

ISSN: 2151-7967

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History

*A Refereed Annual Journal published by the Journalism History Society of
Georgia State University*

**Georgia State
University**

Volume 8 - Number 1
Fall 2009

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History

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Cover Design by John Daigle

Printed by Printed Communications, Inc.
Tucker, GA

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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

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AN EDITORIAL COMMENT

The four essays that are seeing the light of day in this 8th volume all underwent rigorous attention and revision in order to appear in print. All four authors first presented their original research at prestigious academic conferences and subsequently submitted their work to the *Review's* panels of professional historians of the American press.

All four essays contribute something new to the ongoing conversations on their topics – the Missouri Compromise, nineteenth-century immigration, the Scottsboro Boys, and “Gone with the Wind.” In their research, they immersed themselves in historical artifacts in their attempt to understand the arguments of those times.

Erika Pribanic-Smith's readings about the Missouri Compromise included newspapers from six Southern states that offered “a glimpse into the general mind of the South.” As an outcome of massive immigration in the 1890s, the United States enacted restrictive legislation, documented by **Harriet Moore's** essay: “While the American press cannot be held responsible for restrictive immigration legislation, derogatory framing of immigrants with regard to epidemics and illnesses undoubtedly made these issues more salient to the public.”

In the twentieth century, **Shanna Gildersleeve** studied racial justice through the lens of the Scottsboro trials and retrials, concluding that “the media helped convict and save the Scottsboro Boys.” **Alexandra Sowers** uncovered the Marxist reviews of “Gone with the Wind” in the pages of *The Daily Worker*, the newspaper of the Communist Party-USA whose headlines countered the dominant narratives: “Harlem Negro Leaders Slam ‘Gone with the Wind’”; “An Insult to the American People”; “Fanning the Flames of War.” Pribanic-Smith, Gildersleeve and Sowers all first presented their papers at the Southeast Symposium of the American Journalism Historians Association. Moore presented her paper at the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, Civil War and Free Expression.

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History is proud to be the forum to showcase this original research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Atlanta Review of Journalism History*, a refereed national journal, is a joint production of the Center for International Media Education and the Journalism History Society of Georgia State University and is made possible through the concerted efforts of the authors, editors, readers, reviewers and our sponsors, the Office of Student Activities and the Department of Communication. Mostly we thank the authors who did the primary work of historical research and writing. They forged their essays in the university but have shared them far beyond, with audiences at academic conferences in the region and the nation.

The *Review* staff thanks the esteemed scholars on the Editorial Board, all of them published media historians and most of them members of the American Journalism Historians Association. We thank for devoting time and talent to thoughtful critiquing of the essays submitted for this issue. The reviewers for this Volume 8 were **Reed Smith** of Georgia Southern University, **Karla Gower** of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, **Frank Fee** of the University of North Carolina, **Paulette Kilmer** of the University of Toledo, **James Aucoin** of the University of South Alabama at Mobile, **David Davies** at the University of Southern Mississippi, **Debra VanTuyll** at Augusta State University, **Patrick Washburn** at Ohio University, and **Mark Edge** at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Credit for the overall production goes to the *Review's* staff, led by Managing Editor **Farooq Kperogi**, a Ph.D. candidate in Public Communication who is completing his dissertation on online diasporic journalism. He was assisted by Associate Editor **Jennifer Rankine**, whose skills with InDesign were greatly valued. Additional copyreading was done by **Jelena Kelava**, **Oriana Gatta**, **Jin Zhao**, **Emma Harger**, and **Kiana Nicholas**.

Finally, the *Review* staff is grateful for the essential financial support provided to the Georgia state University Journalism History society through the Student Activity fee allocated by the College of Arts and Sciences. The *Review*, as always, appreciates the steady encouragement and support provided by the Department of Communication and its Chair, **Dr. David M. Cheshier**.

The Emerging Sectionalism of Southern Newspapers: Missouri Statehood Debates in the Press, 1818-1821

Erika J. Pribanic-Smith

Only thirty-two years after the United States became an independent republic, the two regions that would face off in civil war already were at odds over the issues that ultimately would destroy the Union: slavery, the balance of power, and state rights. Controversy over Missouri's statehood pitted North against South in a war of words that eventually would lead to military conflict. No previous historian has explored the southern press during these debates. This paper aims to begin filling that gap by examining six southern newspapers from Missouri's petition on 18 December 1818 to 30 September 1821, in an effort to determine the nature of southern news coverage of the Missouri controversy and the position southern editors took in the debate. The National Intelligencer and Niles' Weekly Register also were studied to provide background and compare clipped material with what was published in the Washington press. This study reveals that although southern newspapers relied heavily on Washington newspapers for important political news, the southern press used a variety of other sources, including clips from northern and other southern newspapers, essays and letters, and in more cases than expected, their own editorials to provide complete coverage of both the legislative action and nation-wide response to activity in Washington. Their selection of sources, including which national publications they turned to for political news, is indicative of editorial position and offers a glimpse into the general mind of the South at this crucial time.

Only thirty-two years after the United States became an independent republic, it faced irreparable internal strife. The two regions that would face off in civil war already were at odds over the issues that ultimately would destroy the Union: slavery, the balance of power, and states' rights. Although a series of compromises represented a temporary truce, Missouri's statehood pitted the North against the South in a war of words that eventually would lead to military conflict.

