EDITORIAL BOARD

The Atlanta Review is particularly thankful for the expertise of scholars of American media history listed below. Their devotion to the field of study and the generous donation of their time and talent have been an essential contribution to the quality of essays in the Review.

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AN EDITORIAL COMMENT

The authors of the four splendidly researched studies in this issue have all been honored in the field of communication history. And rightly so. Their research goes well beyond the commonplace rehashing of secondary sources already published on their topics. By immersing themselves in time periods of the past and therein probing the raw materials of history—old newspapers and magazines, letters, speeches, photography, and film—they have emerged with fresh insights worthy of sharing with a public beyond the classroom.

Indeed, three of these papers were presented at professional conferences before being submitted for consideration by the Atlanta Review’s editorial referees. Brian Cardinale-Powell presented his paper in San Antonio at the prestigious national conference of the nation’s largest journalism and mass media organization, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Kimberly Walker won the Outstanding Student Paper award at the national Symposium on the 19th Century Press and the Civil War. Mary Metzger presented her paper at the American Journalism Historians Association’s Southeast Symposium. Locally, Melissa Bazzhaw’s paper won a First Prize from the Georgia State University Journalism History Society.

All four authors delved into issues which were important in their time periods and are of importance today certainly. They looked at the role of mass media, including film, when focused on the subjects of war, racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and rabid nationalism. The authors engaged in the professional practices of historians in the gathering of evidence and critical analysis. Each can testify that hour upon hour they came to understand better the people and situations of those times.

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History is proud to be the forum for this showcase of original research and probing discussion.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History is a production of the Journalism History Society of Georgia State University and is made possible through the concerted efforts of the authors, editors, readers, and our supporters. We thank first those authors who did the primary work of research and writing. As students, they forged their essays in classrooms but carried them far beyond, to competitive conferences in the region and the nation. After submitting their work for consideration by the Review, the authors made certain revisions suggested by the Review’s Editorial Board.

The Review staff thanks the Editorial Board members, all media historians, many of them members of the American Journalism Historians Association, for devoting time and talent to thoughtful critiquing of essays submitted for this issue. The reviewers were Patrick Washburn of Ohio University, Frank Fee of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Bernell Tripp of the University of Florida, Wallace Eberhard of the University of Georgia, Lisa Parcell of Wichita State University, Kathy Fuller-Seeley of Georgia State University, Patrick Cox of the University of Texas-Austin, and David R. Davies of the University of Southern Mississippi.

Credit for the overall production itself goes to the Review’s staff, led by Managing Editor Stacy Schmitt. Stacy coordinated the process from beginning to end: tracking manuscripts, arranging for Editorial Board readers, monitoring the progress of authors asked to make revisions, and coordinating with the printer. Stacy’s Associate Editor, Katie Hawkins, whose skill with software sent the Review camera-ready to the printer, coordinated the intensive proofreading process. As page proofs came back, the staff expanded to include several proofreaders: Jin Zhao, Shanna.
Semitism in the United States. She presented her research at the Southeast Symposium of the American Journalism Historians Association at Panama City, Florida, in January 2005.

BRYAN CARDINALE-POWELL
Propaganda and Prestige: Principal Foundations for a Canadian Film Industry, 1939-1945
Bryan Cardinale-Powell, a candidate for the Ph.D. in Communication at Georgia State University, traced the effects of this wartime project and found that, “Film board personnel trained and inspired a generation of Canadians who believed in the power of film.” His paper was accepted for presentation to the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at its annual conference in San Antonio, August 2005.

MELISSA BAZHAW
The Limited Press Coverage of Women’s Recruitment for Domestic and Military Services during America’s Involvement in World War II: 1941-1945
Melissa Bazhaw won the Georgia State University Journalism History Society’s First Place award for this research paper on women in wartime, written during the History of News Media course. She concluded that press coverage of women’s recruitment was limited, and “many of the most important articles concerning them were placed between fashion ads and recipes.” Melissa graduated in 2004 and is now pursuing a Master’s degree in Communication at Georgia State.
HISTORY’S ALMANAC
“The Treason of the Senate,” 1906

This year we note the 100th anniversary of a landmark journalistic exposé that is linked forever to two lasting outcomes: the naming of a genre of journalism as “muckraking” and the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, mandating direct election of U.S. Senators instead of appointment by the states.

The series of articles, titled “The Treason of Senate,” exposed the conflicts of interest and dominating personalities of powerful U.S. Senators who were “incessant, flagrant, deliberate” in serving corporate and financial interests rather than the public interest. The author, David Graham Phillips, was so fluent in both journalism and storytelling that the first installment stunned not only Senators but also the President, Theodore Roosevelt.

In response, Roosevelt attacked the messenger. He called Phillips and others like him “muckrakers.” Roosevelt equated such journalists with the fixated character in John Bunyan’s allegory The Pilgrim’s Progress — Bunyan’s “man that could look no way but downwards with a muck-rake in his hand.”

Phillips countered, dismissing the “muck-raking” epithet as irrelevant to the central debate on betrayal of the public interest: “Admit that it is ‘muck-raking’ to write and publish the records of Senate, the biographies of the senators as made by themselves. Still, how does the epithet ‘muck-raker’ change the fact of senatorial treason to the people?”

Roosevelt could have had several motives for attacking the investigative journalists. He may have been nettled that Phillips’ series appeared in a magazine recently purchased by a publisher whom Roosevelt despised, William Randolph Hearst, who was then serving his second term as a Congressman from New York. Also, Roosevelt had been accused by at least one Senator of using his cozy press relationships to manipulate the Senate; the “muckraker” attack might have helped restore his credibility with the Senate. Then, too, zealous press crusaders seemed to be claiming ownership of the new reform movement, giving Roosevelt little or no credit for past or proposed reforms. Worse, Phillips discounted Roosevelt as both a dupe of the Senate clique and a compromiser who settled for weakened legislation out of “the desire to feel that he had ‘done something,’ the desire to get credit with the people for accomplishment.”

Whatever the transient motives, two matters became permanent. For journalists, the “muckraker” label stuck, and some wore it as a badge of honor in the era of reform. Secondly, Congress changed the way Senators were chosen. On May 13, 1912, Congress passed the 17th Amendment permitting Senators to be “elected by the people.” The Amendment was ratified by the states on April 8, 1913.
Broken Shackles: How Frederick Douglass Used the Freedoms of Press, Speech, and Religion in the Cause of Freedom for the African American Slave, 1847-1863

Kimberly G. Walker

Abstract

Frederick Douglass was the pre-eminent African American spokesperson of the nineteenth century. Douglass, a former slave, became one of the leading abolitionists of his time. Even as a slave, he learned the power of the spoken and written word. As editor of The North Star, Frederick Douglass’ Paper, and Douglass’ Monthly, he advocated the legal and uncompromising end to slavery in America. Though often a harsh critic of the American political system, ironically, the nature of that system afforded Douglass the opportunity to influence public attitudes regarding slavery. Very astutely, he combined his journalistic prowess, Christian ethics, and powerful oratory to take advantage of the American freedoms of press, religion, and speech to ignite the abolitionist movement.

Perhaps his greatest impact on the civil rights of black people in the nineteenth century was evidenced by his editorials featured not only in his three papers, but in other abolitionist publications and several northern dailies. Through his editorials, Douglass reached wider audiences, particularly in the North and abroad, thus making him an effective change agent as well as an ardent spokesman against slavery and racial oppression in America. The focus of this treatise is to examine major editorials from those publications during the years of 1847-1863 to define Douglass’ role in the anti-slavery movement.

Frederick Douglass (1818?-1895), born Frederick Augustus Bailey, was one of the most prominent Americans of the nineteenth century. An accomplished man in many fields of endeavor, Douglass was an orator, abolitionist, journalist, editor, author, minister, and statesman. With a career that spanned over fifty years, few could rival his oratory and influence. Perhaps only President Abraham Lincoln himself overshadowed Douglass’ celebrity during the Civil War period. What makes his story all the more remarkable is that he was an American slave.

Only six years after escaping from slavery in 1838, Douglass became the leading black abolitionist and one of the anti-slavery movement’s greatest orators. Initially, Douglass was inspired by the prominent abolitionist and publisher of The Liberator, William Lloyd Garrison, with whom he became a close friend and ally. Yet, Douglass’ eloquence and stories about his treatment as a slave soon became powerful weapons in the fight against slavery. As his oratory grew more polished, audiences began to question whether he had ever been a slave.

To dispel these doubts, he published his first autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, in 1845. In this work he named his former owners and described every aspect of his life under slavery. However, Douglass omitted details about his method of escape, so as not to jeopardize similar attempts by other slaves. His narrative, one of the most effective accounts written by a slave, has become a major source of information about slavery and a classic of American literature. Douglass later wrote two more autobiographies: My Bondage and My Freedom (1855) and Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (1881, revised 1892).2

Yet, it was Douglass’ career as an editor of his own abolitionist papers that propelled him to become the pre-eminent race statesman of his day. For sixteen years, from 1847-1863, Douglass’ publications: The North Star, Frederick Douglass’ Paper, and Douglass’ Monthly were the primary vehicles for his
abolitionist views. As a freed slave, Douglass capitalized on the rights granted in the First Amendment of the Constitution: the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of religion, to champion the cause of freedom. Brilliantly, he combined cogent editorial and eloquent oratory, cloaked with the fiery rebuke of a “fire and brimstone” preacher to bring attention to the evils and inequalities of slavery. As the author of thousands of documents including: speeches, editorials, articles, and letters, plus three autobiographies, it is well beyond the scope of this paper to critique all of Douglass’ writings. The purpose of this discourse is to analyze some of Douglass’ editorials from The North Star, Frederick Douglass’ Paper, and Douglass’ Monthly, between the years 1847-1863, to determine how his rhetoric and role as an abolitionist made him an agent of change at the height of the anti-slavery movement.

On Friday, December 3, 1847, Douglass inaugurated a new era in African American journalism with the publication of The North Star. He published the first issue in Rochester, New York, with its masthead proclaiming “Right is of no Sex – Truth is of no Color – God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren.” Douglass made known his intent for the new four-page weekly newspaper on page one: “The object of the NORTH STAR will be to attack Slavery in all its forms and aspects; advocate Universal Emancipation; exalt the standard of PUBLIC MORALITY; promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the COLORED PEOPLE; and hasten the day of FREEDOM to the THREE MILLIONS of our ENSLAVED FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.” The first issue, indicative of the format that would continue throughout its duration, included stories about slavery atrocities, slave captures, letters, speeches, poetry, advertisements, marriage announcements, transcripts of anti-slavery meetings, and columns from other newspapers.

Douglass published The North Star every Friday at its printing office located at 25 Buffalo Street in the Talman Building, opposite the Reynolds Arcade. Martin R. Delany, a prominent African American journalist, had just resigned his editorship of the Negro paper, the Pittsburgh Mystery, to serve as co-editor. William C. Nell, a self-taught Negro and devoted Garrisonian abolitionist, was listed as publisher. Subscriptions were two dollars per year, but no subscription was accepted for a term of less than six months. Advertisements not exceeding ten lines could be inserted three times for one dollar. Every insertion was twenty-five cents.

Douglass’ editorials, usually found on page two, became the mainstay of The North Star. In his first editorial, “Our Paper and Its Prospector,” Douglass revealed his intent for the paper:

We are now about to assume the management of the editorial department of a newspaper, devoted to the cause of Liberty, Humanity and Progress. The position is one which, with the purest motives, we have long desired to occupy. It has long been our anxious wish to see, in this slave-holding, slave-trading, and Negro-hating land, a printing press and paper, permanently established, under the complete control and direction of the immediate victims of slavery and oppression.

Douglass used his editorials to state his positions about the most pertinent and controversial issues in the anti-slavery movement. Common themes in Douglass’ editorials included: slavery, prejudice, civil rights, women’s rights, public policy, legislation, the government, and the church. Being a Christian himself, his most stinging critiques were often against the church and the so-called Christian slaveholders that supported slavery. The bulk of Douglass’ commentary regarding slavery centered on the role of the government and the church in sanctioning slavery and preju-
dice against African Americans. Douglass also highlighted the cause of women’s rights in his writing, so much so, that he became a frequent lecturer among women’s groups.

When Douglass joined the abolitionists, the movement had split into three distinct schools of thought: moral suasion, political action, and violent revolution. Moral suasion, the main approach of Garrisonian abolitionists, emphasized taking a moral high ground in spreading brotherhood as opposed to political activism or physical force. They believed that the best way to get rid of slavery was to persuade men to regard slavery as evil by drawing attention to its injustices. However, Douglass did not intend to become an abolitionist when he escaped from slavery in 1838; he just wanted to maintain his freedom.10

Before Douglass published The North Star, his abolitionist views stemmed from his belief that Christianity was used to justify slavery. Douglass converted to Christianity in 1831 at the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland. By 1839, he was licensed to preach by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and spoke frequently at the New Bedford Zion Methodist Church. His speech denouncing the colonization of freed slaves was reported in William Lloyd Garrison’s The Liberator. By this time, Douglass was subscribing to The Liberator and began attending speeches of noted abolitionists, Wendell Phillips and Henry Highland Garnet.11

In 1841, Douglass became an orator for the Garrisonians.12 Early in his career as a lecturer, Douglass prefaced his speeches by stating that he was inadequate or “unfit” for public speaking. He acknowledged that his experience as a slave and lack of education and opportunity made him less qualified to speak on matters of civic policy. Yet, it was the brutality of his own slave experience that fueled his impassioned response when asked about it. His slave experience gave him the highest credibility and the best perspective from which to speak against slavery. Furthermore, it was the genius granted him by the God in whom he believed that gave him the eloquence upon which to speak and write for the cause of freedom.

