up and express some interest, wondering how the 1876 and 2000 elections were similar. Highlight is given to the contested electoral votes in 1876 and the creation of an electoral commission and finally a compromise that brought Hayes to the White House and brought an end to Reconstruction.

So there it is, the disputed presidential election of 1876. Of course the subject is much more complex, and it is addressed in more depth at the end of the semester, but some students, especially those who are history aficionados, yearn for more details in order to comprehend this tumultuous event. Michael F. Holt, Langbourne M. Williams Professor of American History at the University of Virginia and author of five previous books, offers a thorough study of the election.

Holt examines the relationship between the economic conditions of the country in 1876 and the political results of the election. The country was in the throes of an economic crisis caused by the banking panic in 1873. Democrats won the congressional and state elections of 1874 and seemed poised to take the White House in 1876. Holt sums up: “Yet Democrats lost the presidential election of 1876. The primary purpose of this book is to explain why” (xii).

The chapters in this study analyze congressional elections; the second session of the Forty-third Congress, from December 7, 1874, until March 1, 1875; the Republicans’ fall from grace during the Ulysses S. Grant presidency; the power of the Liberal Republicans; the importance of Ohio both as a key electoral state and for its favorite son Rutherford B. Hayes; the rise of the Democrats and the emergence of Tilden as their candidate; the election of 1876; its disputed results; and the resolution of that dispute. Most important, this is the story of a Republican Party that revitalized itself in the North and brought hundreds of thousands of voters to the polls in 1876. These numbers verify that hatred and fear aroused by the Civil War still lingered and that “waving the bloody shirt” was a successful tactic in turning out the vote and electing Republicans to office.

Utilizing the Hayes and Tilden papers, diaries of the key actors, newspaper accounts, Appleton’s Annual Cyclopaedia, the cartoons of Thomas Nast, biographies, and numerous secondary sources, Holt’s study overflows with a host of details and facts. Black-and-white photographs and political cartoons are scattered through the text, an appendix contains eight tables of election statistics and Hayes’s inaugural address. This is a noteworthy
retelling of a familiar tale with rich facets that expose the complexity that is American politics and history.

PATRICIA ANN OWENS
Wabash Valley College


Despite all the excellent social history scholarship dealing with working- and middle-class formation over the last generation, we often take the class development of business elites as a given. It is almost as if they establish shared interests by osmosis, while the same is such a struggle for working people or the middle classes. Jeffrey Haydu forces us to subject these assumptions to a critical analysis. By comparing two cities, Cincinnati and San Francisco, and drawing on social movement theory, he seeks to add historical specificity to the process by which businessmen developed class alignments, shaped civic identities, and pursued political and economic solutions. Despite experiencing many of the same social and economic trends, businessmen followed very different strategies, particularly in their relations with labor.

Haydu notes that Cincinnati’s elites faced an uncertain path to unity. A strong producer ethic linked employers to workers both in the workplace and in the community, while industrial divisions and competitiveness fractured class solidarity. It was not until workers began to organize as a class in the last decades of the nineteenth century that businessmen did likewise. Once this began, Cincinnati employers developed trade organizations, cultural institutions, and civic improvement associations that only gradually articulated a strict class orientation, but that path enabled them to cultivate an identity that Haydu calls “business citizenship,” which celebrated individual rights and duties and asserted business-class interests as identical to the interests of the city as a whole.

In contrast, San Francisco business leaders confronted a different set of forces. Racism strengthened the bond between white employers and workers as well as the sense of unity among the workers themselves. Consequently, the labor movement developed greater economic and political power and the employers adopted a more accommodating relationship with unions. Through the end of the nineteenth century, San Francisco employers also were better able to appease unions than were their counterparts in Cincinnati; their markets were somewhat insulated from national competitors. Thus, the business community resembled the corporate liberalism of such national organizations as the National Civic Federation but without the same commanding presence of the dominant huge corporations. As Haydu
notes, there was “little high-minded idealism in this civic ideology”; rather, it was “a self-interested response to the realities of labor power” (89).

The final portion of the book discusses the extent to which employers in San Francisco and Cincinnati were able to transpose their group identities across a range of institutions. With some qualifications, Haydu argues that the solidarities and identities forged by employers in both cities provided “a common framework for evaluating worthy citizens, good employees, and the proper governance of city and workplace” (136). But the contrasts in the case studies also raise questions about the extent to which it is possible to talk about a national business-class consciousness.