On 18 December 1818, the Missouri territory made its second petition for statehood. Little had been made of the first petition earlier that year, which expired without much discussion at the end of Congress' term. The second petition set off a firestorm of controversy as Americans debated the admittance of another slave state into the Union.

When Congress received Missouri's petition, the nation was split evenly between free and slave states. Missouri's admittance as a slave state would upset that delicate balance and officially allow slavery to infiltrate the American west. Passed in 1820 and 1821, the Missouri compromises maintained equilibrium by admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. Furthermore, they created a line at 36° 30' north latitude above which slavery would be prohibited, confining the institution to the South.

Most histories of the Missouri controversy focus on its position as a transition period from the republic's emergence to the antebellum era. Historians point out that the compromises created a temporary peace between pro- and anti-slavery forces, but drew a distinct line between the North and the South. By the time Missouri officially became a state in August of 1821, the South had committed itself to the permanence of slavery, whereas the North had committed itself to slavery's eradication. These deepening differences provoked vilification of each region by the other and fostered a spirit of sectionalism in the southern states.¹

Media historians have addressed the Missouri compromises marginally, if at all. Research on the early antebellum press suggests that newspapers throughout the nation equally covered slavery-related events such as the Missouri question, although southern newspapers emphasized regional aspects rather than adopting the national emphasis of the northern press. Editors throughout the nation relied heavily on Washington newspapers for much of the important political news.² Students of the antebellum press have concluded that southern editors were extremely influential in the politics of the time,³ but discussion of these men during the Missouri debates is limited. Only Thomas Ritchie of the *Richmond Enquirer* has received significant treatment as an editorial voice in the controversy, likely because he is recognized as the most influential editor in national politics over the course of antebellum period. During the Missouri crisis, he adopted a states' rights stance, denouncing the compromise for its exclusion of slaveholding southerners from the

territory above 36° 30'.⁴ According to the paragraph Glover Moore dedicated to southern press reaction to the compromises, most of Virginia and Georgia echoed Ritchie's sentiments, whereas other southern editors praised the measure for settling discord.⁵

Moore's conclusion supports the view that the compromises represented a temporary solution to the slavery debate, but it does not address the southern media's role in the argument. As a budding mass medium, newspapers were an important public forum during antebellum debates that foreshadowed greater conflict to come. Because of that fact and the obvious influence of certain antebellum editors, examining the southern newspapers' coverage of such controversies offers a glimpse at the ideological origins of the Civil War. Yet no historian has explored the southern press as a whole during the debates leading up to the Missouri compromises.

This paper represents an exploratory effort to begin filling that gap through a study of the following six southern newspapers⁶ from Missouri's petition on 18 December 1818 to 30 September 1821⁷:

- *Charleston (S.C.) Courier* – Though joined from time to time by other colleagues, *Courier* co-founder A.S. Willington was the primary editor throughout the Missouri Compromise controversy. A transplant from Massachusetts, Willington pledged to defend the Constitution, Christianity, order and good government while remaining impartial to party politics.⁸
- *Georgia Journal* (Milledgeville) – Camac and Hines are listed as the *Journal's* editors during the Missouri Compromise controversy, but little is known about either man (including their first names).
- *Knoxville (Tenn.) Register* – Born in Maryland but raised in Virginia, Frederick S. Heiskell founded and edited the *Register* with his brother-in-law Hugh Brown. Showered with state publishing contracts, the *Register's* printers rose to power and influence and became close friends and allies of nationally prominent men, including the engineer of the Missouri Compromises, Henry Clay.⁹
- *Mississippi State Gazette* (Natchez) – New York-born Andrew Marschalk arrived in Mississippi Territory as an Army officer and became its first printer at the request of the territorial governor. He published numerous small frontier papers during his stay in

Mississippi, including the *State Gazette* from 1818-1825, and saw the purpose of the newspaper as merely documentation of national politics without interjecting political opinion.¹⁰

- *Richmond (Va.) Enquirer* – Ritchie, who was born in Virginia and remained there for most of his life, served as state printer and editor of the *Enquirer* for 41 years. A staunch partisan, Ritchie was heavily involved in politics both in and out of his newspaper, building alliances with prominent men such as Martin Van Buren. Unlike the editors who imagined their role as impartial documentarians, Ritchie strove to shape political opinion.¹¹
- *Star, and North Carolina State Gazette* (Raleigh) – A native North Carolinian, state printer Thomas Henderson Jr. was sole proprietor and editor of the *Star* from 1815 until he moved to Tennessee in 1823. Although he professed Federalist principles, he sought to remain neutral in his newspaper.¹²

Leading national newspapers of the time also were studied to provide background and compare clipped material with what was published in the Washington press. Chosen for study were the *National Intelligencer*, edited by the North Carolinian Joseph Gales, Jr., and Virginian William Winston Seaton, and *Niles' Weekly Register*, edited by the anti-slavery Baltimorean Hezekiah Niles.

Items from northern newspapers appear only as reprinted in the southern and national press. Their appearance is not intended to offer a northern point of view but to explore how southern newspapers covered political activity in the North as well as how southern editors perceived northern sentiments.