Douglass’ burgeoning reputation as an orator was spurred on by the reprints of his speeches in several abolitionist papers and Northern dailies. In a speech before the American Anti-Slavery Society on May 6, 1845, entitled “My Slave Experience in Maryland,” Douglass stated: “My habits and early life have done much to unfit me for public speaking.” In the speech, Douglass recounted his experience as a slave in which he was whipped and beaten mercilessly by unrepentant slaveholders. He also spoke of the harsh realities he witnessed first-hand against fellow slaves. Douglass named the perpetrators of these acts even at the risk of his own personal safety, and possible re-enslavement. After all, he was still a fugitive slave. For him, it was necessary for the “sake of humanity” and he was willing to serve as the instrument of God in “tearing down the bloody pillar of Slavery.”13

One of Douglass’ first articles written in 1845 for The Liberty Bell, a publication of the American Anti-Slavery Society, provided a preview of what kind of writer Douglass would become. Also, he responded to doubts that he had ever been a slave. In establishing arguments against slavery in his writing, Douglass would often present the opposing side’s counterarguments to demonstrate why their reasoning was faulty. He also employed the repetition of words as a rhetorical device to provide emphasis and continuity as shown in the following excerpt from The Liberty Bell article. Speaking of slaveholders, Douglass wrote:

When they tell the world that the Negro is ignorant, and naturally and intellectually incapacitated to appreciate and enjoy freedom, they also publish their own condemnation, by bringing to light those infamous Laws by which the Slave is com-
pelled to live in the grossest ignorance. When they tell the world that the Slave is immoral, vicious and degraded, they but invite attention to their own depravity … When they pretend that they hold the Slave out of actual regard to the Slave’s welfare, and not because of any profit which accrues to themselves, as owners, they are covered with confusion by the single fact that Virginia alone has realized, in one short year, eighteen millions of dollars from the sale of human flesh. When they attempt to shield themselves by the grossly absurd and wicked pretence that the Slave is contented and happy, and therefore, “better off” in Slavery than he could be possessed of freedom, their shield is broken by that long and bloody list of advertisements for runaway Slaves who have left their happy homes, and sought for freedom, even at the hazard of losing their lives in the attempt to gain it. 14

When Douglass published details of his life as a slave in his *Narrative*, he was in danger of recapture. The provisions of the Fugitive Slave Laws allowed slaveholders to seize runaway slaves (even in free states) and return them to bondage. Because of his growing prominence, Douglass feared his former owners would send agents to capture him and return him to Maryland. Thus, in August 1845, he went abroad for two years to England and Ireland, touring and speaking against slavery. His oratory made as great an impression in England as it had in the United States. 15

Late in 1846, Douglass’ friends raised £150, or $710.96, to purchase his emancipation from slave owner Hugh Auld. Abolitionists decried the purchase, claiming that Douglass’ friends were sanctioning the “right to traffic human beings,” a direct violation of the anti-slavery principle of never offering a slaveholder compensa-

sation for selling human flesh. When Garrison had contributed to Douglass’ freedom fund, *The Liberator* was deluged with letters accusing him of violating a major principle of the anti-slavery creed and the controversy waned for nearly three months. In a letter to *The Liberator*, Douglass defended the transaction on behalf of his friends by saying it was their objective “to place [him] on equal footing of safety with all other anti-slavery lecturers in the United States.” 16 After receiving his manumission, Douglass returned to the United States, reuniting with his family in Lynn, Massachusetts on April 20, 1847. 17

Upon returning home, Douglass immersed himself in *The North Star*. From 1848 to 1851, Douglass used the paper to champion his many causes. Next to the abolition of slavery and equal rights for blacks, the cause closest to Douglass’ heart was women’s rights. He had befriended many icons of the women’s movement like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. He attended his first women’s rights convention held at Seneca Falls, New York: July 19-20, 1848, where he was the only man to speak in favor of Stanton’s resolution regarding women’s suffrage. There were many in the abolitionist movement who would advance the rights of black men while denying the rights of women. Men who championed women’s causes were subject to ridicule with names like “hermaphrodites” and “Aunt Nancy men.” While some in the anti-slavery movement supported women’s causes in principle, many felt (including some women) that it was judicious to fight only one battle at a time. 18

Douglass was among the minority of abolitionists, who not only supported women’s rights publicly, but also devoted space in his paper to women abolitionists and regularly attended and lectured at women’s conventions. He recognized the need for women to have their own independent movement advocating their rights for equality. 19

In this editorial on “The Rights of Women” on July 28,
1848, Douglass wrote:

A discussion of the rights of animals would be regarded with far more complacency by many of what are called the wise and the good of our land, than would a discussion of the rights of women... Many who have at last made the discovery that the Negroes have some rights as well as other members of the human family, have yet to be convinced that women are entitled to any. We are free to say that in respect to political rights, we hold women to be justly entitled to all we claim for man... Our doctrine is that "right is of no sex."

During the first ten years in his work as an abolitionist, Douglass followed the philosophies of the Garrisonian school without question. Philosophically and socially, he was a Garrisonian abolitionist; using the power of the spoken and written word to advance the anti-slavery cause. After establishing The North Star in Rochester, Douglass was away from the influence of Massachusetts abolitionists and began to deviate philosophically from strict Garrisonism. Advocates of Garrisonism rejected political activism as a means to further the cause against slavery and viewed the Constitution as an evil, pro-slavery document. After considerable study and extensive reading in law, political philosophy, and American government, Douglass concluded that there were serious flaws in Garrisonian doctrines. He began to formulate a new anti-slavery creed.

By 1849, Douglass began to announce publicly his stance about the Constitution, distancing himself from his friend Garrison and the followers of moral suasion. On February 9, 1849, Douglass responded to a reader: "On a close examination of the Constitution, I am satisfied that if strictly 'construed according to its reading,' it is not a pro-slavery instrument." But, in the same letter, Douglass contradicted himself with this statement: "I now hold, as I have ever done, that the original intent and meaning of the Constitution (the one given it by the men who framed it, those who adopted it, and the one given it by the Supreme Court of the United States) makes it a pro-slavery instrument—such an one as I cannot bring myself to vote under, or swear to support."

Douglass' admission of a pro-Constitution stance stood in direct opposition to Garrisonian abolitionism and sparked a heated debate among the Garrisonians. On March 16, 1849, Douglass responded with a lengthy commentary and analysis of his views on the Constitution in an editorial entitled, "The Constitution and Slavery." Douglass reiterated his assertion from the previous month's letter that the original content of the Constitution was not pro-slavery, but acknowledged there were compromises made for slave states, such as the "three-fifths" clause. At this point, Douglass believed that the Constitution could be wielded in the cause against slavery. Douglass had become a political abolitionist.

In 1850, abolitionism suffered two major setbacks: The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The Compromise of 1850 was designed to maintain the balance of power between free and slave states. California was admitted as a free state; New Mexico and Utah were given popular sovereignty, the right to decide about slavery on their own; and the slave trade was abolished in Washington, D.C. The tougher Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 made slave capture more profitable and penalized anyone who interfered with the capture of fugitive slaves.

Douglass responded to both of these legislative acts with biting criticisms. In an editorial about "Henry Clay and Slavery," on February 8, 1850, he warned that "the judgment-day of slavery is dawning." Furthermore, he maintained: "Slavery has no rights. It is a foul and damning outrage upon all rights, and has not
right to exist anywhere, in or out of the territories.”

Douglass encouraged slaves to escape to freedom in “A Letter to the American Slaves” on September 5, 1850. He also provided guidelines about slave behavior once they reached freedom in the North. First, if slaves joined a sectarian church, they could not join one that had a “Negro pew,” a segregated section for blacks only. Secondly, slaves could “join no political party” which supported slavery in any way including pro-slavery candidates for office. Thirdly, Douglass warned slaves not to send their children to schools that discriminated against “colored people.”

During the winter of 1850-51, Douglass taught a series of seven lectures on slavery at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, the city’s most popular auditorium. The aim of the series was to counteract the influence of the local press and pulpit in creating an atmosphere of indifference toward slavery. The well-attended lectures were highly publicized in the local press and reprinted in pamphlets contributing to the growth of anti-slavery sentiment in the community.

By 1851, the number of subscribers to *The North Star* went from 2,000 to 4,000 and Douglass was able to separate his personal finances from his business interests. In April, radical political abolitionist, Gerrit Smith, wrote to Douglass proposing to merge his struggling *Liberty Party Paper* with *The North Star* and offering to support the new paper. Smith also encouraged Douglass to adopt his philosophy about the role of the Constitution in the anti-slavery movement.

The change in Douglass’ anti-slavery creed became public in May 1851 at the 18th annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Syracuse. At the meeting, it was proposed that *The North Star* and the *Liberty Party Paper* receive official recommendation by the Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison opposed the endorsement of the *Liberty Party Paper* because it did not stand for the dissolution of the Union or affirm that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document. Douglass thereupon announced that he could not consider his paper eligible for endorsement since he believed that the Constitution could “be wielded in behalf of emancipation” and it was the “duty of every American citizen…to use his political as well as his moral power for [slavery’s] overthrow.” Douglass reprinted his stance in the May 15 editorial, “Change of Opinion Announced.”

Garrison was outraged. “There is gueroy somewhere,” he cried. He moved that *The North Star* be stricken from the list of endorsements. Douglass responded to Garrison’s outburst by writing in *The North Star* on May 15, “We can easily forgive this hastily expressed imputation, falling, as it did, from the lips of one to whom we shall never cease to be grateful, and for whom we have cherished (and do now cherish) a veneration only inferior in degree to that which we owe to our conscience and to our God.” This announcement marked the end of the Douglass/Garrison alliance and friendship, and signaled the beginning of a new era of Douglass embracing political activism as a strategy in the abolitionist movement. By June, the demise of the friendship was sealed when *The North Star* and the *Liberty Party* paper merged. On June 30, 1851, the first issue of the new weekly appeared, now called the *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*.

Douglass published *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* from 1851 to 1858. Though forsaken by the Garrisonians, Douglass found new admirers and allies elsewhere once he paved his course toward political action. At the Whig Convention in Rochester in October 1851, the Free Soil delegates, a minority wing of the Whig Party, proposed Douglass as representative for the Second Assembly District in the State Legislature. He rebuffed overtures from the Free Soilers by stating that his intent for public service and influence of public policy would be as an abolitionist and not as a candidate for political office. Douglass reiterated his stance in “On Being Considered for the Legislature” on October 30:
I do not believe that the slavery question is settled, and settled forever. I do not believe slave-catching is either a Christian duty, or an innocent amusement. I do not believe that he who breaks the arm of the kidnap, or wrests the trembling captive from his grasp is a "traitor." I do not believe that human enactments are to be obeyed when they are point blank against the laws of the living God.\(^{32}\)

Within a year, Douglass soon realized that his isolationist policy was futile as he noted the enthusiasm evoked by the growing Free Soil movement. He wrote to Gerrit Smith on July 15, 1852, that it was the abolitionists’ duty to lead the Free Soilers and their political responsibility to attend the upcoming National Free Soil Convention at Pittsburgh to bring up issues around which the delegates would rally. When 2,000 delegates crowded into the Masonic Hall in Pittsburgh on August 11 for the Free Soil Convention, Smith and Douglass were present in the New York section.\(^{33}\)

Soon after convening, Douglass was elected secretary of the convention amid roaring applause. Douglass was not a scheduled speaker at the convention, but loud calls from the crowd beckoned him to the platform. Though he had no prepared speech, he launched immediately into an aggressive speech filled with anger and threats. In his speech to the convention, Douglass revealed that he not only affirmed any political means to end slavery, but also endorsed violent means, if necessary, in the anti-slavery cause. Amidst thundering applause, Douglass avowed that “slaveholders not only forfeit their right to liberty, but to life itself.”\(^{34}\)

This speech, reprinted in the Frederick Douglass ‘Paper on August 20, presented Douglass’ agenda for the Free Soil platform. He suggested that if the Liberty Party had stayed true to its principles, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 would not have been enacted. Douglass stated:

The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers. A half dozen more dead kidnappers carried down South would cool the ardor of Southern gentlemen, and keep their rapacity in check. That is perfectly right as long as the colored man has no protection. The colored men’s rights are less than those of a jackass… There is more protection for a horse, for a donkey, or anything, rather than a colored man – who is, therefore, justified in the eye of God, in maintaining his right with his arm.\(^{35}\)

A voice from the audience raised an objection, “Some of us do not believe that doctrine.” Douglass responded, “the man who takes the office of a bloodhound ought to be treated as a bloodhound.” Douglass made it known that he was a disciple of Gerrit Smith and affirmed that “when a government destroys human rights, it ceases to be a government … and is entitled to no respect whatever.”\(^{36}\)

In March 1853, Douglass visited Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, at her home in Andover, Ohio. He wanted to enlist her support in establishing an industrial school to train black artisans.\(^{37}\) (Stowe also wrote the non-fictional document, *The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, to refute reports that the accounts of slavery in her novel were false.\(^{38}\)) In support of Stowe, Douglass wrote in his editorial on April 29, 1853:

All efforts to conceal the enormity of slavery fail. The most unwise thing which, perhaps, was ever done by slaveholders, in order to hide the ugly features of slavery, was the calling in question, and denying the truthfulness of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. 
The ‘Key’ not only proves the correctness of every essential part of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but proves more and worse things against the murderous system than are alleged in that great book.39

In 1854, the Republican Party was founded after passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act splintered the Democratic and Whig parties. The act authorized the creation of Kansas and Nebraska, west of the states of Missouri and Iowa, and divided by the 40th parallel. It repealed a provision of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that had prohibited slavery in the territories north of 36° 30’ and initiated the concept of popular sovereignty.40 With the prospect of slavery expanding farther to new territories, Douglass’ commentary had become more piercing.

As stated previously, Douglass did not object to violence as a means of slave resistance, though he remained a political abolitionist. On June 2, 1854, Douglass wrote an editorial entitled, “Is it Right and Wise to Kill a Kidnapper?,” to respond to the slaying of James Bathelder, a truckman serving as the U.S. Marshall in Boston. Fugitive slave Anthony Burns had escaped from Richmond, Virginia in February 1854 and was hiding in Boston. He was arrested on May 24 and about to be delivered to his master when his story caught the attention of Boston abolitionists, who were determined to prevent Burns’ return to slavery. Bathelder was killed in an escape attempt at the Boston jail.41 Douglass observed: “The shedding of human blood at first sight, and without explanation must ever be, regarded with horror; and he who takes pleasure in human slaughter is ... a moral monster. Resistance is ... wise as well as just. For a white man to defend his friend unto blood is praiseworthy, but for a black man to do precisely the same thing is a crime.”42

In August 1855, Douglass published his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, with Miller, Orton, and Mulligan in New York. It sold 15,000 copies in two months. Despite the book’s success and positive reviews, Douglass did not revel in his growing celebrity, but maintained his attack on the slave system. He criticized the recently formed Republican Party for opposing the extension of slavery while tolerating its existence in the South.43

For Douglass, the final struggle was the uncompromising end to slavery. That could only be achieved, Douglass surmised, if abolitionists presented a united front, feeling that divisions over strategy and agendas were harmful to the anti-slavery movement. In “The Final Struggle,” Douglass wrote in November, “there must exist a thorough organization of freeman, with the single issue presented, Liberty everywhere, Slavery nowhere; there must be unity of effort; every man who loves freedom, must array himself in her defence, whatever may have been his past political predilections.”44

On August 15, 1856, Douglass announced his support of Republican Party candidates John C. Fremont and William L. Dayton, respectively, for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States. This is quite surprising because Douglass, the previous summer, called the Republican Party, “a heterogeneous mass of political antagonism, gathered from defunct Whiggery, disaffected Democracy, and demented, defeated, and disappointed Native Americanism.”45 Furthermore, Douglass had very recently endorsed his long-time friend and benefactor, Gerrit Smith’s, presidential nomination. But, Douglass believed that Fremont had a greater chance of being elected. Smith had financially backed *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* since the merger in 1851. By the fall of 1856, the paper was in trouble, so Douglass instituted a policy of advance subscription payments.46

Realizing this change of heart would rile many of his readers, Douglass guaranteed in the editorial, “Fremont and Dayton,” that his support of them would not lead him to abandon a single “Anti-Slavery Truth or Principle.” “The difference between our
paper this week and last week is a difference of Policy, not of Principle," Douglass purported, "we maintain the platform of the Radical Abolitionists. The unconstitutionality of Slavery, the illegality of Slavery, the Right of the Federal Government to abolish Slavery in every part of the Republic, whether in States or Territories."