One cannot do justice to the sophistication and nuance of Haydu’s argument in a brief review. He utilizes a range of theories and concepts (framing, social boundaries, social movement theory, neoinstitutionalism, path-dependent processes, transposition, cultural scripts, et cetera) in an attempt to answer basic questions about how and why employers create a united front, what are the components of that shared identity, and how they apply that identity in other contexts. This makes for tough sledding in places, but it is worth it. Haydu deserves our thanks for significantly advancing the discussion of business-class formation and the barriers that it presents to the American labor movement.

Ken Fones-Wolf
West Virginia University


In Album Quilts of Ohio’s Miami Valley, Sue C. Cummings provides a readable and informative analysis of a unique slice of Americana. She approaches her subject, album quilts, from a perspective different from most works in this genre. In her preface she accurately suggests that most quilt studies done in reference to Ohio have focused on the ideological constructs—such as race, ethnicity, and religion—that bind the makers together. Cummings, however, describes a localized folk tradition and follows its ebbs and flows.

Cummings’s study encompasses the period from 1888 through the beginning of the 1920s. She concentrates on the products of a small community of quilters from Darke, Miami, and Montgomery Counties in southwestern Ohio. Focusing on a handful of characteristic motifs—the appliquéd tulip, the appliquéd love apple, the schoolhouse, and, most significant, a distinctive spread eagle—Cummings argues that these Miami Valley album quilts created by individuals who were friends, relatives, and neighbors “show characteristics that set them apart from quilts made elsewhere . . . and provide stunning proof of a community-based, regional quilt style” (xiii).
Sue Cummings’s approach is novel; she combines the genealogies of her subjects with those of the quilts that they produced. Perhaps more important, although her focus is narrow, the methods she employs are transferable to collections elsewhere or to larger groupings of similar artifacts. She creates a grammar for her quilts and traces its evolution and dissemination across southwestern Ohio. In moving beyond the artifacts themselves, Cummings weaves the artifacts into the fabric of the community that produced them. For example, using an album quilt composed of irregular blocks produced and signed by members of the community as a starting point, the author pieced together the complex social networks that bound the community. Her supplemental research included information gleaned from census documents, tax maps, local histories, and personal interviews, which allowed her to establish personal relationships between the quilt makers as well as the similarities in their creations. What she discovers is a network of relationships that transcends conventional boundaries. Cummings’s quilts “represent both genders, all age groups and several different religious affiliations,” as well as a variety of ethnic origins (108).

The only deficiency in this work is the lack of a general conclusion. Her discussion of the spread eagle motif is an important one but not, perhaps, the end of the story. Why, for example, did the tradition fade? Did the families and individuals just stop making quilts or simply move away from this particular tradition? Cummings does excellent work in uncovering the origins of the Miami Valley folk motifs and the motivations for their use but stops short of explaining why they disappear.

That said, her text is clear, straightforward, and accessible to the general audience for which it was intended. The illustrations are beautiful and add to the richness of the text. Also, she makes excellent use of a variety of graphs and charts to map out the complex social and physical networks of her quilt makers. The reader is left with a sense of the creators as well as of the quilts.

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\textsc{Martha I. Pallante}
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Youngstown State University


Just before July 4, 1917, the white residents of East St. Louis, Illinois, unleashed a torrent of violence against African Americans. Over two days, the mob terrorized black men, women, and children, sadistically torturing and killing at least thirty-nine, injuring hundreds, and driving thousands more to seek refuge outside the city. Charles L. Lumpkins retells the story of the
first instance of mass racial violence of the World War I era, placing it in the context of black East St. Louisians’ decades-long political struggle to secure freedom and equality. The analysis he presents in American Pogrom provides a significant reorientation of the literature on the racial attacks that all too often afflicted midwestern cities.

Lumpkins rejects the argument that social strain, created by competition over industrial jobs, motivated the white attackers in East St. Louis. Although he concurs with contemporaries and other historians that the Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities influenced the outbreak, he focuses not on employment, but on political power. (See especially Elliott M. Rudwick, Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917 [Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1963] and Malcolm McLaughlin, Power, Community, and Racial Killing in East St. Louis [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005].) American Pogrom argues that black political organizations threatened local white leaders at a moment of political realignment. Lumpkins maintains that politicians representing real estate interests played an important role. Hostile to the prospect of racial equality, “White machine politicians, through their proxies, unleashed murderous antiblack violence to terrorize African Americans into leaving the city en masse” (7). The violence of July 1917 thus becomes a pogrom, “an assault, condoned by officials, to destroy a community defined by ethnicity [or] race” (xi).

In part, Lumpkins builds his case through a careful reconstruction of East St. Louis politics from the nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War. He relies heavily on the East St. Louis Daily Journal to chronicle African Americans’ ongoing attempts to participate in municipal government and to substantiate his claim that in 1917 many whites feared African Americans held the balance of power and wanted a return to the prewar status quo.