By focusing exclusively on an analysis of newspaper content, the author aims to answer the following questions: What was the nature of southern news coverage of the Missouri controversy? What position in the debate did southerners take through the newspapers?

A Light Skirmish before the All-Out War: The Fifteenth Congress and the Tallmadge Amendment, Winter, 1819

Little discussion on the Missouri question occurred for two months following Henry Clay's presentation to Congress on 18 December 1818 of a memorial from the Missouri legislature requesting to adopt a

state constitution and form a state government. On 13 February 1819, a congressional committee of the whole met on the issue. New York Rep. James Tallmadge, Jr., moved to amend that the further introduction of slavery be prohibited, and that children of slaves born within the state be freed.¹³

The *National Intelligencer* quickly reported on the proposed amendment, calling the motion “wholly unexpected” and declaring its importance to the political relations among the states. A few days later, the *Richmond Enquirer* weighed in on the matter, opposing the amendment on the grounds that it violated the treaty for the purchase of Louisiana. The *Charleston Courier* began its coverage of the controversy by picking up both of these articles.¹⁴

Congress debated the amendment for the remainder of February and the early days of March, and the *National Intelligencer* produced ample next-day coverage. Congressional records appeared in *Niles' Weekly Register* a week behind. By the first of March, all of the newspapers except for the *Mississippi State Gazette* had begun picking up the proceedings. As was typical throughout the Missouri controversy, the *Richmond Enquirer*, *Georgia Journal*, *Knoxville Register*, and *Star*, and *North Carolina State Gazette* offered lengthy descriptions of the debates as well as short summaries provided by the *Intelligencer*, the *Georgetown National Messenger*, and the *Washington City Gazette*. The *Charleston Courier* primarily followed the proceedings via the short summaries. None of the newspapers published comments from Niles, although its editor offered plenty of editorial matter on the issue and the respective southern newspaper editors often mentioned receiving the *Register* as an exchange.

The amended Missouri bill passed the House by a narrow margin, but the Senate overwhelmingly voted to remove the Tallmadge clauses and passed the Missouri bill without amendment. The House refused to concur with the Senate in striking the amendment, and the Senate would not budge on its position. On 3 March 1819, the Fifteenth Congress adjourned without resolving the Missouri question.¹⁵

Because of the lag time common in early nineteenth century news, coverage of the controversy continued well into March. The southern newspapers widely reproduced a February 20 article from the *National Intelligencer* declaring the debates to have engaged so much of the legislature's interest that “the House was never before known to be so full.”

An excerpt from this article in the *Mississippi State Gazette* on March 20 was that newspaper's only acknowledgement of the matter.¹⁶

Of the southern newspapers, only the *Richmond Enquirer* added any editorial comment to the proceedings from Washington during the winter of 1819. The *Enquirer* accused certain members of the House of pursuing a course "which is at war with [Missouri's] equal rights, as well as the public faith of the nation." Ritchie proclaimed Negro labor to be best for the cultivation of Missouri's tobacco crops and asserted that Missouri should be granted that advantage. He averred that barring slavery from Missouri also harmed the slave population by keeping it concentrated in the southern states. A letter the *Enquirer* published in May supported Ritchie's beliefs that Congress had no constitutional right to impose restrictions on the territory, and that the North and South had equal interest in the land west of the Mississippi. The letter also foreshadowed the fears of disunion that would erupt as the controversy swelled in the next congressional session.¹⁷

House/Senate War Sparks Fighting Words in the Press: The Sixteenth Congress and the First Missouri Compromise, Winter-Spring, 1819-1820

During the summer of 1819, the southern newspapers ignored the Missouri controversy, reserving their pages for news on the president's tour of the South, yellow fever epidemics, and a sea serpent spotted off the New England coast. Several short items clipped from the *National Intelligencer* and the Boston newspapers in June and July announced the separation of Maine from Massachusetts, but no one foresaw the impact that would have on the Missouri question.

Interest in the Missouri controversy renewed as congressmen made their way back to Washington in December of 1819. The first major issue to arise in the Missouri debates of the Sixteenth Congress concerned connecting Missouri's bid for admission to the Union with Maine's application for statehood. Some senators in favor of Missouri's admission without restriction proposed uniting the two bills, believing that amending Missouri to the Maine bill would help their cause. The Senate also added to the Missouri bill an amendment recommended by Jesse Thomas of Illinois that would prohibit slavery north of the line at 36° 30'.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives had been considering

its own bill, with a restriction on slavery recommended by John W. Taylor of New York. The House rejected the Senate's amendments, which the Senate then insisted upon. After weeks of deadlock between the houses, Thomas suggested a conference. The joint committee recommended that the Senate withdraw its amendments to the Maine bill, both houses strike the slavery restriction clause from the House bill, and both add the 36° 30' provision. This series of actions became known as the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Both houses agreed and passed bills making Maine a state, but only authorized Missouri to form a state constitution and government, which would lead to further ferment and the Missouri Compromise of 1821.¹⁹

Readers in Washington and the South found ample description of the atmosphere and activity in the Capitol and beyond on the pages of their newspapers. The *National Intelligencer's* coverage in early December set the tone with its proclamations that never in peacetime had Congress met "under circumstances of deeper responsibility," nor had "the eyes of the people been fixed upon them with more intense attention." The newspaper counted the bill for admitting Missouri territory into the Union as the most important issue of the session.²⁰