In August 1857, Douglass published his speech on the Dred Scott decision in a pamphlet. In a speech before the Anti-Slavery Society in New York on May 14, he called the Dred Scott decision a "vile and shocking abomination." In his oratory, he had always offered a word of hope to abolitionists and a word of doom to slaveholders:

The whole history of the anti-slavery movement is studded with proof that all measures devised and executed with a view to ally and diminish the anti-slavery agitation, have only served to increase, intensify, and embolden that agitation … It was so with the Fugitive Slave Bill. It was so with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; and it will be so with this last and most shocking of all pro-slavery devices … Step by step we have seen the slave power advancing; poisoning, corrupting, and perverting the institutions of the country; growing more and more haughty, imperious, and exacting. The white man’s liberty has been marked out for the same grave with the black man’s. 49

The summer of 1858 marked yet another milestone in Douglass’ life because of two events that inevitably altered the course of his career as a journalist and abolitionist. In June, Douglass began publishing his third publication, Douglass’ Monthly as a supplement to his weekly, Frederick Douglass’ Paper. It became a separate publication in January 1859 with a subscription rate of five shillings per year. The Monthly was more conducive to Douglass’ extensive schedule of lecturing and touring all over the North and Canada. 50 Its masthead decreed, "Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction; open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. 1st Escl. xxxi 8, 9." 51 Also, that summer, Douglass met with revolutionary John Brown, whom he had been friends with for several years. The two discussed plans to raise armed bands that would help slaves escape north through the Virginia and Maryland mountains. 52

In the fall of 1858, Douglass joined Susan B. Anthony and other activists calling for the abolition of capital punishment. The group had hoped to prevent the execution of Ira Stout of Rochester, who was about to be hanged for murder. In a meeting on October 7, this group was to present a series of resolutions appealing to Governor King for a stay of execution for Stout and commutation of his death sentence to life imprisonment. When the chairman of the group failed to show, Douglass was appointed chairman. When Douglass reached the platform, the crowd hissed, yelled, and shouted threats and racial epithets; becoming so unruly that the mayor had to adjourn the meeting. Douglass, along with his children, had to flee for their safety. Douglass’ paper had denounced capital punishment many times before. In joining this cause, Douglass showed a great deal of moral courage despite bitter discrimination. The resolution and accompanying story was reprinted in The Liberator on October 22, 1858. 53

In Chambersburg, Pennsylvania on the night of August 19, 1859, Douglass met again with John Brown. Brown revealed his plans to stage a raid on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and arm slaves in the surrounding area for a slave revolt. Douglass warned him that an attack on the national government was doomed to failure and declined to participate in favor of Brown’s original
plan. Two days later, Brown’s attack on Harpers Ferry failed and he was hanged for treason within months.\textsuperscript{54}

After Douglass’ letters were found among Brown’s possessions, authorities sought Douglass’ arrest. He fled to Canada to avoid arrest and extradition to Virginia. Subsequently, Douglass went to England to fulfill plans for a lecture tour made before Brown’s raid, where he praised Brown as a martyr.\textsuperscript{55} Writing from England in the November 1859 issue of the \textit{Monthly}, Douglass defended Brown’s actions in “Captain John Brown Not Insane.”

Slavery is a system of brute force. It shields itself behind might, rather than right. It must be met with its own weapons. Capt. Brown has initiated a new mode of carrying on the crusade of freedom, and his blow has sent dread and terror throughout the entire ranks of the piratical army of slavery. His daring deeds may cost him his life, but priceless as is the value of that life, the blow he has struck, will, in the end, prove to be worth its mighty cost. Like Samson, he has laid his hands upon the pillars of this great national temple of cruelty and blood, and when he falls, that temple will speedily crumble to its final doom, burying its denizens in its ruins.\textsuperscript{56}

Douglass’ tour was cut short by the death of his youngest daughter, 10-year-old Annie, on March 13. He returned home despondent despite the threat of arrest and kept a low profile. However, authorities had abandoned their search for Douglass, since Brown’s confession before his death did not implicate anyone else.\textsuperscript{57}

By 1860, presidential politics took center stage as the country became further divided about slavery and southerners rallied to oppose Lincoln. In the June 1860 editorial, “The Chicago Nomi-

nations,” Douglass wrote favorably of Abraham Lincoln after his presidential nomination, calling him “a man of unblemished private character . . . and one of the most honest men in political life.”\textsuperscript{58} In July, Douglass stopped publishing \textit{Frederick Douglass Paper}; it had been solvent for months.\textsuperscript{59} In December, Douglass wrote in the monthly that Lincoln did not threaten southern states and predicted that the South would not secede. In “Late Election,” Douglass asserted:

Mr. Lincoln proposes no measure which can bring him into antagonistic collision with the traffickers in human flesh, either in the States or in the District of Columbia. The Union will, therefore, be saved simply because there is no cause in the election of Mr. Lincoln for its dissolution. Slavery will be as safe, and safer, in the Union under such a President, than it can be under any President of a Southern Confederacy.\textsuperscript{60}

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union.\textsuperscript{61}

In “Dissolution of the American Union,” Douglass wrote on January 1861 that “South Carolina is out of the Union, just as the nonvoting Abolitionists are out of the Union – the former to preserve slavery, and the latter to abolish slavery.” South Carolina was out of the Union “on paper,” since the U.S. flag still flew over Fort Moultrie. Douglass doubted that the dissolution of the Union would be successful, since in order to accomplish it, South Carolina would need to conquer a formidable federal army and furthermore, the slave population outnumbered whites in the state. Douglass wrote that if the Union could only be held together by “a new drain on the Negro’s blood,” then “let the Union perish, and perish forever.”\textsuperscript{62}
As the secession movement progressed, Douglass’ only ray of hope was Lincoln’s inauguration. However, Douglass was bitterly disappointed with Lincoln’s inaugural address because of his intent to uphold existing fugitive slave laws; assuring the South that he was “an excellent slave hound.” He derided Lincoln for being on the same moral level with slaveholders and was “in no respect better than they.” “Once in Washington,” Douglass wrote, “Mr. Lincoln found himself in the thick atmosphere of treason on the one hand, and a cowardly, sentimental and deceitful profession of peace on the other.”

On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops attacked Fort Sumter, South Carolina, marking the start of the Civil War. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Douglass entered into a new phase as an abolitionist. Before this time, he had fought slaveholders as an individual or as part of various groups of abolitionists. Now the full might of northern wrath was set against the southern slaveocracy. At the beginning of the war, the issue of slavery was barely discussed as a cause for war, while many in the public sphere argued that tariffs, national banking, and states’ rights were primary reasons. For Douglass, on the other hand, there was but one reason — slavery. The Civil War was the fulfillment of a prophecy he foretold long ago that slavery would be drowned in a sea of blood. He warned that the nation must abolish slavery or be abolished by it. As the war persisted, Douglass fixed his efforts upon two strategies: making slave emancipation a war measure and recruiting Negroes for the Union Army.

As war raged, signs of slavery’s demise began to appear. On April 3, 1862, slavery was abolished in the District of Columbia. This was the first time since the outbreak of war that Douglass had cause to rejoice. He wrote in the May monthly that this measure was “the first great step towards that righteousness which exalts a nation.”

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation which took effect on January 1, 1863. Some abolitionists viewed the proclamation as an empty gesture, while Douglass viewed it as the long awaited fulfillment of his lifelong dream.

“Free forever” oh! Long enslaved millions, whose cries have so vexed the air and sky, suffer on a few more days in sorrow, the hour of your deliverance draws nigh! Oh! Ye millions of free and loyal men who have earnestly sought to free your bleeding country from the dreadful ravages of revolution and anarchy, lift up now your voices with joy and thanksgiving for with freedom to the slave will come peace and safety to your country.

Douglass had called for the enlistment of Negro troops since the beginning of the war, but up until December 1862, that call had not been heeded. As the need for manpower increased, the recruitment of southern Negro troops was given serious consideration. The final Emancipation Proclamation allowed that freed slaves would be accepted into the armed forces of the United States. Consequently, on January 20, 1863, the formation of the 54th Massachusetts regiment was announced, making it the first Negro contingent recruited in the North.

Within weeks, Douglass enlisted as a recruitment agent for Negro soldiers. In the April monthly he wrote nine reasons for Negroes to enlist in the Union Army in the article, “Why Should a Colored Man Enlist?” Among those reasons, he wrote, was that the Negro man must secure, protect, and defend his own liberty and that the war, whether stated or not, was “a war of Emancipation.”

Once enlisted, the treatment of Negro soldiers was less than honorable. The unjust treatment and discrimination of Negro
soldiers made Douglass’ recruitment efforts difficult. In July 1863, Douglass made his first trip to Washington to visit President Lincoln to plead the case of the Negro soldier. If the War Department wished to recruit Negro soldiers, he argued, then it had to reverse its policies: give Negro soldiers the same pay as whites, compel the Confederacy to treat Negro soldiers as prisoners of war and not fugitive slaves, promote Negro soldiers worthy of accommodation for bravery and distinguished service, and retaliate when Negro soldiers were murdered in cold blood. 

Lincoln listened intently to his proposals, but felt that the time was not yet ripe for such drastic measures. He appeased Douglass by offering him a commission in the Union Army for the Negro regiments, upon recommendation by Secretary of War Stanton. Though disappointed by Lincoln’s hesitancy in instituting his proposals, Douglass was highly impressed with Lincoln as a person describing him “as great as the greatest” of men and free from “prejudice against the colored people.” These impressions influenced Douglass’ decision to continue recruiting for the Union Army. With the promise of a commission, Douglass hastened back to Rochester to publish the last edition of his monthly in August 1863.

Douglass’ decision to cease publication of his journal was not sudden. It had been his intent for some time. Circulation of the monthly had been declining since the beginning of the war. In the fall of 1862, Douglass informed his old friend Julia Griffiths that on January 1, 1863, the date on which the Emancipation Proclamation was to take effect, he would give up his editorial duties and retire to a farm. With the promise of a military commission, Douglass was excited to embark upon a new phase of his life.

In his “Valedictory,” on August 16, 1863, Douglass wrote the farewell editorial of his own paper detailing his reasons for ceasing publication. Noting that slavery was not yet abolished, he praised his paper for drawing attention to slavery and prejudice.

Douglass wrote:

I discontinue the paper not because I think that speaking and writing against slavery and its twin monster prejudice against the colored race are no longer needful . . . I can write now through channels which were not opened fully to these subjects, when my journal was established . . . I discontinue my paper, because I can better serve my poor bleeding country-men whose great opportunity has now come, by going South and summoning them to assert their just liberty.

After 16 years, Douglass discontinued his role as an editor of his own paper and the military commission never materialized. A prolific era in American journalism was over. Within two years President Lincoln was assassinated, the Civil War ended, and the Thirteenth Amendment, which ended slavery in America, was ratified. Freedom finally!

Conclusion: The Legacy of Frederick Douglass

The constitutional freedoms of the press, speech, and religion guaranteed in the First Amendment afforded Douglass the opportunity as a free man to redress the wrongs of American slavery at the height of the 19th century abolitionist movement. Douglass practiced those freedoms most prominently as a journalist, and secondarily as an orator and Christian minister. Douglass used the freedom of the press as an editor to ignite public debate concerning slavery. He used the freedom of speech as an orator to sway public indifference toward slavery, and he used the freedom of religion to wage a holy crusade against slavery. Though wavering between the varying schools of abolitionist thought and strategies, Douglass embraced any means that could be used to
dismantle the institution of slavery which he viewed as inherently evil and ungodly. For Douglass, the anti-slavery cause was not simply a moral, social, or political issue, but also a spiritual movement. From the pen, the podium, and the pulpit, Douglass was able to broaden his sphere of influence to keep the issue of slavery on the national political agenda.

Frederick Douglass’ greatest dream was the complete manumission of all African Americans, to which he devoted his entire life. There were many great abolitionists, but no one was more charismatic than Frederick Douglass. Perhaps, there were abolitionists more knowledgeable about the legalities and politics of public policy, but no abolitionist could articulate more eloquently the depths of depravity and degradation endured by the American slave. What gave him this advantage? He lived the slavery experience. He had experienced every phase of life available to the black man of his time – he was a slave, he was a fugitive, he was a free man. He proved that when given an opportunity, any person can overcome adversity and achieve unimaginable heights.

Early in his life, Douglass realized the power of the spoken and written word. Infused with Christian ethics, he combined oratory and journalism into a powerful tool against systemic racism and sexism. His editorials combated the doctrines of white chauvinism by dismantling the ideological weapons of white superiority and black inferiority which were used as the psychological and philosophical foundations of slavery. Douglass pointed out that the idea of white supremacy was just as much a part of the American slaveocracy as the slave trader, master, overseer, whip, and bloodhound. Douglass exposed the folly expounded from colleges, pulpits, politicians, and the press that propagated the inherent inferiority of black people.

Douglass was a pragmatist and a cogent thinker. He analyzed every argument, willing to make adjustments in his own views and philosophies, and redirect his energies and strategies to reach his ultimate goals. He was not afraid to change his mind if shown a better alternative, even at the risk of controversy or offense. He challenged many of his contemporaries, friend and foe alike, but his willingness to change for the good of the cause made him an effective agent of change. He challenged his enslavers, first by confronting an overseer, secondly by organizing an escape, and finally by embarking upon the road to freedom. He did not win every battle, but in the war of freedom and justice, no soldier fought more valiantly.

Finally, he did live to see the emancipation of four million of his fellow bondsmen and women. While overcome with joy, he did not stop fighting. He did not confine himself to sanctimonious outcries, but continued his activism even at his own peril. While Douglass was afforded a great deal of celebrity and respect because of his activism, he was not always well-received. In fact, he encountered many dangerous situations, yet faced every danger with courage and dignity. Whatever his faults, no one could accuse him of not having the courage of conviction. As long as injustice and oppression prevail in the world, Frederick Douglass’ efforts will continue to give history a magnificent example of how one man can use the power of the press to impel the dismantling of an inequitable institution.
ENDNOTES


3 U.S. Const. amend. 1.


5 *North Star*, December 3, 1847, 1.

6 *Rochester Daily Advertiser* and was a frequent contributor.


8 ("*The North Star* is published every Friday, at No. 25, Buffalo Street (opposite the arcade) Terms: Two dollars per annum, always in advance. No subscription will be received for a less term than six months. Advertisements not exceeding ten lines inserted three times for one dollar, every insertion, twenty-five cents"). This was printed in every paper on page one, column one.


47 “Fremont and Dayton,” Frederick Douglass’ Paper, August 15, 1856, 2.
48 Dred Scott v. Sanford, 19 How. 393 (1857). The Supreme Court protects the extension of slavery and declares that blacks are not citizens.
51 Douglass’ Monthly, June 1859.
55 Foner, ed. Selected Speeches and Writings, 373.
57 Foner, ed. Selected Speeches and Writings, 373.
64 Foner, ed. Selected Speeches and Writings, 442-443, 447.
65 Ibid., 493.
67 Foner, ed. Selected Speeches and Writings, 525.
69 Quoted in Foner, ed. Selected Speeches and Writings, 546.
70 Ibid., 546-547.
71 Ibid., 543.

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Sports, Race and Politics: The 1936 Olympics Boycott Movement in American Mainstream and Ethnic/Race Newspapers

Mary Metzger

Abstract

The 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany were probably the most controversial in Olympic history, sparking a protest movement in the United States that put pressure on American athletic associations to boycott the Games. This paper examines events relating to the boycott debate in the years preceding the 1936 Olympics (1933-1936) as reported by three different publications targeted toward three communities, namely, the general public (The New York Times), the Jewish community (The Jewish Exponent) and African-Americans (The Pittsburgh Courier).

In May 1931, the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) awarded the 1936 summer Games to Berlin,¹ which “signaled Germany’s return to the world community after World War I.”² Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist party, became Chancellor of Germany two years later in 1933. The I.O.C. could not have foreseen Hitler’s rise to power when it awarded the Games to Berlin; and, as Hitler’s policies began to be implemented, a worldwide debate began as to whether nations should boycott the Olympics to voice disapproval of Germany’s racial laws. In the United States, a number of Jewish groups began pressing American athletic organizations to boycott the 1936 Olympics, producing a “serious and frightening (at least to the Nazis) protest movement.”³

The boycott debate received wide coverage in most major American newspapers, including specialty newspapers intended for readers of a particular ethnicity or race. The New York Times was a mainstream publication, published primarily for a general audience in the New York City area, although it also had a broad national readership. The Jewish Exponent and The Pittsburgh Courier, on the other hand, were meant for Jewish and African-American readers, respectively, in nearby metro areas (Philadelphia for the Exponent and Pittsburgh for the Courier). Thus, it is not surprising that these three newspapers covered the issue in different manners particularly suited for their specific audiences. This paper examines the events relating to the boycott debate in the years preceding the 1936 Olympics (1933-1936) as seen by different communities, and compares the coverage of these events and issues in the newspapers noted above.