Lumpkins minimizes the role of industrial strife. He acknowledges that organized labor inflamed working-class racism during World War I, but that was nothing new. Few of the leaders of the 1917 mobs were industrial workers. Instead, Lumpkins ties the instigators to local political bosses and the city’s notorious underworld. Most of the connections are only indirect. Some of the perpetrators organized attacks from a hotel owned by a prominent player in local real estate, and city police protected the white assailants. Yet Lumpkins’s painstaking research of manuscript sources, congressional and Illinois state investigations, and personal interviews certainly allows him to recast the spate of murderous hostility as a “profoundly political event” (110).

American Pogrom deserves a wide audience among historians, although some readers may find themselves overwhelmed by the machinations of East St. Louis politics. Focusing on these details also leaves Lumpkins little time to pursue the tantalizing suggestion in his title. If these midwestern attacks con-
stituted a pogrom, how do they compare to racial violence outside the United States? Lumpkins’s insights should intrigue and inspire other scholars.

ALISON CLARK EFFORD
Marquette University


In this short biography, Tom Diemer offers a journalist’s portrait of Howard Metzenbaum, a three-time U.S. senator from Ohio. As a Cleveland Plain Dealer reporter, Diemer covered the Washington scene during Metzenbaum’s second and third terms. His access to innumerable major and minor political figures provided wide-ranging quotes about his personality and accomplishments. Diemer relies primarily on newspaper and magazine articles but is rather scant on documents from the Metzenbaum papers and secondary works.

To Diemer, Metzenbaum was a quintessential Don Quixote figure who avoided the dreaminess associated with his hero. Instead, he was “a doer on a journey to the dragon’s lair” (228). Metzenbaum’s greatest accomplishment was his use of archaic Senate rules, including the filibuster, to impede or delay bills that he considered objectionable. For his obstinacy he earned the title “Doctor No.” His major foes were corporations and senators with pet projects. A liberal from a middle-of-the-road state that often leans right, Metzenbaum beat Robert A. Taft Jr. and George Voinovich because of his ability to convince Ohioans that he stood on principle to protect the little guy.

For Diemer, Metzenbaum also served as a model of the American Dream. Born to relatively poor Jewish parents, he became a successful lawyer, millionaire businessman, and U.S. senator. After graduating from law school in 1941, he and “other nice, young Jewish lawyers” were not hired by any of the major firms in Cleveland, so he served four consecutive terms in the state legislature instead (19). Although he loved politics, he left the state legislature in 1950 to engage in a variety of business opportunities, including an airport parking company (APCOA) that mushroomed into an international business. When he ran again in 1970 for the Senate, he lost to Robert A. Taft Jr. but rebounded against him in the post-Watergate election of 1976.

As Metzenbaum gained experience in the Senate, he learned to seek compromise with opponents. By 1994, his last full year, he had built a substantial, but not exceptional, legislative record. Metzenbaum touted the Brady gun-control bill, the requirement that food and drug manufacturers list nutritional values on their labels, and new standards for infant formulas as his major achievements. He also worked on civil rights legislation,
including age discrimination; federal financing for Alzheimer’s research; and pension protection. Yet Metzenbaum was most effective in blocking the special interest amendment slipped into a broader bill.

Although Diemer has written an admiring biography, he does discuss Metzenbaum’s warts. Surprisingly, in spite of Metzenbaum’s consistently pro-labor stance and his many AFL-CIO clients, APCOA did not use union labor and paid its employees a little more than half of the prevailing union wage. He was also gruff and at times cruel to political aides. Most embarrassing for Metzenbaum were his naïve comments after meeting Saddam Hussein in May 1990—“and I am now aware that you are a strong and intelligent man and that you want peace” (188).

Overall, Diemer has written a readable and compelling first biography of a complicated political personality. The book has a few minor errors, but most unfortunate is an editor’s failure to notice the duplication of the same paragraph on the final pages of the biography. The extensive quotes from the senator and people who worked and lived with him, however, create a rich delineation of Metzenbaum’s character and a judicious evaluation of his importance in the post-Watergate political era.

William D. Jenkins
Youngstown State University


This past year marks the fortieth anniversary of the NASA history program. Since 1959, when Dr. Eugene Emme took up his duties as the first NASA historian, the history office has published scores of monographs, chronologies, translations, special studies, collections of key original documents, and edited volumes of papers presented at conferences and symposia. In terms of its value to the agency, the public, and the history profession, the NASA program is a model for other federal agencies.