Throughout the session, articles in the *Intelligencer* and southern newspapers echoed the theme that the Missouri debate had excited great interest and aroused the emotions of the legislators and the nation at large. Several articles appeared pointing out the amount of attention Congress devoted to the question. A letter to the editor of the *Richmond Enquirer* expressed that the Missouri controversy seemed to excite more attention than any other. Another letter in the *Enquirer*, from a member of Congress to a friend in the Virginia legislature, declared that Missouri engrossed Congress' whole attention and that other issues were almost forgotten. The *Intelligencer* also lamented that the topic continued to consume the attention of both houses so entirely that Congress ignored all other legislative objects. Furthermore, so many members of the House left their post to hear the Senate debates that the House at one point had no quorum.²¹

The issue drew widespread interest from the general public as well. In a widely reprinted article, the *National Intelligencer* of January 14 proclaimed that the galleries and lobbies of Congress never were more crowded. The *Intelligencer* declared the scene "rendered the

more interesting by the great number of ladies, whom we were glad to see admitted to the floor.” An item in the *Enquirer*, reprinted from the *Georgetown Messenger*, also commented on the number of ladies, “apparently of the highest rank,” that had encircled the lobby.²²

Covering the Debates

As the debates got underway, the *National Intelligencer* provided the quickest and most thorough coverage, publishing next-day summaries of the proceedings in each house. From mid-January to mid-February, it supplemented its daily recaps with detailed accounts of the debates in the Senate, followed by detailed accounts of the debates in the House from mid-February to mid-March. Whereas the daily recaps offered up-to-date information on the status of the controversy, the detailed, verbatim publication of speeches ran up to a month behind. The *Intelligencer's* editors expressed their intent to publish “a pretty copious report” on the debate, but feared that they would not be able to publish all of it because it had gone on for so long. Clearly the *Enquirer* and *Courier* depended on the *Intelligencer* for coverage of the debate; both published the *Intelligencer's* intents and fears in their papers. *Niles' Weekly Register* also continued publishing a detailed account of the debates long after the issue was settled. On March 11, its editor expressed intent to “proceed leisurely” in recording the speeches on the topic, to be interrupted only when more timely issues arose.²³

All of the southern newspapers relied heavily on the *Intelligencer* for congressional reports. As in the debates of the previous session, the *Richmond Enquirer*, *Georgia Journal*, *Knoxville Register*, and *Star, and North Carolina State Gazette* picked up the *Intelligencer's* lengthy descriptions. The Richmond paper generally stayed within a week behind the *Intelligencer*. The lag time ranged from two to four weeks in the other papers. Generally, important news on the status of the controversy appeared within two weeks of publication in the *Intelligencer*, whereas detailed accounts of the debates sometimes took longer to find space on southern newspapers' pages. Most southern newspapers ignored *Niles'* coverage, which included weekly congressional reports and commentary by its editor, Hezekiah Niles. The *Enquirer* engaged in some banter with Niles during the controversy, but never reprinted his articles.

In each of the southern papers, congressional reports during the

Missouri crisis often began on the front page and extended onto the second and sometimes even the third page. In addition, more and more of the newspapers' front pages—generally reserved for advertisements—were consumed by congressional coverage as the debate wore on. Editorial comment in each of these sheets justified front-page coverage as a space issue. They apologized to businesses for bumping their advertisements and explained that the overabundance of news from the Capitol necessitated use of advertising space.

The *Charleston Courier* seldom ran lengthy congressional reports, opting instead for short summaries. The *Courier* only borrowed the *Intelligencer's* detailed descriptions to relay the yeas and nays on important votes and to recount particularly important speeches. The *Courier* usually published reports within a week of their appearance in the *Intelligencer* but occasionally lagged as far as three weeks. The *Mississippi State Gazette* ran no congressional reports. Its sparse coverage of the controversy consisted entirely of editorials clipped from the *Intelligencer* and *Richmond Enquirer*, usually running several weeks behind.

The *Intelligencer*, *Enquirer*, and frequently supplemented their congressional coverage with editorial comment on the issues. Five of the studied southern papers (*Mississippi State Gazette* excluded) also published letters from readers and correspondents. The *Intelligencer* shied away from outside comment on the controversy, asserting that argumentative essays would only “exasperate into enmity what is now a mere difference of opinion.”²⁴

In addition to, and occasionally instead of, printing the full text of speeches, the newspapers often offered comments on the orations. The two-day speech of William Pinkney of Maryland, arguing against the restriction on slavery, received the most attention. The *Enquirer* published articles from the *Baltimore Patriot* and the *Georgetown Messenger*, describing the excitement in Congress as even greater than usual on the days that Pinkney spoke and praising the senator's eloquence and argument. The *Charleston Courier* and *Georgia Journal* also published articles lauding the speech. The *Intelligencer* apologized that its reporter was indisposed for Pinkney's orations and requested assistance in reconstructing them. The *Enquirer* and *Courier* both reprinted the *Intelligencer's* apology, alongside letters summarizing Pinkney's arguments and extolling their virtues. That the southern newspapers lauded the orator who best echoed their

principles is not surprising. Nor is the negative reaction of the anti-slavery *Niles' Register*, which marveled at the "lawless censure heaped upon Mr. Pinkney," and offered an antidote, by way of a letter that called Pinkney "an orator puffed up with vanity" and his arguments common place. The speeches of Henry Clay of Kentucky, James Barbour of Virginia, and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania also warranted some attention, but none were as widely recognized as Pinkney's.²⁵