The Boycott Debate

In the United States, critics cited a number of reasons why the American team should not participate in the 1936 Olympics. Initially, the primary grievance was the unfair treatment of Jews
regarding access to athletic facilities, training, etc., in Germany. Over time, however, Hitler’s policies became more public, and the debate questioned whether or not American athletes should participate in what was clearly becoming an appropriation of the Olympics by Hitler for his own propagandistic causes.

Hitler was originally unenthusiastic about the Olympics; but, Reich Sport leader Hans von Tscharner und Osten and Minister for Propaganda Josef Goebbels, convinced him of their political potential. The Olympic Games, they argued, were the perfect opportunity to internationally showcase the superiority of Aryan athletes and the glory of Germany. Hitler decided that new facilities must be built to impress the world and declared that “the stadium must be built by the Reich. It will be the test of the nation. If Germany is to stand host to the entire world, her preparations must be complete and magnificent.” In light of these ambitions, many felt that American participation in the Olympics would give tacit support to Hitler’s spectacle and believed that Nazi policies were in egregious violation of the spirit of fair play supposedly exemplified by the International Olympic Games.

However, some in the African-American community (including a number of prominent athletes) argued that the best way to proceed was to participate and excel, thus undermining Hitler’s theories of Aryan racial superiority. Several influential African-American newspapers, including The Chicago Defender and The Philadelphia Tribune, argued that victories by African-American athletes would help bring the black community together by fostering a sense of pride. Although the American Olympic Committee’s decision was likely motivated more by a desire to avoid political controversy than by any concern for the black community, the African-American athletes correctly anticipated their ultimate success.

Newspapers Tackle the Issue

Based in Philadelphia, The Jewish Exponent has been published continuously every week since 1887. Since its founding by 43 Philadelphia investors, the Exponent’s mission has been to provide a publication “devoted to the interests of the Jewish people.” Though its base is in Philadelphia, the Exponent covered national and international issues of importance to Jews everywhere.

The Jewish Exponent, not surprisingly, had been protesting German policies in general since the beginning of Hitler’s rise to power. Most of the Exponent’s articles from this time period were devoted to the situation in Germany. A typical article, “World Aghast At Hitler Madness,” describes protests in the United States and abroad in defiance of German policies against Jews. A boycott against German goods was discussed often, but serious debate over an Olympic boycott did not appear until later. This debate began around the end of 1933, at approximately the same time that the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (A.A.U.) adopted its initial stance on the issue, deciding to boycott the Games.

The boycott issue first surfaced on the pages of The New York Times on October 9, 1933. On that date, the Times reported a request by Bernard Deutsch, president of the American Jewish Congress to the American Olympic Committee, to discuss the question of an American boycott at the next convention of the Committee. The article implied that this request had been favorably received, saying that “judging from the undercurrent of feeling displayed by the executive committee, drastic action may be taken.” The article outlines Deutsch’s charges of the poor treatment of Jews in Germany, particularly with regard to sports and promises made (and broken) by the Nazis to ensure equal access to facilities by all athletes.

The Times followed the early events of the boycott debate relatively closely, far surpassing the number of articles run by either
the *Exponent* or the *Courier*. The A.A.U.’s decision to prevent its athletes from competing in the 1936 Olympics was a major story for the *Times*. The story, “A.A.U. Boycotts 1936 Olympics Because of the Nazi Ban on Jews,” ran on the front page on November 21, 1933 (over a month after Deutsch’s request to the American Olympic Committee). It detailed the decision by the A.A.U. (which it describes as the largest sports governing body in the world) to boycott the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin “unless there [was] a change in the attitude of the Hitler government towards Jews in sport.” The article included the text of the A.A.U.’s decision and is placed on the page directly above another piece which concerned a protest by German Evangelical pastors against “Nazi extremists.”

On November 24, 1933, the American Olympic Association (A.O.A.) approved a vote that rejected the A.A.U.’s original “strongly worded” resolution, choosing instead to adopt a more diplomatic tone towards the Nazis. With the reporting of this event, the boycott issue took prominence on the front page of the *Times*, which led off with the article “U.S. Olympic Body Takes More Temperate Stand Than A.A.U. On Racial Issue.” This article gave the impression, however, that many present at the meeting disagreed with the Association’s decision.

The *Times* disagreed with the stance taken by the athletic associations. The *Times*’s editor positioned two articles dealing with this topic next to each other on the front page. The first reported that the A.A.U. had taken a more moderate stance, phrasing their resolution “more temperately” than the statement urging a boycott. The new document expressed hope that the Nazis would reconsider their discriminatory actions and change their policies regarding Jews in sports “so that the athletes of the teams of the United States of America [could] and [would] be certified for competition under the Olympic standard.” The second article reported a declaration by the Reich sports authority that “reaffirm[ed] discrimination against Jews despite the decision of the American Amateur Athletic Union to boycott the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 unless this discrimination was removed.” The juxtaposition of these articles highlights the discrepancy between what the athletic groups appeared to believe (namely that the Germans would likely fold to international pressure and allow Jews to compete in the Olympics), and what was actually occurring (Germany was reinforcing its discrimination, not lessening it).

The reason why the American Olympic Association ultimately decided to participate in the 1936 Games remains unclear. Olympic officials could not realistically claim ignorance of Nazi actions in Germany. The policies of discrimination were clearly stated and published in the American press. In one case, The *New York Times* ran an article articulating these policies, positioning it directly next to an article about the boycott debate as early as November 1933. Some have speculated that many members of the American Olympic Association held a pro-German bias that led them to overlook the actions that the German government was taking. In certain cases, members of the A.O.A. seemed to be in outright denial that any discrimination was taking place. Frederick W. Rubien, secretary of the American Olympic Committee, stated:

> Germans are not discriminating against Jews in their Olympic tryouts. The Jews are eliminated because they are not good enough as athletes. Why there are not a dozen Jews in the world of Olympic calibre.

Rather than taking a stand against the Nazis, the resolutions adopted by the A.O.A. generally “expressed the hope that Germany would lift all restrictions on its Jewish athletes.”

In one of the more puzzling anecdotes of the relevant history, A.O.A President Avery Brundage visited Berlin as part of a
carefully planned and chaperoned, tour hosted by the German Olympic Committee. He returned with the recommendation that the American team participate in the Olympics, as Germany was “observing the letter and the spirit of Olympism.”20 Originally opposed to participation, Brundage first said that “participation in the Olympics would not necessarily signify support for the Nazi regime,” and, then later wholeheartedly threw his support to the side of participation, apparently impressed by the prosperity that Germany seemed to be enjoying, as well as the elaborate preparations for the Olympics that were being made.21

Brundage was not the only prominent Olympic official to discount Nazi policies and actions, nor was such willful ignorance adopted only by Americans. The president of the I.O.C., the Belgian aristocrat Count Henri de Baillet-Latour, visited Germany in October 1935 and publicly concluded that there were “no grounds for trying to remove the Games from Germany.”22 When Commodore Ernest Lee Jahncke, an American member of the I.O.C. (and, incidentally, of German ancestry), steadfastly refused to endorse American participation in the 1936 Olympics, calling it a “propaganda campaign by racists and murderers,”23 the I.O.C. determined that he had “clearly infringed upon the Status of the International Olympic Committee in betraying the interests of the Committee and in failing to preserve a sense of decorum towards his colleagues.”24 On July 30, 1936, the I.O.C. voted unanimously to expel Jahncke, pointedly filling his spot with Avery Brundage.25 With this decision, Jahncke became the only Committee member expelled in I.O.C. history.26

The Times, in keeping with its reputation for international reporting, did not ignore the debate occurring in other nations. Some articles indicated the discussion of a boycott in the United Kingdom. Its coverage also mentioned the British equivalent of the A.A.U., and the fact that although the decision had raised “considerable interest” in Britain, there were no discussions to make a similar vote at that time.27 In contrast, the Exponent did not cover the international debate in a significant way; and, The Pittsburgh Courier did not covering the boycott debate at all during this time period.

As early as December 1933, the Exponent was showing a marked interest in the boycott debate. It ran a prominent article “Two Sportsmen Debate Boycott” in which both sides of the issue were presented.28 In fact, readers were showing interest in the issue by means of letters to the editor; letters showing support for the boycott appeared as early as November 1933.29 A piece published in late 1936 detailed the treatment of Jewish athletes in Germany. It described the segregation of athletic facilities enacted by the Reichstag laws, as well as a reluctance of non-Jewish clubs to compete with Jewish sports teams, despite the Jewish teams’ official recognition by the government. This article gave the clear impression that Nazi officials were not abiding by the “fair play” rules for Jews at the Olympics; and, that even visiting Jewish athletes would not be able to comfortably participate in the Olympics held in Germany.

Nevertheless, the Exponent’s coverage of the Olympic boycott question fits into the larger picture of its reporting on the general boycott of German goods and the situation in Germany overall. The Exponent may have reflected the view many Jews of the time likely held, that a boycott of the Olympics was, and should have been, a foregone conclusion. If a sufficiently strong sentiment existed in the nation to maintain an economic boycott of Germany, how could the Olympic committee fail to support a boycott of an international competition, especially one meant to exemplify the highest ideals of cooperation and fair sportsmanship, which was instead being used to showcase racist and exclusionary policies? This was the sentiment of at least some Exponent readers, as evidenced by a number of letters to the editor supporting the boycott of both goods and participation in the Olympics. For example, on
August 16, 1935, the *Exponent* devoted almost an entire page in the “Correspondence” section to a letter written by the Executive Secretary of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League taking Avery Bruncage to task for supporting American participation in the 1936 Olympics.

The *Exponent*’s editors rarely gave coverage to other viewpoints, and when they did, they were generally critical. For example, the American member of the I.O.C., Brigadier General Charles E. Sherrill, had once strongly insisted that Germany allow Jews to join the national team, but later decided to oppose the boycott.\(^3\) In public remarks to the former ambassador to Turkey, Sherrill explained his opposition to the plan to boycott the Olympics, stating that he believed that a boycott would be “impractical and [...] provoke an ‘anti-Semitic feeling’ in the United States.”\(^3\)

Overall, the *Exponent* covered the boycott issue far more thoroughly than either the *Times* or the *Courier*. The paper regularly ran articles concerning this issue, particularly during 1935 and 1936. It also reported on a number of stories that were not remarked upon by either of the other newspapers. Most of these stories dealt with specific groups that were supporting the boycott. One such example is the statement by Harvard College’s Athletic Director William J. Bingham that Harvard would not allow its athletes “to enter [the Olympics] under Harvard colors” if Jews were not allowed to enter the competition.\(^3\)

The focus of the *Times* and the *Exponent* was on Germany’s race laws and policies on Jews in sports only. Discussion of black participation in the Olympics did not appear in the *Times* until December 7, 1935, and did not seem to be of concern at all to the editors of the *Exponent*. Examining The Pittsburgh *Courier*, however, one finds an entirely different story.

The *Courier* was one of the most influential black newspapers in the country. By the 1930s, it was one of the most widely read black newspapers in the United States, along with The *Afro-

*American* and The *Chicago Defender*. The *Courier* focused on political and social issues pertinent to African-Americans in the Pittsburgh area; and later, throughout the nation. At one point, the *Courier* published 14 national and local editions, giving it an audience and influence that extended far beyond Pittsburgh.\(^3\)

The *Courier* also covered international affairs in Africa and Europe. Its international coverage from 1933-1934 dealt primarily with Liberia and Liberian-American relations. Coverage during 1935 and 1936 was utterly dominated by stories about Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia. In turn, these articles were overwhelmingly sympathetic toward and supportive of Ethiopia. The *Courier* covered the Ethiopian issue along the same lines as its racially charged athletic coverage. Both stories “represented the black man’s fight for survival and self respect.”\(^3\) Incidentally, the *Courier* was the only African-American newspaper to send its own correspondent to Berlin to cover the 1936 Olympics, a decision personally made and enacted by publisher Robert L. Vann. Vann would turn out to be the sole African-American reporter covering the Olympics full time that year.\(^3\)

In sharp contrast to the *Times* and the *Exponent*, the *Courier* did not cover the debate over the proposed Olympic boycott in any considerable way. There were no serious mentions of the boycott throughout 1933 and 1934, when the A.A.U. made its first important decisions regarding participation in the Olympics. A look at contemporary material reveals *Courier* articles that hint at a possible explanation for this phenomenon. One such article is an editorial entitled “The A.F. of L. and the Nazis.” Although the article did not specifically address the Olympic boycott, it displayed a rather bitter tone toward those who were so deeply concerned about the exclusion and persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. Perhaps reflecting the attitudes of many African-Americans of the time, the *Courier*’s writer stated:
The intelligent Negro must wonder why the American Federation of Labor does nothing of a similar nature in this country to safeguard the rights and privileges of the Negro people. Why cannot the A.F. of L boycott the goods of Southern manufacturers who are the backbone of the persecution of Negroes in Dixie? There are only a half million Jews being deprived of their rights and privileges in Germany compared to ten million Negroes in the South.  

The irony was surely not lost on black America. Around the same time that the A.A.U. was adopting a resolution to boycott Hitler’s Olympics because of Nazi policies denying Jews access to athletic facilities, the *Courier* was publishing stories such as “Local Keystone Athletic Club ’Explains’ Jim-Crow Action When NAACP Objects,” which detailed an athletic club’s refusal to let three black men use the swimming pool.  

The *Courier*’s writers appear to have been justified. An American pamphlet of the time wrote that the Nazi form of racism was much worse than any racism that existed in the U.S. With apparent obliviousness to the conditions of African-Americans in the nation at the time, the pamphlet wrote:

Germany’s introduction of race is not an expression of the kind of prejudice against Jews which unfortunately exists in this and other countries, and which manifests itself principally in private, social relations. It is, on the contrary, the expression of a fundamental principle of Nazi ideology […] racial inequality, the superiority of the Aryans not only to the Jews, but to all people whom the Germans do not regard as members of their own race.

There was clearly a feeling of moral superiority and subscription among some to the idea that the American brand of racism was somehow less harmful than that of the Nazis.

The *Courier*’s writers were under no illusion that Nazism was any better for blacks than the United States government’s policies. An editorial published on February 17, 1934, discussed the forced sterilization of mixed-race children in Germany (a legacy of colonialism) stating, “we would be criminally negligent to assume that Americans of color would fare better under a Fascist government here than the colored citizens are in Germany.”

The *Courier* never shied away from tackling issues of sports and race. During the week of February 29, 1936, the publication devoted a full page spread to “The Battle of the Century - Joe Louis vs. Jim Crow.” This section depicted Joe Louis as a model African-American with strength, poised to dominate the sporting world. One section of this page specifically addressed prejudice in sports, and illustrated the “extreme nationalism of the present Olympics in Nazi Germany.” It described the “propaganda hurled at foreign newsmen, according to the New York Times [...] an extreme case [...] when a Jewish player was mobbed by the crowd of Nazis and [was] so seriously injured that he died.”

The *Courier*’s readers apparently had an insatiable appetite for sports news, as the paper contained sizeable recurring sports sections. This was partially because white-run publications rarely covered black athletics. Boxing was extremely popular, and news about Joe Louis was a regular feature. The *Courier* also published a statement by famed German heavyweight boxer Max Schmeling shortly before the beginning of the summer Games. In an exclusive interview with the *Courier* that dealt primarily with his upcoming bout with Louis, Schmeling promised that black athletes would be treated fairly at the Berlin Olympics.