This volume, edited by the current NASA historian, is fully up to the high standard established by its predecessors. It includes the papers offered at a conference jointly convened by the NASA History Office and the National Air and Space Museum’s Space History Division, October 22–23, 2007. The organizing principle of this conference—to consider some of the larger social, cultural, and political questions raised by fifty years of space exploration—resulted in papers of genuine interest to historians, aerospace professionals, and space buffs.

One group of contributors—Asif Siddiqi, John Krige, Michael Neufeld, and James Hansen—accesses the impact of the space age from a variety of
regional and national perspectives. Another set of papers focuses on cultural representations of space flight in music, photography, cinema, and art. Roger Launius and Jonathan Coopersmith provide useful insights into space-age historiography.

The most interesting group of papers, however, addresses the impact and deeper meaning of space flight in the broad context of world history. A generation ago, Walter McDougall won a Pulitzer Prize with a brilliant political history of the early space age, in which he argued that the first flight of human beings into space represented a saltation, an epic event on a par with the moment when the first lungfish crawled up onto a beach. In his contribution, McDougall takes at least a small step back from that view, suggesting that it is still too early to judge the ultimate impact of our venture beyond the atmosphere.

Historian J. R. McNeill takes a much tougher stance. “At the moment,” he writes, “space programs, space flight, space research, all seem at most secondary next to the dominant trends of modern history” (399). Former NASA historian Sylvia Kraemer agrees that space flight “has some strong competition as a claimant to defining our world.” In the case of the cold war, she continues, “space was an important salient, but not principal provocateur” (403).

John Logsdon argues for space as a key force promoting globalization, suggesting that if all space systems were to be shut down for twenty-four hours, “we would quickly realize that those systems have become deeply integrated into the infrastructure of the modern world” (399). Martin Collins goes a step further, arguing that satellites operating in near-earth orbit have been the key instruments of social, cultural, and economic change. “Spaceflight,” he points out, “has been . . . a primary site in which prior categories of the modern—the nation state, the military, civil society, capitalism—have been refashioned and given new meaning” (200). Given the speed at which information and money move around the globe, thanks to space-based systems, even Sylvia Kraemer agrees that the day may not be too far off when “the great cities of the world will have more in common with each other than they have with their respective hinterlands.” Wherever one stands on the question of space flight as an instrument of fundamental change, this volume offers much food for thought.

Tom D. Crouch
National Air and Space Museum

Above and Beyond: Tim Mack, the Pole Vault, and the Quest for Olympic Gold.

Americans love the Olympics. Our champions become instant celebrities
who appear on national television shows and see their images immortalized on the fronts of cereal boxes. But such fame is often restricted to the winners of the high-profile glamour sports: swimming, gymnastics, track sprints. Overlooked are the athletes who excel in sports that garner little public interest and meager television exposure. In Above and Beyond: Tim Mack, the Pole Vault, and the Quest for Olympic Gold, Cleveland Plain Dealer columnist Bill Livingston addresses that shortcoming by documenting the trials and tribulations of one such obscure Olympic champion, northeastern Ohio native Timothy Mack.

Tim Mack won the pole vault competition at the Athens Olympics in 2004. That accomplishment culminated a remarkable decade-long journey, often characterized by failure and frustration. Livingston adroitly chronicles Mack's uneven career. From a middle-class family in suburban Cleveland, Mack embraced the pole vault at St. Ignatius High School after it had become obvious that he could not compete successfully in baseball or football. He was not an instant success. He failed to qualify for the Ohio state track meet. He then competed in the pole vault at Malone College in Canton, Ohio, the only school that offered him an athletic scholarship. When, after two years, his skills improved, Mack transferred to the University of Tennessee, where he finished his collegiate career working under the tutelage of fabled coach Jim Bemiller. After graduation, he remained in Knoxville and survived by taking a series of menial jobs so that he could continue to train with Bemiller. Although Mack had evolved into a national contender in the pole vault, he failed during the Olympic trials in 1996 and 2000. In 2004, years of toil and perseverance paid off when Mack, at thirty-one, one of the oldest pole-vaulters in international competition, barely qualified for the last spot on the Olympic team at the American trials in Sacramento. At Athens, after a protracted dual with his teammate Toby Stevenson, Mack secured his most unlikely place in sports lore by soaring 19 feet 6 ¼ inches, an Olympic record, on his final jump.