In the southern papers, perceptions of the speeches frequently appeared via letters from Washington. Such correspondence provided other insights as well. As the Missouri debate got underway, the *Enquirer* published a letter proclaiming certainty that the Senate would pass the Missouri bill without the slave restriction, but the outcome was "more than doubtful" in the House. Washington letters published in the *Knoxville Register* expressed the same belief, including one that suggested the non-slaveholding states looked to improve not the condition of the slaves but their own political positions.²⁶

Short updates on the proceedings, separate from the congressional reports, also appeared frequently. One of the most widely reprinted updates appeared in the *Intelligencer* on February 2, declaring that the Senate had denied Congress's right to impose restrictions on Missouri. Three weeks later, the *Intelligencer* announced that the House refused to consider Maine and Missouri in one bill and expressed doubt that any Missouri bill would be passed before the session closed. The *Intelligencer* reiterated its fears on February 29, in an update reporting that the two houses would confer in an attempt to reach an amicable resolution. A postscript in the same issue reported the committee finished with the bill and promised to recount the proceedings fully in a later issue.²⁷

The first week of March, updates appeared in the *Intelligencer* nearly every day. A short item on March 1 reported that the house sat for nine hours of "laborious discussion," resisting many motions to adjourn, before ordering the Missouri bill to be engrossed with the slavery restriction. A March 2 update lamented that the house had passed the bill with restrictions but expressed hope of its being ultimately adjusted to please both parties and "tranquelize the present ferment of the public mind." On March 3, the *Intelligencer* offered hearty congratulations to its readers and fellow citizens in general that the Missouri question was settled, and that Missouri was admitted without restrictions. The article

declared the trial passed and hoped for “harmony and conciliation on all sides.” A few days later, an article appeared expressing relief that the controversy had subsided and Congress could move on to other things. Finally, the *Intelligencer* reported the Missouri bill signed into law, and the people of the Missouri territory “thus relieved from a state of suspense in which the people of the United States largely have generally participated.” Southern newspapers clipped many of these updates and similar items from the *Washington City Gazette* and *Georgetown Messenger*.²⁸

Reactions North and South

Agitation became evident in the northern states during the intervening months between the close of the Fifteenth and the opening of the Sixteenth Congress, as cities and towns called public meetings regarding the potential for slavery’s extension beyond the Mississippi River. Not until Congress resumed, however, did the southern newspapers cover these proceedings. In addition, the *Intelligencer* and southern press reprinted articles from northern newspapers on the controversy, often accompanied by editorial comment in response.

Coverage of political meetings in northern towns demonstrated that local proceedings on the Missouri question generated just as much interest as the congressional debates. A short item reprinted from the *Boston Centinel* described the large crowd at a town meeting, including the “circle of ladies, who appeared to take a lively interest in a subject in which the rights of humanity are so deeply involved.” Resolutions passed at proceedings throughout Pennsylvania and New England proclaimed slavery to be “contrary to the spirit of our republican institutions” and declared its extension “undesirable for the general good of the nation.” The legislatures of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey took the official step of recommending that their delegates in Washington oppose the introduction of slavery into new states. The New York legislature went so far as to instruct their senators and representatives to vote for restrictions of slavery, thus, according to the *Enquirer*, “pitching the bar farther than they had a right to do.”²⁹

Although most meetings were peaceful demonstrations, others were violent. The *Enquirer* and the *Mississippi State Gazette* clipped items from Connecticut papers regarding retaliation against a congressman from that state who voted in favor of the Compromise of 1820, burning him

in effigy next to a banner that read, “Lanham and Slavery.” Although the editor of the *Hartford Times* disagreed with Lanham’s vote, he regretted the community’s actions and suggested that if Lanham had disgraced his constituents, “the people can apply the remedy at the election, by selecting rulers of more principle, capacity, and independence.”³⁰

Many of the newspaper articles reprinted in the *Intelligencer* and the southern press came from newspapers in Maine, whose fate became intertwined with Missouri’s. Maine editors regretted that the bills had been combined and questioned the justice of being dragged into such an uncertain and volatile situation. They encouraged their representatives to take any steps necessary to secure their state’s admission. Newspapers in Maine’s parent state, Massachusetts, weighed in on the situation as well. A *Boston Centinel* article, reprinted in the *Charleston Courier*, chastised “the bartering system of legislation in Washington” for trampling Maine’s rights. *Niles’ Register* also took Maine’s side, advocating the separation of the Maine and Missouri bills and expressing embarrassment at the Senate’s actions.³¹

Known as the “restrictionists,” editors promoting the restriction of slavery in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia published several articles not only advocating their point of view but also attacking those who opposed it. The *Enquirer* succinctly summarized the restrictionists’ response to the Compromise’s passage, declaring, “As far as the press is an index to the public mind, the Missouri Compromise seems to have given more dissatisfaction to the North than to the South.” Ritchie quoted bitter denunciations from the *New York Evening Post*, *New York Daily Advertiser*, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, and *Philadelphia National Recorder*, including declarations that the rights of the free states had been revoked. An *Intelligencer* report on how the resolution of the Missouri question had been received declared the lamentation of the restrictionist newspapers to be “directly adverse to the best interests of the country.” Niles agreed, proclaiming that although he abhorred slavery and believed Congress had the right to restrict it, he thought compromise would restore national harmony.³²