Although the *Exponent* occasionally ran a “Jews in Sports”
section, it did not have a regular sports section as the Times and Courier did. It is nevertheless telling of the general feeling in the Jewish community that there were few articles similar to those in the Courier that expressed hope for the success of their group's athletes at the Olympics. The Exponent did include a few articles about Jewish athletes participating in the Olympics, although they were necessarily tied up with the issue of discrimination by German officials. For example, one such story involved Helen Mayer, a German-Jewish fencer whose eligibility for the Olympics was in doubt due to her status as a Jew. She was eventually found eligible and allowed to compete, an outcome that was also reported in the Exponent.

In general, the Courier took a cool stance towards the boycott. It duly reported the N.A.A.C.P.'s somewhat reluctant decision to support a boycott near the end of 1935. Most of the articles concerning the Olympics were printed in the sports section, and they generally dealt with athletes who could potentially qualify for the U.S. Olympic team. The article “Tuskegee Has Olympic Hopes,” published in March 1934, expressed optimism that some of Tuskegee's students would be chosen for the team, and was typical of the Courier's Olympic coverage through 1936.

By the time the summer Olympics drew close, however, the Courier adopted a positively jubilant tone regarding the Games. After the Olympic teams were chosen, the Courier enthusiastically heralded the “sepia sensations,” trumpeting the large percentage of blacks who had “won the right to represent the Stars and Stripes on the U.S. Olympic team.” The extensive reporting on the team was indicative of its importance in the black community. In fact, the event's coverage even spilled over into the society/women's pages as “New York Society Perks Up at Olympic Finals: Gay Crow Out to See Sepia Stars Triumph.”

The conspicuous lack of articles concerning athletes participating in the Olympics, or indeed any coverage of the Games' events, perhaps indicated a sense of disenchantment with the Olympics among the Exponent's readers and writers (in sharp contrast to the apparent feeling among those of the Courier). During the Olympics, the Exponent paid virtually no attention to the events of the Games. Standings, results and the like were not reported, and the “Jews in Sports” section for August 21, 1936 (which would have been the first issue published after the close of the Games) did not mention the Olympics, even in passing. Instead, the section was devoted to Jewish soccer games, including teams from Palestine.

The Games Go On

In the end, whether due to a pro-German bias on the part of Avery Brundage and his ilk, or for other reasons, the United States did not boycott the 1936 Olympic Games. Instead, American teams competed in both the winter and summer Games. The 1936 Winter Olympics were held from February 6 through 16 at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria. These Games were held with considerably less fanfare than the following summer Games in Berlin. German officials made an attempt to hide some of the blatant signs of anti-Jewish discrimination. Anti-Jewish signs were temporarily removed from public view, and a half-Jewish hockey player was allowed to compete. In both the winter and summer Olympics, German censors told the press not to disparage foreign athletes, an order that was not always heeded.

The winter Olympics were followed by dramatic political events. Just twelve days after the winter Games closed, German troops entered the Rhineland, marking the beginning of new international tensions. The year 1936 also witnessed the beginning of a Germany-Italy alliance, as well as the beginning of Goering's Four Year Plan, which was created to prepare Germany for war by 1940. Political tension was building and would continue to grow
to a fever pitch.

Opening on August 1, and closing August 16, the 1936 summer Olympic Games were an historic event. They were an “Olympic Games of firsts.” Germany made the first television broadcast of the Olympics and spectators witnessed the debut of the Olympic torch run. The Berlin Olympics also introduced basketball, canoeing and team handball. However, the summer Games of 1936 are primarily remembered today as a spectacular propaganda effort by Hitler, intended to put German athletes on display as superior specimens, and thus prove Nazi theories of Aryan supremacy.

The stunning success of black American athletes at the Berlin Games, exemplified by Jesse Owens’ historic victories, ruined Hitler’s elaborate propaganda efforts. The American summer Olympic team, prominently featuring 18 black athletes (including two women), received a warm send-off and was similarly greeted in Germany with cheering crowds and adoring fans. The outstanding performances upset Hitler, who refused to shake hands with Owens or any of the black athletes, saying, “The Americans should be ashamed of themselves, letting negroes win their medals for them. I shall not shake hands with this negro.” In sharp contrast to Hitler’s reaction was the enormous support that these athletes, particularly Owens, received from the German crowd, whose appreciation of athletic excellence apparently outweighed any feelings of racial prejudice. In an open act of rejection of Nazi beliefs, German track and field star, Lutz Long (who in many respects embodied Hitler’s handsome, blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan ideal), developed a very public friendship with Owens, embracing him in front of a cheering crowd, including Hitler. Although the German team walked away from the Olympics with more medals than any other nation, the damage had been done to Hitler’s carefully planned script. These Games were to be the last until 1948, as war soon engulfed the world.

Although the boycott movement did help raise American (and worldwide) awareness of racism in Germany, the ultimate failure of the movement suggests that this awareness either did not reach a broad enough audience, or, that it lacked the shock value necessary to bring about change. There are reasonable answers why this would be the case. In the instance of the Exponent, coverage of Nazi Germany and exhortation to protest was likely a case of “preaching to the choir.” The Jewish readership, already sensitive to the cause, did not need much persuasion to agree that persecution of Jews was an important issue and should be addressed strongly. On the other hand, the African-American readers of the Courier were, for the most part, more concerned with discrimination against their own race in the United States than reports of discrimination against a different group across the Atlantic. Finally, although some Americans appeared to be shocked and disgusted by the state-sponsored racism practiced in Germany, discrimination against Jews was in fact quite widespread in the United States during this era, particularly in social settings.

Politically, the boycott movement was driven primarily from the left, who opposed not only Germany’s racial laws, but also its fascist dictatorship in general. Supporter groups included: communists, Catholics, New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, New York Governor Al Smith, and Massachusetts Governor James Curley. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, refused to get involved, citing the tradition of allowing the Olympics to remain independent from political influence.

The impact that an Olympic boycott would have had against Nazi Germany remains unclear. German Olympic organizers had, in fact, prepared for the possibility of a boycott by planning to stage a German Games in the event of one. But, would the international statement of disapproval have presented a clear moral voice of authority against the Nazi regime? Would taking this stand have led the world to stop Hitler before the atrocities of the Holocaust?
were committed? Even with the benefit of 70 years of hindsight, answers to these questions that the editors and readers of the *Times, Exponent* and *Courier* grappled with, are still unanswered.

**ENDNOTES**

1. The Olympic Games are awarded to a city rather than a country. At the 1931 I.O.C. meeting, the candidate cities for the 1936 Games were Berlin and Barcelona, Spain. Under Olympic rules at the time, a country whose city was awarded the Summer Games was also given the right to host the Winter Games as well, and the 1936 Winter Games were held in the Bavarian village of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The International Olympic Committee, “Choice of Host City.”
5. See Hart-Davis chapter 3 “Preparing the Ground.”
7. African-American athletes came home from the summer Games with 14 medals, accounting for nearly a quarter of the medals awarded to the American team. Furthermore, the charismatic Jesse Owens became the first American track and field athlete to win four gold medals in a single Olympics, setting world records in all but one of these events (Official Jesse Owens Site. “Jesse Owens: Biography”).
16. *ibid.*
17. “Nazis Reaffirm Policy of Discrimination In New Order Affecting Jews
20 Mandell, p. 73.
21 Hart-Davis, p. 65-66. Hart-Davis maintains that Brundage’s “superficial assessment” and recommendation to the A.O.C. was the deciding factor that “persuaded them to vote, after long hesitation, for participation in Berlin.”
22 Hart-Davis, p. 77.
23 J. Lacaes, p.53.
26 Jewish Virtual Library.” *The Nazi Olympics.” In his letter to Count Baillet-Latour, the I.O.C. President, Jahncke said “Neither Americans nor representatives of other countries can take part in the Games in Nazi Germany without at least acquiescing in the contempt of the Nazis for fair play and their sordid exploitation of the Games.” Letter to Count Henri Baillet-Latour, November 25, 1935.
27 Guido Enderis. “Protestants Rush Fight Upon Nazis.”
30 Mandell, 70.
38 Hart-Davis, 62.
39 “Germany’s Six Hundred,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 February 1934, p. 10.
41 Stevens, 97.
42 “Schmeling ‘Sure He Can Stop Louis’; Promises Fair Treatment of Race Athletes at Olympics,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 May 1936, p. 1. Louis ultimately lost the much-publicized fight to Schmeling. German Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels claimed Schmeling’s victory for Germany, calling it a victory of Hitlerism. However, Schmeling, who was opposed to the Nazis, and Louis became friends despite the extreme nationalistic sentiment surrounding their competition. In 1981, Schmeling paid for part of Louis’ funeral arrangements. This story bears a striking resemblance to the tale of friendship between Jesse Owens and German Olympian Lutz Long (see footnote 53).
44 “Miss Mayer Accepts Berlin Olympic Bid,” *The Jewish Exponent*, 6 December 1935, p. 7. Mayer, one of Germany’s most famous fencers, was eventually invited to join the German Olympic team after substantial pressure from abroad. The Reich Minister of Sport Tschaamler und Osten declared her “Aryan” despite her mixed parentage (her father was Jewish, her mother, Christian) in order to avoid embarrassment.
48 “New York Society Perks Up At Olympic Finals: Gay Crow Out to See Sepia Star Triumph.” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 July 1936, p. 9. As Stevens points out in “The Black Press,” (see footnote 34), the Courier used terms like “race,” “sepa,” and “colored,” avoiding the use of
"black."


50 Mandell, 93.


52 see footnote 6. In addition to Jesse Owens, the black contingent of the American team included Louise Stokes and Tidye Pickett, the first black women on an American track and field team (Stevens p. 99)

53 Jewish Virtual Library. "The Nazi Olympics."

54 Hart-Davis, 177. According to Baldur von Schirach, who was in the box with Hitler at the time, Hitler reacted violently when pressed by the Reich Minister of Sport to shake hands with Owens for the sake of sport, yelling, "Do you really think that I will allow myself to be photographed shaking hands with a negro?" Schirach said that this was only the second time he had heard Hitler yell in the 11 years he had known him.

55 Mandell, 167. According to biographies of Jesse Owens, Long and Owens became fast friends until Long’s death in combat during World War II. Owens described their friendship as “simply two uncertain young men in an uncertain world.”

56 In one of many examples of American Antisemitism, a 1930s rate card from an upstate New York hotel gives rate information and then states “Applications from Hebrews not desired.” The United States Holocaust Museum. “The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936”. Image of rate card at http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/olympics/ zcc039.htm


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Propaganda and prestige: Principal foundations for a Canadian film industry, 1939-1945

Bryan Cardinale-Powell

In a war which is total or nothing, the Canadian Government, through its National Film Board is producing documentary war films whose hard-hitting realism has broken with the accepted motion picture formula as completely as the Nazis broke with the Maginot line.

—*Business Screen* magazine, 1942

Films produced by the National Film Board [...] promote a sense of national unity and a mutual understanding between the many groups which go to make up the Canadian nation. They are designed to interpret the interests of each section of Canada to the others, and to integrate sectional interests with the interest of the nation as a whole.

—NFB Annual Report, 1945

Most accounts of the establishment of the Canadian National Film Board (NFB) and its activities during World War II focus on John Grierson, a figure who looms so large that the effort of many others is lost in his shadow. Without doubt, Grierson’s presence galvanized the NFB and turned it into the hammer of propaganda he so earnestly promoted. His skills as a government bureaucrat and his connections with filmmakers around the world laid the foundation for early Film Board successes, but Grierson didn’t work alone. The NFB relied on many others to carry out the day-to-day operations of a government-sponsored media machine working to strike a balance between Grierson’s ideals and the commercial realities of a mass medium.

A generation of Canadian film professionals emerged from the *ad hoc* atmosphere of the war-driven film factory set up in an abandoned Ottawa warehouse. Beginning with a handpicked group of 10 people, the NFB staff ballooned to nearly 800 by the end of the war. Their efforts resulted in the production of a wide variety of films, from internationally recognized newsreel documentaries like *Churchill’s Island* (which depicted Great Britain’s response to the German blitz and won the Academy Award for Best Short Documentary Film in 1941) to animated French- and English-language sing-a-longs. The rural film distribution and exhibition system they built brought news of the war to rural populations and promoted a sense of national identity among citizens strewn across the Canadian provinces. These accomplishments demonstrated the ability of film to meet standards beyond the bottom line so revered by Hollywood studios in the United States.

Prior to the outbreak of the war, Canada’s fledgling film industry failed to capture the imagination of its own citizens, let alone gain the attention of the world. Movie theaters in the Dominion were largely subsidiaries of U.S. theater chains; and Hollywood studios south of the border manufactured the overwhelming majority of movies released for exhibition. While Canadian government agencies had been involved in film production since contracting D.W. Griffith for work during World War I, the work of the Motion Picture Bureau (MPB)—mostly travelogues and trade films—enjoyed limited distribution and lukewarm reception among Canadians. Additionally, the economic crises of the 1930s left the MPB struggling to update production equipment to meet the technological needs of synchronized-sound filmmaking. The industry was crippled, looking for direction.
Canadian officials invited John Grierson, a British documentary producer, to offer his prescription. Grierson brought with him a reputation for striking a balance between the objectives of government bureaucracy and the emotional and intellectual impact of cinema, a reputation earned while serving as a producer at the Empire Marketing Board of the United Kingdom and at the General Post Office (GPO) film unit in London.

Grierson’s report, filed in June 1938, offered Canadian officials his perspective on effective government-sponsored filmmaking. He considered propaganda an important tool for the dissemination of information and the development of national identity:

An ideal propaganda policy would see to it
(a) that the idea of Canada is dramatized and brought into the imagination of the home country,
(b) that information about Canada is made an integral part of the public’s general knowledge, (c) that direct trade publicity is organized to make the fullest use of the pro-Canada sentiments thus created.4

The appeal of Grierson’s formulation of government propaganda policy rested in the promise of addressing several issues at once. A successful government film industry not only would produce, distribute, and encourage reception of films but also produce, distribute, and encourage the reception of a coherent national Canadian identity.

The report outlined four categories of film propaganda: educational, trade publicity, departmental, and prestige films. Grierson’s first three categories of propaganda were familiar to government officials accustomed to contracting with American and British filmmakers for the production of bland travelogues and uninspired training films. Prestige films, on the other hand, represented an ambitious alternative to the antiseptic movies associated with bureaucratic filmmaking. Created for distribution in commercial movie theaters, prestige films adhered to the highest standards of production quality. They were documentary films designed to “bring alive in narrative of dramatic terms some particular aspect of community life and achievement.”5

Excited by the promise of bolstering national identity while establishing a reputation in the international cultural arena, Canadian officials embraced Grierson’s report. Parliament approved the National Film Act in May 1939, which established the NFB according to Grierson’s recommendations. After failing to find a Canadian to serve as Government Film Commissioner, officials in Ottawa invited Grierson to take charge in October.

Meanwhile, as war broke out in Europe, Grierson elaborated his notion of government propaganda in light of the tumultuous times. Rather than merely reflecting the temperament of a society, he argued that films—indeed all art—should move audiences to meet the challenges of civilization:

They tell us that art is a mirror—a mirror held up to nature. I think that is a false image, conceived by men in quiet, unchanging times. In a society like ours, which is even now in the throes of a war of ideas and in a state of social revolution of the profoundest nature, art is not a mirror but a hammer. It is a weapon in our hands to see and to say what is right and good and beautiful, and hammer it out as the mold and pattern of men’s actions.6

For Grierson, film production was the site of active engagement with the world, a way to construct understandings and influence lives. While such a formulation (especially in the hands of government bureaucrats) could potentially devolve into an ideologically
single-minded mode of production, Grierson’s ideals opened the Canadian film industry to a variety of perspectives. After all, Grierson believed art was a struggle, and no struggle exists without conflict.