Above and Beyond offers more than a biography of one athlete. Livingston traces the history of pole-vaulting from its origins as an obscure event during the nineteenth century to its present standing in the Olympics. He provides sketches of the sport's most successful champions, including Americans Bob Richards, Don Bragg, and Bob Seagren as well as Ukraine's legendary Sergey Bubka. He reviews the changes to the sport caused by the alterations in the composition of the pole from wood to bamboo to fiberglass. Most important, Livingston suggests that pole-vaulters are elite, multitalented athletes with skills rare to the world of sports. They must possess the speed of sprinters to lift off the ground. They must have the upper-body strength of gymnasts to fly over the bar at increasingly greater elevations. And they must have phenomenal courage to participate in track and field's most risky event.
Indeed, the pole vault might be the world’s most dangerous sport, and Livingston confronts that issue by describing the conflict between traditionalists and reformers, who lobby for the mandatory use of helmets and improved landing zones. Especially poignant is Livingston’s account of the crusade for reform launched by Ed and Terri Dare whose son, Kevin, died from a fall while pole-vaulting at the Big Ten Indoor Championships in Minneapolis in February 2002.

Livingston has a facile command of language, and he tells his story with an elegant style and considerable humor. In particular, he punctuates his narrative with witty analogies: “His biceps are Popeye’s after a spinach infusion” and “At the trials, there were more passes in the pole vault final than in the singles bars around town” (5, 128). Some readers will eagerly turn pages searching for the next one; others will roll their eyes at the overuse of a literary device. More serious, the book lacks a bibliographical essay. From Livingston’s comments in his acknowledgments, readers can deduce that he relied primarily on personal interviews as he shaped his story. More elaborate information about sources was necessary, especially as Livingston rendered his history of the sport and its distinguished competitors. Livingston does include a glossary of pole-vaulting terms, an indispensable aid for the majority of readers.

For those who have rarely participated in athletics, Above and Beyond might hold little appeal. But for those who spent countless hours as children playing sports and dreaming of glory, Tim Mack’s story is an irresistible saga. Few of us realize those childhood dreams, but Tim Mack reaffirmed the underlying principle that hard work, persistence, and dedication still matter. In an athletic world increasingly dominated by superstars, Tim Mack, the common man, beat the odds and seized his dream.

Jack Patrick
Youngstown State University


Since T. Keith Glennan first took command on August 19, 1958, eleven men have served as administrators of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (with eleven more serving as acting administrators). Michael Griffin’s time in that post (April 14, 2005–January 20, 2009) was about average for NASA administrators. However history assesses his record, he will certainly be remembered as the best educated of the bunch—what with a bachelor’s degree in physics, six master’s degrees (aerospace science, aerospace engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, applied physics, business
administration), and a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering, not to mention certification as a flight instructor, with instrument and multiengine ratings. He is also the only administrator to have published a volume of his speeches. While Griffin admits, “public speaking does not come naturally to me,” he regarded his responsibility to represent NASA in public forums as one of his most important, an opportunity to explain the ideas and principles that guided his decisions as NASA administrator. The major theme that links the twenty-seven speeches included in this volume, and which describes the fundamental direction of Griffin’s years as administrator, is the attempt to provide “an intellectual rationale for human space exploration” (ix).

In the opening section, Griffin argues for the importance of a vigorous program of human space flight as a means of achieving national security, economic competitiveness, global leadership, and new opportunities for scientific and technical discovery. In a second series of talks, he underscores the role of military and civil space efforts in the development of systems management and systems engineering, the keys to our ability to manage complexity. Griffin made headlines and created some consternation within NASA by arguing that the agency had struggled “without a guiding vision” for three decades following the conclusion of the Apollo lunar landing program. On one memorable occasion, he suggested that the “space shuttle and the International Space Station—nearly the whole of the U.S. manned space program for the past three decades” were a terrible mistake (Traci Watson, “NASA Administrator Says Space Shuttle Was a Mistake,” USA Today, Sept. 27, 2005). In a final group of talks, he outlines his course correction for the agency, which involves returning astronauts to the moon, and eventually traveling to Mars, using a new generation of ballistic launch vehicles and manned spacecraft featuring heat shields and other elements of the Apollo-era approach to space travel.

Mike Griffin accepted President George W. Bush’s challenge to develop a new program that would enable NASA to retrace the path of the Apollo astronauts to the moon. Time alone will judge the wisdom of that decision. Whatever the future holds, the author provides a summary of the benefits of pushing back out of near-earth orbit, the neighborhood in which we have been operating for the past three decades, and his blueprint for returning to the moon. While this book is not destined for the best-seller lists, it does serve as a useful window into the thinking of the man who attempted to redirect the national space effort at a critical moment.

Tom D. Crouch
National Air and Space Museum
OHIO HISTORY

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