Although the restrictionist papers attacked their congressional delegation following the Compromise, their targets during the debates consisted of southerners in general and Virginians in particular. The barbs pointed at Virginia came partially in response to resolutions passed in

the state's house of delegates, declaring Virginia's intent to unite with the people of Missouri and resist Congress' attempt to restrict slavery. *Niles' Weekly Register* chastised the Virginia legislature and the *Enquirer's* support of its actions. In general, Niles admonished the southern press for its "very singular and rude insinuations" made against the restrictionists, "as if they were influenced rather by party than by principle." A moderate restrictionist himself, Niles agreed with the resolutions passed at northern meetings, which he described as "free expressions of opinion and nothing more." Conversely, he called Virginia's editorials "ill-advised... calculated to provoke opposition, and bring about the worst of calamities."³³

The *Intelligencer* provided other examples of editorials against the southern states. When the Rhode Island American declared slavery restriction to be the Christian path and extension to be Pagan, the *Intelligencer* protested against the attempt to "excite new prejudices" against the South and speculated that the writer had sinister motives. The *Intelligencer* attributed a similar intent to the editor of the *New York Daily Advertiser*, which recently had declared an urgent need for "ascendancy of the free states." The *Intelligencer* cautioned that if the differences between regions were "pushed to such an extreme as to render the distinction permanent, it will lead to evils which we cannot contemplate without horror."³⁴

Just as the *Intelligencer* admonished northern newspapers that aroused sectionalism, it praised those that took a moderate tone. A short item paraphrasing an article from the Portland (Me.) *Eastern Argus* declared it "gratifying to find in that paper, the *Boston Patriot*, and one or two other eastern papers of high character, just statements, and a proper temper on this subject." Several moderate articles from the *Boston Patriot* appeared in the *Richmond Enquirer*. The *Patriot* admonished the Massachusetts legislature for its "unwarrantable interference with the prerogatives of Congress" and worried that its resolutions would "weaken the bonds of our national union." The *Patriot* also recommended compromise to prevent a civil war. A letter from "A Friend of the Union" to the *Patriot* noted that all sides of the Missouri question saw their solution resulting in the amelioration of the slaves' condition, and concluded that the more rational method would be to spread them over a larger space by allowing slavery in Missouri. The *Patriot's* editor agreed with the writer on the propriety of admitting Missouri on her terms,

“rather than exposing the Union to the dangers of internal commotion.”³⁵

Despite the appearance of some moderate articles, southern editors generally found northern newspapers offensive to their principles. The *Georgia Journal* responded to the restrictionist meetings and articles by declaring that they excited feelings destructive to harmony. The *Enquirer* questioned the expediency of eastern citizens enforcing their principles by pressing southerners to violate the Constitution. Another essay in the *Enquirer* questioned the motives of the eastern states, positing that they consisted of a desire to control the Union. An *Enquirer* writer begged the people of Virginia not to yield to “panic language” from eastern states and encouraged Virginians to hold firm to their rights. The *Journal* made a similar plea to the people of Georgia, calling on them to counteract northern meetings with their own and resist encroachments on their rights and property.³⁶

So many able writers submitted essays on the Missouri question to the *Enquirer* that Ritchie proclaimed anyone who decided to compile a book on the subject could find no finer contributions than what his essayists had produced. A series of seven lengthy essays by “An American” appeared in the *Enquirer* from 29 December 1819 to 20 January 1820, responding to the speeches of New York Congressman Rufus King regarding the slavery restriction. The writer addressed in turn the constitutionality, adherence to the Louisiana Purchase treaty, and expediency of restriction, which he called “unjust and cruel.” Two days after An American’s final essay, “A Southron” took up the cause in a series of essays, echoing An American’s belief that Congress did not have the right to impose restrictions and charging Virginia with defending the rights of the states. “Virginius” contributed several letters to the *Enquirer* as well, declaring the Missouri question extraordinary because the two houses had come to opposite conclusions and because it had become a battle for sectional power. The writer also asserted that if the restrictionists aimed to ameliorate the condition of the slaves, penning them into the South would achieve the opposite.³⁷

Ritchie’s own views throughout the debates occasionally clashed with Niles and his *Register*. Responding to Niles’ position on slavery and restriction, Ritchie declared, “Mr. Niles should never stickle again for the Constitution when he abandons it on the Missouri question.” Niles replied to the diatribe by expressing general respect for Ritchie’s opinions,

but greater respect for his own. Ritchie further insulted Niles when his remarks prefacing the proceedings of the Virginia legislature on the Missouri question invited Niles and others who had “carped and caviled so much at the resolutions of the house of delegates” to “read the argument carefully, and answer it if they can.” Niles defended his stance on the Virginia resolutions, proclaiming his comments to be “done without carping or caviling and in a manner which ought to offend nobody whose good will is worth having.”³⁸