Hammer in hand, Grierson recruited filmmakers from Great Britain to join an enthusiastic but inexperienced handful of Canadians interested in making films. Colleagues from Grierson’s days at the GPO like Stuart Legg and Raymond Spottiswoode accepted the invitation to move to Canada. Animator Norman McLaren also moved to Ottawa and stayed on for the duration of the war and beyond. Others, like Dutch documentarian Joris Ivens, and Boris Kaufman, brother of the Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov, answered Grierson’s call to help aspiring filmmakers on a project-to-project basis. These seasoned professionals set the standard for people like Sydney Newman, a 23 year-old painter who showed up wanting to make films after seeing an early NFB production in a Toronto movie house.

Of all the recruits, Legg assumed the greatest responsibility for overseeing wartime film production in the converted warehouse assigned to the NFB. While Grierson accepted and discharged his duties as government film commissioner and as director of the Canadian Wartime Information Board, Legg remained stationed in Ottawa where he produced films and trained apprentices. A skinny, pale, intense filmmaker, Legg first worked with Grierson in England. Although two films Legg made late in 1939 drew criticism for depicting darker sides of Canadian life, his film editing skills and talent for writing narration made him indispensable for the important propaganda projects ahead.

In those days, commercial theaters often accompanied feature films with short documentaries called newsreels. Pioneered by U.S. companies like Fox Film Corporation and Time, Inc., newsreel series like The March of Time tapped into the power of film to depict current events in a realistic fashion. As hostilities escalated into armed conflict in Europe, Canadians looked to newsreels for information regarding military and political developments.

Grierson and his team at the Film Board quickly recognized the opportunity presented by the war. Newsreel production for commercial distribution fulfilled the ideological promise of prestige films Grierson advocated in his 1938 report. Furthermore, Legg reasoned that successful newsreel production and distribution demonstrated the commercial viability and relevance of the NFB while providing an important source of revenue for an enterprise susceptible to the changing priorities of the government’s wartime budgets.

According to Legg, rental fees offered the best protection against detractors who assumed the poor production values and quality of films associated with government sponsorship. A favorable national and international reputation for work produced by the Film Board depended upon the ability of NFB films to attract the interest of commercial film exhibitors in business to make money:...

...one school is prepared to equate Government films with a free handout [...] But there is another, and possibly stronger school of thought which holds that if no value, in terms of price, is put on an article in the world of showmanship then, in fact, it has no value. It must stink. It is rather as if I were a highly-trained trapeze artist, who went to Bertram Mills and said, ‘I am a first-class trapeze artist, and I want to perform in your circus so that I am willing to do it for nothing.’ It wouldn’t be my generosity that was suspect; it would be my skill as a trapeze artist. 

Legg and others at the NFB faced the commercial conundrum: even if NFB films were produced to the highest standards of artis-
tic quality, they would carry no cultural or political currency without being able to make money.

Legg devised Canada Carries On to demonstrate the skills of the NFB and to hopefully produce a project with commercial viability. Organized as a monthly series of films to be distributed commercially throughout the Dominion by Columbia Pictures of Canada, Canada Carries On, maintained production from April 1940 through the end of the war despite formidable obstacles.

Limited training for NFB staff members combined with the urgency of making wartime films demanded flexible production strategies for Canada Carries On. According to Legg, during the first frantic year of production at the NFB, “We were all learning as we went along. There we were trying to make a monthly series of two-reelers […] on really very small resources and small budgets.”12 Another producer, Raymond Spottiswoode, described the makeshift wartime production process as something like a game of musical chairs where personnel shifted responsibilities on a regular basis:

There is a constant transfer of staff between departments. Our present personnel manager has been successively head of the negative cutting department, the film library and the laboratory. The laboratory staff has frequently exchanged staff with the camera department, and directors and script writers have often handled cameras.13

Such stopgap measures were “sometimes disconcerting to those who have to plan continuity of production,” Spottiswoode continued, but “… they have supplied an invaluable versatility of skill and have certainly helped to prevent the Film Board from getting stale and falling into a rut.”14 The NFB’s hectic production schedule and ad hoc organizational structure inhibited the development of a centralized, authoritarian production company. Instead, the organization operated as an idealistic, albeit frantic collective.

Inexperience, inadequate resources, and limited opportunities to collect original footage failed to deter NFB filmmakers. Relying on Grierson’s professional and bureaucratic connections, Legg and his colleagues pulled together footage donated by March of Time newsreel producers, footage collected by military units, and even footage captured from enemy propagandists:

The easy thing was the film material, because at the time there were vast resources of film being shot all over the world […] it was an absolutely Tolstoyan panorama of the world in conflict; one would just sit and screen twenty, thirty, forty thousand feet at a time and then begin to whittle it down, narrow it, and see what you could use to express certain aspects of your theme.15

Especially in the first few months of the war, Legg gathered film from wherever he could find it.

Looking to the March of Time newsreels for inspiration, Legg and others relied on narration to tie the images together. However, while March of Time producers enjoyed the luxury of writing scripts that included scenes that could then be produced, NFB staff members were required to write scripts according to the available images. Legg learned to appreciate the process of surveying the range of images, then writing the narration. He believed the result followed in the tradition and effectiveness of Soviet montage:

The words were not a sort of dissertation, divorced from what was happening on the screen. They were closely connected, every word where pos-
sible falling on a cut between scenes, to add to the impact and the force of presentation. I think this is largely from Eisenstein. You know, the conflict, the impact of two shots juxtaposing, exploding into a third entity.\textsuperscript{16}

Intent on bringing the war effort home for Canadian citizens in ways more immediate and emotional than newspaper accounts, Legg considered ideas and images exploding from the screen obligatory.

Searching for a distinctive voice for the newsreel series, Legg turned to Lorne Greene,\textsuperscript{17} a 25-year old radio announcer from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to record the narration for Canada Carries On. In April 1940, Legg telephoned Greene at his office in Montreal with an invitation to record voice-over for films in Ottawa.

Greene’s voice lent gravity and seriousness to the films. Canadian moviegoers soon dubbed Greene’s distinctive vocal style the “Voice of Doom,” though it’s unlikely the casual moviegoer appreciated the difficulty under which Greene and producers toiled. According to Greene, 20 minutes of narration sometimes took 12 to 14 hours to record properly.

I remember that in those days we didn’t use recording tape, so we’d work from nine in the morning until sometimes ten-thirty at night [...] They put the music track on one dubber, they had the sound effects on another, and they put the voice, live, on a third channel [...] So it had to be mixed.\textsuperscript{18}

Limited access to relatively primitive filmmaking technology tested the patience of Film Board producers and engineers.

At a certain time, certain sound effects had to come in at a precise moment on the film, and the poor sound man, sometimes he missed his cue. I’d be talking my gut out and suddenly they’d say ‘cut’ and we’ll have to do it again; sometimes we would do as many as twenty-five or thirty go-throughs on a single ten-minute reel.\textsuperscript{19}

The highest profile work produced by the Film Board coincided with war events in Europe. During the first year of production, Canada Carries On titles included Atlantic Patrol (April 1940) and The Front of Steel (July 1940) among others. While the former film relied on prewar footage provided by the British navy, the latter was the first NFB film to feature captured Nazi footage.\textsuperscript{20} By early 1941, with seven films completed, the Canada Carries On series earned the NFB a national reputation for creating films worthy of commercial release.

Legg and his colleagues worked to counter the World War II German propaganda machine with films designed to leverage the emotional impact of moving images for the purpose of moving viewers’ intellects, not merely to shock and overwhelm viewers with images of military power. Occasionally, Canada Carries On films featured “shot and shell” action sequences, but Legg worked to link these scenes to themes that reached beyond the simple exhilaration of winning the battle. Legg, following Grierson’s lead, thought of the monthly films as editorials.

These things weren’t films, they were screen editorials on some aspects of international strategy or international politics—the background, the pattern of event rather than the event itself, how the events related together, and twenty minutes to do it in.\textsuperscript{21}
With animated sequences and careful narration, Legg’s films sought not only to show the war, but also to evaluate progress against the Nazis and stand watchful of potential threats in other parts of the world.

With the release of *Churchill’s Island* in June 1941, Canadian prestige films were on the verge of surging into international distribution. Not merely a “shot and shell” picture, *Churchill’s Island* focused on the resilience of everyday Brits faced with the advancing German army. The film portrayed citizens who resolutely made sacrifices and faced hardships with “a stubborn calm which iron and steel and bombs can never pierce.”

Legg’s ability to wring meaning and continuity out of disparate images was evident throughout the film. Sequences depicting German air strikes and U-boat maneuvers are linked with animation employed to demonstrate Britain’s defenses. Legg even admits a sense of humor when he inserts footage of two British beachcombers dressed in bathing suits, dressing robes and steel combat helmets. Throughout, non-military British citizenry are featured in their everyday efforts to keep the German war machine at bay. *Churchill’s Island* is a testament to the strength of Britain in the face of danger.

Legg’s newsreel attracted the attention of movie distributors and audiences throughout the Dominion, as well as south of the border. The American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences nominated *Churchill’s Island* for an Academy Award, and United Artists approached the NFB to secure international distribution rights for the Canadian newsreel series. An Alberta newspaper reported that, in addition to wider distribution, *Canada Carries On* would assume a new series title when presented in theaters in the United States.

United Artists Corp., Hollywood, has signed an agreement with the National Film Board of Canada to take all of Canada’s monthly films depicting the Dominion’s part in the war effort [...] The series, released in the Dominion under the serial title “Canada Carries On,” will be released in the United States titled “World in Action.” [...] Some 7,000 theaters in the United States will run the output over the two-year period.

Distribution contracts for *World In Action* brought the newsreels to an estimated international audience of 30 million viewers. Taking into account rental fees collected by the Film Board, these films paid for themselves, brought welcome attention to the NFB, and lived up to Grierson’s call for prestige films.

In March 1942, *Churchill’s Island* won the Oscar for Best Documentary. News spread quickly throughout the Canadian provinces. Along with accolades, commercial success of the Film Board partnership with United Artists brought a new dimension of complication to the creative process. Dave Coplan, a United Artists representative, watched rough cuts of *World In Action* films with an eye on the bottom line. As Legg described him, “He [Coplan] was tough; he was simply concerned with distribution and whether it would work in box office terms or not.” Occasionally, Coplan’s remarks sent Legg and the filmmakers scurrying back to the cutting room with less than twenty-four hours to make the film something Coplan and United Artists could “sell.”

Meanwhile, NFB personnel worked to supplement theatrical distribution with the establishment and expansion of non-theatrical distribution networks. After all, Grierson pointed out, there were many more seats outside of theaters than in them. Building on the efforts of the now defunct Motion Picture Bureau, the NFB expanded its reach through rural exhibition circuits, library and university based film exchanges, and special programming for trade unions and industrial organizations. National film societies also
provided a venue for the work of the NFB to reach Canadians.

Using 16-millimeter film prints produced in-house at the NFB lab in Ottawa, projectionists traveled with their equipment from town to town throughout the country on circuits scheduled from September through May. Donald W. Buchanan, the Canadian Grierson put in charge of the non-theatrical network, expressed their mission this way:

In rural Canada, by means of special war appropriation, the National Film Board has been able to put into the field over seventy traveling projectors. There are twenty villages served by each operator, and he comes to them, even during the depths of winter, regularly once a month, with a programme that makes Canada and the war vibrantly alive.27

According to Buchanan, NFB projectionists enjoyed a certain degree of notoriety in the communities they visited: “These same traveling operators also give school showings, where each man becomes, for a few brief hours, almost the modern equivalent of the Pied Piper of legend.”28

Buchanan and other government officials designed the non-theatrical network to serve three central purposes. First, wide exhibition of NFB films developed the reputation of the commission among Canadian citizens, which garnered support for the work being done in Ottawa. Second, the traveling film programs helped fulfill the Film Board’s idealistic mission to “see Canada and see it whole: its people and its purpose.” Finally, NFB administrators designed exhibition circuits to build upon frameworks of community within towns and develop ties across the wide expanse of the country.

Exhibition circuits brought Legg’s films and the work of his apprentices home to Canadian citizens who responded enthusiastically. Canadian citizens looked forward to the 60 to 90 minute programs offered by the NFB. Whether projected in community halls, schools, or churches, citizens paid especially close attention to the war films, looking for recognizable faces among the soldiers.29 They were also entertained by the animated shorts and imported movies from the U.S. Early NFB circuit visits offered some citizens their first opportunity to see a motion picture.

For educational and animated films, the NFB made extensive and innovative use of color Kodachrome prints in an era when black and white film still dominated the commercial market. Devotion to such technology emphasized filmmakers’ efforts to depict reality vividly and almost made up for the government’s failure to invest in synchronized sound film equipment back in the 1930s.

By as early as 1942, Film Board projects were leaving a mark on Canadian society. According to Documentary News Letter, NFB films helped Canadians see more clearly the richness of their own plurality.

...[NFB films are] doing a first rate job of showing Canada to Canadians, and to the rest of the world as well—films about Ukrainian, Icelandic and French minorities, the far-removed districts such as the Peace River farming country, Canadian artists, Canadian crafts, agricultural problems, Indian tribes and cultures, transportation and many more....30

At the same time, projectionists like Clayton Bricker, a former high school teacher from Winnipeg, traveled distribution circuits that criss-crossed the Dominion and worked to build a sense of collective national identity.

NFB projectionists were recruited as much for their knowl-
edge of Canadian geography as for their access to projection equipment and a reliable automobile. Bricker’s circuit through southern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia included:

...12 trade union shows in operation serving the interests of coal miners. Besides these, there are 20 industrial plants which reserve dates for showings. Already 12 schools are cooperating with the National Film Board’s aim to awaken and satisfy curiosity as to the main social problems of the country in which we live. Ten service clubs have applied for programs during the past year. With an aggregate attendance of 36,000 during the year, there has been an average of 73 persons at each presentation.31

Projectionists also encouraged discussions after showing films and collected audience ideas for future projects.

Bricker and others, by virtue of their relatively high profile in various localities, promoted the NFB mission. Indeed, Bricker’s distinction between documentaries and entertainment films closely matched Grierson’s original goals for the Film Board. Summed up in a quote published by The Lethbridge (Alberta) Herald:

The documentary film is real, not make-believe. It’s about the things around us—jobs, wars, people, changes, our country in relation to other countries. Secondly, it’s made for a special reason—not just to set you up with half-a-dollar’s worth of entertainment, but to show you in plain strong colors, the developments around us that are affecting our lives; to show how the world of today is taking on new shapes, new ways of work-

In other words, during times when national and world affairs seemed to be changing at an increasingly rapid pace, NFB documentaries offered citizens a way to make sense of the world around them.

...the documentary movie sets out to explain. It doesn’t preach a sermon. It does it by sifting and selecting the important events that go on around us, and putting these events together in a way that gives us a fresh look at the way the world is moving.32

By the end of the war, estimated annual attendance for rural, industrial, and trade union circuit exhibition was 465,000. Projectors put on 1,700 shows per month throughout the nation’s nine provinces.34 In commercial theaters, Canada Carries On reached 1.1 million viewers and international distribution of World in Action newsreels reached an estimated 30 million theatergoers.35

The NFB’s first annual report, issued in 1945, highlighted the organization’s wartime accomplishments. In addition to the annual production of 26 prestige films for the war information program,36 the Board continually produced five series of motion pictures by the end of the war: a series depicting various Canadian communities, a series focused on agricultural and rural development issues, a series on national resources and industries, a series on Canadian achievements in the arts and sciences, and a series of tourist films.37

In little more than five years, and with the indispensable help of wartime momentum, Grierson’s team managed to set a high standard for government-sponsored film production and distribution in Canada. Film Board personnel trained and inspired a generation of Canadians who believed in the power of
film to bring national and international events home to Canadians, to advance the development of Canadian national identity through the community-based distribution of films in non-commercial settings, and to establish for the Dominion a place of cultural distinction on the world stage.