Most of Ritchie’s editorials appeared in reaction to the proposed compromise. The *Enquirer* voiced indignant disapproval of the measure, calling it a compromise with the Constitution. This reaction caught the attention of other newspapers. Niles briefly sketched Ritchie’s feelings but declined to comment on them, proclaiming that he respected Ritchie’s opinion even though it differed from his own. The *Intelligencer* mentioned the *Enquirer*’s position in a report on the general excitement among Virginians on the compromise, which the *Georgetown Messenger* described as “being more violent, and more extensive than on any occasion in recent history.” The *Enquirer* reprinted the *Intelligencer* and *Messenger* articles, along with an editorial expressing no regret for the comments and continued belief that compromise was not in the best interest of Virginia. Following the compromise’s passage, the *Enquirer* lamented that the Constitution had been “warped from its legitimate bearings” and professed an inability to recollect having tasted “of a bitterer cup.”³⁹

The *Georgia Journal* published a similar reaction. Its editors had condemned “the bold stand taken by Virginia as overstepping the bounds of discretion,” due to a belief that Congress had too much good sense, patriotism, and dignity to “permit the adoption of measures that tend so directly to endanger the safety of the union of these states.” The *Journal* sided with the *Enquirer*, however, after the actions of some legislators made it clear that their objective was political power.⁴⁰

At the conclusion of the 1820 crisis, the *Enquirer* published a letter from Alcibiades, declaring that many years must pass before the harmony was restored which the “fatal question unhappily interrupted.”⁴¹ Little did he know that another fatal question would arise when Congress reconvened the following winter.

Once More, Without Feeling: The Sixteenth Congress and the Second Missouri Compromise, Winter, 1820-1821

After receiving the go-ahead from Congress in March of 1820, Missouri drafted its state constitution, which included a clause to prohibit the immigration of free blacks and mulattoes into the state. That article brought Missouri back into the spotlight as the Sixteenth Congress convened for its second session in December of 1820. Although several other states had similar provisions in their state constitutions, both houses believed Missouri's article to be contrary to the federal Constitution. The two houses disagreed, however, as to how to handle the situation.

The Senate passed a resolution admitting Missouri with an objection to the clause, whereas the House refused to grant statehood under the state constitution Missouri had created. The deadlocked Congress continued debates from December of 1820 through February of 1821. Finally, Henry Clay engineered a second compromise by way of a joint Senate-House Committee, which recommended that Missouri be admitted to the Union on equal footing with the original states, on the condition that the state constitution did not conflict with the federal Constitution. If Missouri assented to the condition by the end of November, the president would announce admission by proclamation. The two houses voted swiftly in favor of the resolutions, and Missouri assented as required. President James Monroe signed the proclamation admitting the state on 10 August 1821, officially laying the controversy to rest.⁴²

The *Intelligencer* continued its loyal coverage, providing next-day accounts of congressional proceedings, frequent separate updates on important actions, and editorial comment. As the debates began in early December, the *Intelligencer* immediately published one entire speech from each side of the question to present "a tolerably fair view of the arguments," and promised to publish summaries of the remainder of the debate.⁴³

The southern newspapers provided occasional congressional reports and updates from the *Intelligencer*, but they did not follow the debates to the extent that they had in the previous session. What material from the *Intelligencer* they did reprint appeared within two weeks of the original publication, perhaps due to the fact that there was less material to keep up with because far fewer essays and letters poured in on the subject. The

southern press reprinted little from the other Washington papers, either, clipping from the *City Gazette* and *Messenger* only after major events. Reprinting of material from the *Enquirer*, however, increased. The *Journal* carried fewer original editorials during this debate than it had the previous winter. The *Mississippi State Gazette* ignored the proceedings altogether, acknowledging it only in an article from Washington on March 31 that declared the Missouri debate to have pushed the Bankrupt Bill “too near the verge of the session to finally be acted on.”⁴⁴

Comments in the *Intelligencer* suggested that the debates were less heated than they had been in the previous session. The *Intelligencer's* editors commented on the decorum and dignity with which both houses conducted this Missouri debate, and a letter published in the *Knoxville Register* proclaimed the question to be “in a shape not so dangerous to the peace of the country.” However calm the debate may have been, it certainly took up as much of Congress’ time as the previous one had, as evidenced by comments in the *Intelligencer* about the question’s “all-pervading influence” and its possession of the House’s whole attention. *Niles’ Register* also predicted that nothing important would be transacted until Congress decided on the Missouri constitution. As the session drew to a close, Niles proclaimed that the distracting question had kept Congress from other important subjects, to the point that no recent Congress “contributed less to an advancement of the public interest or the promotion of private prosperity.”⁴⁵

Other articles revealed more drama than the *Intelligencer* and *Knoxville Register* professed, and evidenced the sectional strife that continued both in Congress and the northern states. All except three of these items appeared first in the *Enquirer* and later found their way into other southern newspapers. The newspapers cited articles in the northern press that were volatile toward the South and admonished them for riling a spirit of disunion. Ritchie also accused Congress of exciting sectional feelings and trampling on Missouri’s rights. The *Enquirer* published an item from the *Washington City Gazette* declaring the Missouri Compromise at an end, and that “nothing short of the slave restriction ought to satisfy the members of Congress.” Letters from the St. Louis *Enquirer* and Missouri’s delegates in Washington accused the restrictionists of attempting to divide the Union, and another letter from Washington called on the delegates of the South to maintain their devotion to public good.⁴⁶ The

firm states' rights stand and dramatic nature of the items that appeared in the *Enquirer*, when compared to the generally moderate accounts in the *Intelligencer*, likely account for the southern papers' increased reprinting of items from the Richmond paper.