ENDNOTES


2 Charles Blackhouse. *Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, 1917-1941*. Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1974. According to Blackhouse, who refers to Canadian Public Archives, proceeds from UK distribution of Griffith’s film, *Hearts of the World*, were given to war charities. The production of this film and others was coordinated by the War Office Cinematographic Committee, p. 4.

3 As a division of the Trade and Commerce Department, the MPB was not required to post a profit; thus, expenditures were always in excess of revenues. However, the financial picture was particularly dismal in the mid-thirties. Revenues peaked at $29,444.85 in 1930-31 and bottomed out at $6,271.64 two years later in 1933-34. From 1933 to 1938, expenditures held steady around $40,000 per year. These figures suggest that capital improvements, such as investment in new sync-sound production and projection equipment, were put off in favor of maintaining the MPB status quo.


5 Ibid., p. 671.


7 Joris Ivens directed *Corvette Port Arthur* for release through the *Canada Carries On* series in May 1943. Boris Kaufman enjoyed a career making films in France and the United States as well as Canada.

8 Interview with Sydney Newman, 1972. Transcript appears in *John Grierson/Film Master*, by James Beveridge. New York: Macmillan, 1978, pp. 156-160. Beveridge’s book is a collection of interviews and printed materials used in the production of *Grierson*, a film biography. Newman relates in his interview the excitement of social gatherings at Grierson’s residence on the weekends during the war: “There were we, young kids of twenty-three and twenty-four hobnobbing with senior civil servants or ministers of forty and forty-five, who were running the country in the middle of wartime, and he [Grierson] allowed us in fact to mix in with these decision-making people. This was tremendous for us. It opened vistas of a world that existed far beyond our own pitiful little concerns about montage and joining two pieces of film together.”
11 Ibid., pp. 85-86.
12 Interview with Stuart Legg, 1972. Transcript appears in Beveridge, pg. 184.
14 Ibid., p. 396.
15 Beveridge, p. 184.
16 Ibid., p. 186.
17 Greene may be more familiar to American audiences as the character Ben Cartwright from the television series Bonanza.
18 Ibid., pp. 196-197.
19 Ibid., pp. 196-197.
20 Evans, pp. 121-126.
21 Beveridge, p. 185.
22 Stuart Legg. Churchill’s Island. 1941.
26 Beveridge, p. 184.
29 Gray, p. 42.
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The Limited Press Coverage of Women’s Recruitment for Domestic and Military Services During America’s Involvement in World War II: 1941-1945

Melissa Bazhaw

In 1942, six months after the start of World War II, the U.S. Army introduced the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps to aid in the war effort. By intention, the Army involved the press from the beginning, when Oveta Culp Hobby, 37, was sworn in as the first WAAC director on May 16, 1942. Reporters were also present two months later at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, on July 20 when the Army opened the first training center for women. From the onset, the War Department knew it was dependent on the press for image purposes to boost reactions from the public. “This whole thing stands or falls on the next sixty days,” said General John H. Hilldring.1

It is clear through research that women’s recruitment for domestic and military services during World War II was not given precedence in the press. For an entire country to be involved in a world war, it was disappointing to find that though there was a push from the government to gain women volunteers, there was not one from the press. Women’s involvement during this particular wartime was very important in retrospect; and, it was odd to find the articles as they were written and placed. Not only were articles placed farther back in newspapers than the majority of other war-related items, but they were also put among items that would have appealed to the domesticated side of a woman’s life at that time.

The Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), later the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), was established in May of 1942. In July, the Navy started recruiting women into its Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES). Women volunteers also entered the ranks of the Marines and Coast Guard. Female pilots became members of the Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Service (WAFS) and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).

Recruitment Beginnings

Before the development of the Corps, the press had forecast such an auxiliary Army. On January 22, 1942, The New York Times published an article in its late edition citing the government’s discussion. The article, fairly positive and almost urgent, stated that both Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers and Rep. Frances P. Bolton supported a bill to create a volunteer Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps for “noncombatant service with the Army of the United States.”2 Hobby, then with the Public Relations Office of the War Department, also presented an argument in support of the bill. The article went on to suggest that there was an overwhelming push from these women and Generals George C. Marshall and Hilldring to enact the bill. However, though the bill would affect both men and women, the story was placed on page fourteen, amongst other news of “child service” and “lima bean loaf.”3

The press expected the House to approve a bill to create an auxiliary reserve in 1942. The New York Times contained an article by Nona Baldwin covering a press conference about the auxiliary reserve plans. Representative Melvin Maas suggested the bill be put on the consent calendar so that the measure would pass the House the following week, unless it was opposed. Authorities reportedly told the committee that an estimated 1,000 men had already moved to different posts overseas because officials were certain the bill would pass. Baldwin also mentioned the Army’s Signal Corps announcing the recruitment of women for service through radio and telephone services. The Signal Corps would tour the country in search of women and men with technical training. The Maas bill would allow enlistment of these women. The
backing of the bill was positive, once again guaranteeing the suggestion of freeing men for sea duty while women got shore duty. However, the article made only the “women’s section,” buried among articles about “dye labels” and “bridal fashions.”

Women’s recruitment made page eight in The New York Times on May 2, 1942, just days before Hobby was sworn in. The article stated that the War Department was ready to enroll 150,000 women into non-combatant service “immediately.” According to the article, one senator sent back the Women’s Army Auxiliary Bill to the committee with a proposal to make the corps a part of the Army, not just a civilian auxiliary. General Hilldring told reporters that the Army was only interested in getting the women recruited, having no preference on whether or not they would be considered civilians. Though not on the front page, this article was among other articles that would perceptibly be read by both men and women; presumably, putting it into the minds of the public as an important issue.

The same page of The Times contained another article concerning women, “President Shelves Draft of Women,” written by Nona Baldwin. Finding that there were more women registered with employment services than were jobs to fill, President Roosevelt ended plans to register women for war service. Citing research, the President claimed that over one million women were registered for work, and the director of the War Manpower Commission, Paul McNutt, stated that there might be four million women in war industries by the end of the following year. McNutt also stated that the enlistment of women would be on a strictly voluntary basis, and these women would be placed in areas of shortage. Baldwin reported that though this push to hire women seems evident, the Employment Service reported only a small amount of women-hires in comparison with men-hires. It is apparent that Baldwin was aware of the contradictions and was attempting to make the public aware as well.

The Washington Post carried a short article with no by-line about how organizations like the WAAC would help ensure victory. It supported the organization of women for wartime efforts, and pointed out that other countries such as Britain, Russia, and China had already established such corps of women. However, unlike organizations in other countries, the WAAC would be in noncombatant roles of the Army. It also explained to readers that to run a war effectively, one must elicit the aid of the effective people. “Efficient mobilization for war demands first of all the intelligent utilization of the Nation’s human resources.”

Images of Volunteers

For the WAAC to be effective, the women would need to be taken seriously. Mindful of the public’s interpretation of the corps, Director Hobby said, “Waacs will be neither Amazons rushing to battle, nor butterflies fluttering about.” But which image would prevail—the real women of the Army or the sex-driven cover girl? The War Department expected parts of the press to respect the interests of the nation and downplay negative images of these women so as not to hinder recruitment.

Charity Adams Earley remembered the press in her book about the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps. She reported to Fort Hayes on July 13, 1942, and was sworn in. She, along with the other new recruiters, left for Fort Des Moines six days later for training. After a tour of the training center, Earley realized that reporters were going to be a big part of her life as a WAAC from there on.

It was about this time that I became aware of the reporters—an awareness I have kept ever since. We had had a small experience with the press before we left Columbus, but that was nothing compared to what was in store for us. We were talked
to and photographed, we held forks as directed, or continued eating as directed. We stood, sat, or saluted (which we did not know how to do) [...] All of this media pressure was to remain with us for quite a long time; every move we made was watched and recorded.

Feature stories about women involved in the war effort took shape to encourage women to enlist. “She Rules the WAVES” by S.J. Woolf was a small feature about Lieutenant Commander Mildred H. McAfee, 42, former president of Wellesley College. She took the commanding position at the urging of the Navy, and according to the reporter, kept her same demeanor. Though rumor had it at the time that women who joined the armed forces turned into either sexpots or aggressive authority figures, McAfee remained herself. “She is one of those executives who never appear overburdened by their responsibilities. Since she left Wellesley a board of three is now doing what she did alone and still had time to spare.” From a comment McAfee made about the uniform’s blue, not gold, braic, one gets the impression that the original purpose of the piece was for recruitment. McAfee said, “But after all, it evidently is not going to make any difference to the women who are applying.”

Woolf reported through McAfee’s words the specifics of the WAVES enlistment. McAfee explained that 1,000 officers would be trained to put in command of 10,000 enlisted women. The officer applicants must have had at least two years of college, two years of business and technical experience, and two years of mathematics. Another 300 would be “probationally appointed” officers, ensuring that the administrative end of the organization would get underway. And another fifty women, who had teaching experience, would be placed in charge of the remaining 650 women. The plan was to start the first week in October, with the training center at Smith College. They expected the officers to be trained within four months; and during those four months, McAfee expected the 10,000 women to enlist.

McAfee explained that the women would work in very important positions and gain useful knowledge. They would work in naval labs and observatories, decode and encode messages, lay out maps, work in telephone and radio labs, and handle business transactions for the Navy. McAfee went on to express her position on how colleges would be after the war ended. She explained that colleges were places to inflict the young with ways to change the world—make conditions so that there would be peace and health throughout the world. “[The post-war college] must face reality, and when it preaches the futility of war it must also instruct in the ways it can be averted.” Her last words to the reporter, and the last line of the article, can assure any reader that the article would have been used for the recruitment of women. “[There is one thing I want you to stress: you have met a college president who has fallen for the Navy.”

The importance of public esteem was evident to everyone when the “Slander Campaign” emerged in the spring of 1943. It consisted of jokes, obscenity, and gossip about the WAAC, and the Army battled the campaign that summer and into the next year before subduing it. However, during the smear campaign, the U.S. War Department Bureau of Public Relations permitted no special attention to the WAAC. There was no coordination of policy, news releases were limited to stories cleared by individual presses, and these stories had limited views as well.

D’Ann Campbell stated in her book, *Women at War with America*, that the reasons for women’s enlistment varied during World War II. “Patriotic reasons” dominated surveys. Publicity bureaus sought out emotional comments about a loved one having served at Pearl Harbor and killed in the raid. According to Campbell, the Pentagon agreed that women with this emotional background and attachment to the armed forces made the best...
workers because their “psychological involvements” were high. However, as Campbell pointed out, not all women joined the military because of a feeling of duty. “More than one woman stopped in the recruiting station to get out of the rain and found herself in the service.”

Though the United States Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard kept quotas for women low, the Army had a hard time filling its higher quotas. Standards had to be lowered because generals were asking for more and more WACs. However, the standards always remained significantly above those required of male draftees. Therefore, the Army had to pool resources and recruit the aid of outside professional agencies. There were nationwide media campaigns coordinated by Madison Avenue ad agencies. In an experiment, the Army used the citizens of Cleveland to see how many women could be recruited in a saturation campaign. At the rate of the experiment’s response, the Army would have had to personally contact more families than even lived in the United States to meet the quota they had set. According to Campbell, six out of seven Americans knew the Army was looking for more women volunteers, but the majority of eligible women failed to volunteer. One reason a 1943 Gallup survey found was the hostile attitude of the Army.

The slander campaign of 1943 was an underground movement to describe all female soldiers as sexually promiscuous. The campaign launched about the same time that the government increased public awareness of the WACs and stressed how much Americans needed women to release men for combat. The FBI determined that American servicemen had planted the false rumors, and the Army recruiting campaigns never fully recovered.

Articles were also written aimed at women not involved in any way with the war effort to make them feel bad about themselves. In the Women’s Activities section of The New York Times, Helen Woodbury Yocum, member of the Civilian Defense Volunteer Organization (CDVO), had a byline for an article titled “Must We Conscript Women?,” which ran in 1943. According to Yocum, women who didn’t volunteer were mostly of the upper class and cited “not enough servants” as their reason for not joining any organization. Yocum went on to describe the drafting of women in other countries involved in the war, including Japan and Germany. She essentially suggested that unless more women became involved, the conscription of women could become a reality for American women.

Some articles about women were a bit more negative. Another article glamorizing the women’s armed services was by Margaret Kerndole, writer for the Associated Press in Washington, D.C., “Washington is No Bugaboo for Living—if You Are in the Waves” described how women in the WAVES had it made, so to speak. Kerndole described that women were fed and bed by the Navy. “Housing for these beauties in uniform ranges from regular navy barracks and de luxe apartment to homey hotels (for the officers) for the duration.” The article made light of the work that the WAVES did, calling them “hush-hush.”

Even living conditions were exposed as those of celebrities. Kerndole wrote of their almost non-existent housework as if they were undeserving. “Their laundry problems shrink like ayon under a hot iron in comparison with capital civilians’ laundry worries.” Kerndole described maids, washing more than the rationed amount, easy-to-get late curfew passes, “lovely lounges in which to entertain their dates,” and painted rooms. She also boasted the WAVES having large mess halls, free tea on hot days, and a bus system that took them out for swimming many times a week. Although the article may be read contemporarily as a satirical piece, one wonders if it wasn’t intended as so in 1943 because not once did the reporter attempt to speak with any of the women, nor did she include the “working” side of the WAVES in Washington.
Women in the Industrial Workforce

To wage a war for almost four years, the United States would have to mobilize every able body—male and female. The country needed to convert quickly its domestic industries into military industries. Auto factories, shipyards, and other factories were converted into aircraft plants and expanded to fit the new needs of a country waging war. Complex jobs that were once filled by highly skilled workers were broken down into simpler, more specific tasks. But, with much of the male workforce volunteering for the frontlines of the war or being drafted, women were left to pick up the slack. President Roosevelt made it clear in 1942 that prejudices were going to have to be overlooked, especially during the time of war. “In some communities employers dislike to hire women. In others they are reluctant to hire Negroes. We can no longer afford to indulge such prejudice.”

The integration of women into the workforce did not happen overnight, and it involved a major movement within the workforce. News of good pay for women quickly spread and in 1942, women began to enter war industries in large numbers. Nearly half of the women defense workers moved from other areas of the workforce. However, the limited number of women was not enough to fill the increasing need of workers, as more and more men were called into service. Themes of patriotism and glamour appealed to young women, especially recent high school and college graduates. Songs like “Rosie the Riveter” glorified the woman-behind-the-man-behind-the-gun mentality that recruiters felt would draw more women in. Norman Rockwell memorialized Rosie on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post. His drawing epitomized everything Rosie was to stand for—an attractive young woman, gun across her lap, stamping out fascism. Media coverage was seen as successful—one out of every five defense workers was a recent student.

Another tapped resource of women was the homemaker. Like other recruitment campaigns, recruiters targeted homemakers for their patriotism. Self-sacrifice, safety, and preservation of the American way of life were all themes employed to gain homemakers into the realm of defense workers. Skills used at home were essential skills to perform tasks laid before them at factories. This homemaker campaign was also successful—by 1944, at the height of war production, nearly one third of women defense workers was a former full-time homemaker. The addition of homemakers to the workforce meant that married women outnumbered single women workers for the first time in U.S. history.

Some articles, though buried, could have stood alone and made an impact. Amongst the fashion-related stories in one edition of the Washington Post was an article related to both fashion and women involved in the wartime workforce, “Women Welders’ Work Clothing Flame-Proofed.” The article, though situated among fashion articles, was much longer than the others, and would have drawn attention to it. The article discussed a new chemical, ammonium sulfamate, manufactured by duPont and used on gloves, aprons, and headgear to safeguard women and men in welding factories where industrial burns were causing the loss of thousands of labor hours. The flameproof treated clothing, the article stated, was being adopted in war industry, and put into the ranks with leather and asbestos protective apparel.

Like the flame-proofed uniform article, quite a few were published about women and clothing. In the Women’s Clubs section of the Washington Post, Sunday, April 25, 1943, one of those articles appeared. “Uniform Makers Do Their Bit,” by Lucy Greenbaum, discussed putting men and women into uniform. According to the article, it took an average of 17.7 yards of wool and 56.21 yards of cotton cloth to clothe one WAAC working within the U.S. borders. It also asserted that there were more than 150,000 women in the armed forces at that time. Greenbaum pointed out that more than 90 percent of the uniform-making had to be con-
tracted out to private companies. Greenbaum toured two local contracting sewing factories—one for hats and one for jackets. All interviews she conducted reflected positive feedback, both from the men and women working at the factory. All respondents said that they were happy to help with the war effort—saying that they had a loved one in either the men’s or women’s corps. In fact, one man told Greenbaum that “the faster he stitches, the father figures, the sooner his son will be home again.”

**Domestic Workforce: The Softer Side of Serving**

Organizations connected with the government and military were not the only ones to organize wartime efforts for women. Private and non-profit organizations were mobilized to help as well. An article about the General Federation of Women’s Clubs appeared in the *Washington Post* on October 20, 1942. It discussed plans to recruit 20,000 female nurses to replace those going into military service. The president of the organization, Mrs. John L. Whitehurst, was involved in the first world war and understood the need of nurses in all aspects of the war.

We can render an invaluable service in helping the American Red Cross and the National Nursing Council for War Service to secure young women for training; to persuade eligible, inactive nurses to return to the profession; help recruit part time nurses for hospitals, and sponsor classes in home nursing and nurses’ aides.

As an enticement for the new nursing recruits, the program expected to offer scholarships and other education sessions to the public. Because the organization knew the armed forces came first, it encouraged nurses to join the Red Cross’s First Reserve, a pool from which the Army and Navy were pulling their nurses. At the same time, the organization encouraged more recruits to join to replenish the increasingly vacant jobs on the homefront.

There would be a reward of $100 in war bonds to the woman, member or not, who was able to secure the greatest number of recruits. And certificates would be awarded to women who recruited more than one student nurse. The article stated that each of the 16,500 clubs was asked to organize a committee to set up booths in stores for recruitment, send speakers to high schools and colleges, make radio appeals, hold meetings, and organize a speakers’ bureau to encourage women to join.

Newspapers often placed war articles directly related to women after page 10. *The New York Times* ran a series titled “It’s A Woman’s War, Too” which usually ran after the Amusements section, and fell under the News of Women’s Activities portion of *The Times*. Geared more toward women than men, its main purpose seems to have been to keep women abreast of the latest occurrences about women and war. The articles were informative and relayed information to women on how to participate in war-related activities. A March 21, 1943 article told women where to go to speak to Navy League volunteer recruiters about town. Articles like the one from April 25, 1943, stated that the General Federation of Women’s Clubs credited itself with the sale of over $11 million worth of war stamps and bonds. Also reported in that article was that Aesop’s Fables were being distributed by the League of Women Voters to campaign against isolationism.

The lead of an article in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* read, “Registration of women for civilian defense was urged by Alvin Christovich, head of the speakers’ bureau of the civilian defense council of New Orleans, at the semiannual luncheon of the Presidents’ Co-operative Club Wednesday at the Jung hotel.” However, the remaining five paragraphs were about other important society members in attendance. The headline and lead are misleading because the writer did not take the time to explain in
what ways or how Christovich went about calling on women to volunteer. Structuring the article in such a way suggests that readers of New Orleans had less interest in wartime efforts of women—at least in the daily newspaper runs.

More attention seems to have been given to women, and therefore women’s recruitment, in the Sunday sections of major newspapers during World War II. Such was the case with the *Times-Picayune*. Juxtaposed between two articles about fashion, “Women Must Help in War Says Leader” was a rather lengthy article dedicated to women’s wartime efforts. Ironically, Caroline Haslett, advisor to the British ministry of labor, with regard to the training and registration of women, wrote the article. According to the inset of the article, Haslett was asked by the Associated Press to write the article so as to lend advice to women about how to adjust oneself to the war.

Haslett urged readers to understand that everyone in a country was affected by war. “Everyone has to realize that he or she has a responsibility and should be trained for it.” She urged women to take only the rations assigned, plant municipal gardens, turn evening clothes into suitable day attire, and try to put a little fun in everyday to make it through the tough and serious days of wartime. She commented that American women’s alertness to the preparation for defense impressed her. “There is one particularly important wartime job for women—to give evacuees a place in their homes.” She argued that because industrial factories were popping up everywhere, and more were anticipated, housing the factory workers was a common problem. “It is important to realize that housing defense workers is just as great a job of war as any.”

Some articles served as entertainment proposals for involved women. A small article in the *Times-Picayune* stated that the local U.S.O. Club gave a dinner to entertain women of the armed forces, on the first anniversary of the founding of the first training school for the WAC. Representatives of the WAC, SPAR, Marines, and WAVES attended. The article was short but showed enthusiasm for the women soldiers and stated that there were plans to hold a series of monthly meetings for the armed services at the club.

These articles gave war work a softer side. A feature story appeared in the Sunday Society and Amusements section of the *Times-Picayune* titled “War Work Gives Friends New Ties.” The first two sentences urged women to join war activities in order to keep close ties with friends. The article went so far as to urge women to join in the activities at particular Red Cross chapter houses and volunteer organization offices in New Orleans. The article gave exact direction to and location of at least six different places for women to go to volunteer and indirectly make social contact with other volunteers. There were large pictures on the page of groups of friends already in attendance at these volunteer centers and all in all, the article’s positioning made sense in this case.

**Fillers**

Small articles such as “Women May Help Occupation Setup,” found in the *Times-Picayune*, served as small fillers for the women’s sections of newspapers. Though informative, they did not give much information that would be helpful for a woman who wanted to volunteer. Nor were they long enough to entice a woman for recruitment. The AP wire put out “Women May Help Occupation Setup,” which stated that Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who set up the office of foreign economic coordination, was considering creating a corps of women to help unify economic activities in occupied areas. The corps would not be comprised of many women, but their duties would be important. No further information could be found dealing with the proposed corps.

Such articles seemed out of place within their context.
Amongst clothing ads and between articles about dress designs and cotton duffle bags, “WACs in Africa Look Forward to Joining Army” appeared. The article described some of the jobs the WACs were doing in North Africa to help the Army. According to the article, they included acting statisticians, clerks, switchboard operators, secretaries, and jeep drivers. Although most of the article was about how women in the service wanted to be integrated officially into the Army, the reporter apparently felt the need to include a paragraph about the social arrangement of the WACs and other Army personnel. Captain Frances Marquis, commanding officer of the WACs in North Africa, stated that she hoped the women would gain the same rights as other officers in the military.

“‘Some of our auxiliaries who correspond in rank to Army privates will want an opportunity to become officers.’”

Even articles that begged for women were buried in odd places. Amongst articles about Hollywood and the movie scene, was an article in the Sunday Times-Picayune titled “Military Seeks Higher Quota of Nurses in State.” According to the article, Emma Maurin, chairperson of the state committee for procurement and assignment of nurses, war man power commission, told reporters that in the last four months of 1944, 121 graduate nurses needed to be recruited for the Army and Navy within Louisiana. Maurin pleaded to nurses classified as available to the military to apply “at once” to a local Red Cross office. Maurin pointed out that the increased quota from the prior six months was in part because the country was asking for 9,000 more nurses to enlist in the Army and Navy Nursing Corps. “‘Those who can leave to become a part of the fighting front are urged to take the proper first step, which is to go to the Red Cross and file their intention.’” Eligible nurses were to be between the ages of 21 and 45, unmarried if applying for the Navy, and be considered able to spare from their current positions without detriment.

Pushing the Press: Recruitment Problems

The United States Office of War Information (OWI) made a concerted effort to recruit women into wartime service at home through radio programs. The programs intended to convince women that it was their patriotic duty to apply for wartime work. However, while aimed at women who were in domestic roles, they failed to target working-class women and black women. The programs not only asked women to join the services, but also supplied information about women already in service in an attempt to entice more recruits. Programs about women included professions in railroad, auto working, and airplane manufacturing. The OWI also used stars such as Ethel Merman, Billie Burke, and Patrice Munsel to make the female worker look appealing through their broadcasts.

Radio programs provided an escape for women of both fronts. They also built confidence among women by reminding them of why their family members were fighting the war. Radio also recruited middle-class, white women into service. The OWI launched the “Womanpower” campaign in 1942. Also, its American Women Speak and Women Can Take It (1942-1943) told stories of, and praised the women involved in wartime work.

The WAC Recruiting Service received a total of almost 4,000 male and female officers and enlisted personnel. Because of past negative experience with male recruiting officers, only a minimum of returned combat men were put to use. In July of 1944, the recruiting efforts reached the peak of its wartime efficiency. However, relations between the WAC and the Office of War Information were not at a peak. The WAC had decided to spend its advertising money in newspapers instead of in radio advertising. Objecting to the decision, the OWI stopped all radio cooperation. It wrote to all radio stations in the United States and explained that since this decision had been made, free radio facilities should not
be given to recruiters. Recruitment felt the pinch of this move. However, in December of 1944 Director Hobby suggested getting rid of paic advertising altogether. 

During the last eighteen months of the war, a general “We’ve Won” attitude swept the nation and recruitment became very difficult. The WAAC had exceeded its goal for enlisted officers, draftees filled in as replacements for limited service men, and the Army seemed full. But it was decided that the WAC recruiting must continue. The armed forces needed more drafted men for combat replacements, leaving clerical work open. Women in the Army could be trained within ten weeks to replace able-bodied men in the interior, men could not. Through comparison to the Navy’s WAVES recruitment, the articles criticized the Army for not having enough manpower to establish a stable recruitment process. Therefore, in May of 1944, the Planning Branch decided to separate the WAC Recruiting Service from the Army Recruiting Service. 

To balance the lack of publicity provided by the War Department, Hobby brought in WAAC personnel as public relations specialists to supply stories to news organizations. However, the War Department kept the WAAC from fully exploring its own PR potential within the first year. Therefore, newspapers reported everything from the truth to slighted headlines—using “WAAC” within scandalous phrases to cause excitement. Thus, the recruitment of women into the Army became a large problem. Files of letters at the WAC offices were filled with suggestions for recruitment written by women who had heard of the difficulties and thought they had the perfect solution.

One recruitment technique implemented was to write articles with the express purpose of eliciting prideful feelings among women. Pamela Frankau, a junior commander in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, wrote an article for The New York Times Sunday Magazine, which ran March 21, 1943. By discussing the dull khaki armed forces uniforms and what they stand for, Frankau wrote about the “stages” women go through when they join a training camp and find themselves constrained to a dull set of clothes. According to the author, the girl eventually becomes proud of it because she knows that beneath it lies a woman who serves in the military. She went on to point out that though the first women cadets of the British Army may have walked about “badly,” women today carry their uniforms “well” and are proud to serve their country. The article, though not directly calling for volunteers, does elicit feelings of pride and patriotism—the same feelings that the War Department would have wanted to elicit from potential recruits.

**Post-War Expectations**

Another article, in the Times-Picayune, among a page full of ads taken from the Associated Press wire, called attention to the pay of women war workers. According to the article, Mary Anderson, then director of the women’s bureau of the Labor Department, told reporters that some women in war industries were underpaid because they were women. However, Anderson believed that after the war women would remain in the workforce. The press conference marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the women’s bureau, and Anderson explained to reporters that since World War I, the percentage that women were paid in comparison to men had increased. But she was certain to point out that some women were still lagging behind at only twenty percent less pay. Anderson said she expected legislation to help with the situation, and even improve conditions for women. “She expects to see women as presidents of labor unions and holding key union positions because young officials are being drafted.” She expected that women would continue working after the war because men would want to continue to utilize their new skills, leaving room for women in the workplace.

But would women remain an essential and wanted part of the workforce after the war? When the end of the war was in sight,
the attitudes toward women workers changed dramatically. These women began to be blamed for the rising rate of juvenile delinquency. Less and less photos of female factory workers were being published and more and more of women office workers were being published. Women production workers were being phased out.47

However, some observers quickly pointed out that women had undergone an intense change due to the wartime experience. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes cited the change in women in the Saturday Evening Post. “I think that this is as good a time as any [...] to warn men that when the war is over, the going will be a lot tougher, because they will have to compete with women whose eyes have been opened to their greatest economic potentialities.” The Wall Street Journal ran a headline declaring 75 percent of working women wanted to continue to work after the war. Not only did women who had worked before the war want to continue, but also homemakers who had just started during the war. Not only did they want to continue, but also they wanted to keep the same job. 48

The nation had become a producer economy, and needed to be rapidly converted back into a consumer economy. The press began this campaign before the war had ended. Women’s magazines began running ads promoting all-electric kitchens for the “after-victory” homes in 1944. Other ads during this year also showed how unhappy children of war workers had become. The ads worked hand-in-hand to push women back into the home, and promote buying. After the war, both marriage and birthrate increased dramatically, boosting the Baby Boom. Though an increased number of women were working, most considered their jobs as part of their domestic role. Independent women portrayed on screen and in life by Katharine Hepburn and Joan Crawford were replaced by girls-next-door, Doris Day and Donna Reed. 49

After the surrender of Germany, the WAC Recruiting Ser-

vice was abolished on May 15, 1945, and integrated back into the Army Recruiting Service. Recruitment was then lowered to a baseline level. However, in the unstable early summer of 1945, both the Army and Navy began to wonder if their decisions had been a mistake. The demobilization process had opened many clerical positions that the regular recruiting offices could not adequately fill. Soon after Hobby’s resignation, a demand for 10,000 women in six months came through, half of what the WAC Recruiting Service was able to gain during its most strenuous efforts. Seventy-five percent of these women needed clerical skills. However, the bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki spared recruiters the headache of gaining these specialized recruits. The wartime history of WAC recruiting was closed out by a telegram to all service commands.50

Press coverage of women recruitment during the Second World War was limited. Though the primary sources studied for the purpose of this paper are themselves limited to three of the top newspapers during World War II, the patterns are undeniable. Recruiters probably would have favored having more mass appeal in national newspapers, but instead the stories were, for the most part, placed behind other articles seeming to have been of more importance. Would the recruiters have gotten a greater response? Would men have not sneered at women in the service? There is no true way to test these questions now. However, it is apparent that the placement of press coverage could have had something to do with the overall attitude toward women volunteers. It shouldn’t be a wonder that they weren’t taken seriously by more of the population when many of the most important articles concerning them were placed between fashion ads and recipes. Further investigation should be encouraged in this area of research and other media, such as magazines and radio spots, for a better understanding of the issue.
ENDNOTES

3 Ibid.
8 Treadwell, p. 48.
11 Treadwell, pp. 191-218; Campbell, p. 37.
12 Campbell, p. 36.
13 Campbell, p. 37.
14 Campbell, p. 37.
17 Ibid.
23 “General Federation to Recruit 20,000 Women for Nursing,” *The Washington Post*, October 20, 1942, p. 4B.
24 Ibid
25 Ibid.
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