Weariness of the subject explains the dearth of debate coverage southern newspapers reprinted from the national press. The *Georgia Journal* declared the "dreaded subject of Missouri" to be carrying on endlessly in the House, and the *Charleston Courier* called it "this never-ending subject." *Niles' Register* averred that so much had been written on Missouri that people were "displeased with the mere sight of the words in print, and few are willing to read much more." Even the *Intelligencer* seemed to grow tired of the debate. Its editors declared in mid-January that they had hoped the Missouri question would have been settled by then. By mid-February, they seemed exasperated, proclaiming to have entertained "the soul inspiring hope that we should have had it in our power this morning to congratulate our readers on the prospect of a settlement of this distracting question."⁴⁷

Newspapers' response to Congress's position on the free black clause varied. The *Intelligencer* argued that the bill would have passed easily without the "obnoxious" clause and urged Missouri to expunge it so that the shortest course would be taken to resolution. The *Journal* also lobbied for removal of the clause, but for the selfish reason of creating an outlet for the emigration of free blacks from Georgia. On the other hand, the *Enquirer* and *Knoxville Register* declared that as a sovereign state, Missouri had every right to include the clause, and that Congress had no constitutional right to make her change it.⁴⁸

The report of the joint committee that recommended compromise was the most-covered event over the course of the renewed controversy. On February 23, the *Intelligencer* declared that Clay had "made another attempt to untie the Gordian knot into which the Missouri controversy has been woven." Four days later, the *Intelligencer* congratulated its readers that the question was "in a fair way of being settled" following the committee's report. The *Intelligencer* posited that the result would be generally agreeable. Conversely, *Niles* proclaimed the compromise to have pleased no one and predicted that Missouri would refuse the condition. The *Intelligencer's* articles were widely reprinted in southern newspapers. The southern press also reprinted items from the *Washington City Gazette*

and *Georgetown Messenger* on the report, but continued to ignore *Niles' Register*.⁴⁹

The *Richmond Enquirer* reprinted heavily from the *Intelligencer* in the final weeks of the debate, while Ritchie himself became strangely quiet on the issue. He published two final *Intelligencer* articles on the matter March 3: one from February 28 proclaiming the Missouri question “happily settled” following passage of the bill and expressing trust that the issue would never again make an appearance, and one from March 1 declaring the relief evident in Washington following the issue’s settlement. The *Charleston Courier* reprinted the latter article on March 9. After that, the southern press fell completely silent on the Missouri issue.⁵⁰

Of the southern newspapers, only two acknowledged the president’s proclamation admitting Missouri to statehood in August, each publishing the proclamation verbatim, with no editorial comment on the matter.⁵¹ Thus, the Missouri issue was laid to rest just as quietly as it had emerged, nearly three years earlier.

Conclusion

It is clear from this exploratory study of six southern and two national newspapers that the Missouri Compromise contributed to an emerging sectionalism, and that the newspapers provided a forum for discussion on the matter. Although southern newspapers of the early nineteenth century relied heavily on Washington newspapers for important political news, the southern press used a variety of other sources, including clips from northern and other southern newspapers, essays and letters, and in more cases than expected, their own editorials to provide complete coverage of both the legislative action and nationwide response to activity in Washington. Their selection of sources, including which national publications they turned to for political news, is indicative of editorial position. It also offers a glimpse into the general mind of the South. The early antebellum southern press ultimately provides evidence for the widening chasm between North and South and the vilification of each side by the other.

What was the nature of southern news coverage of the Missouri controversy? The coverage of Congress in the six southern newspapers studied consisted not only of lengthy congressional reports, short

updates, and editorials from the *National Intelligencer*, but also occasional summaries from the *Washington City Gazette* and *Georgetown Messenger*, and letters from friends and correspondents in Washington. *Niles' Weekly Register* also published such items, but the southern papers did not reprint them. The *Richmond Enquirer* did, however, occasionally comment on Niles' position. Ritchie's comments and the pro-northern/anti-slavery sentiments in the supposedly national journal demonstrate that Niles stood in opposition to southern principles. This opposition likely accounts for most southern papers' avoidance of Niles' items and the *Enquirer's* arguments with them. Conversely, the *National Intelligencer* took a moderate approach, advocating compromise and harmony among the sections. Furthermore, the *Intelligencer's* southern editors admonished northern newspapers for their volatile attitude while tolerating reciprocal treatment in the southern press. Southern newspapers thus had obvious reasons beyond thorough congressional coverage for relying heavily on the *Intelligencer*.

Reprinted articles from northern newspapers provided coverage of state and local political meetings, as well as evidence of volatile feelings toward the South by some northerners. Essays and letters from local writers appeared often in the *Richmond Enquirer*, and occasionally in the other southern newspapers, which offered the southern point of view. Southern editors contributed personal comment as well. Ritchie's pen was most prolific, and his comments often were reprinted in the other southern newspapers. However, the *Georgia Journal* and, to a lesser extent, the *Knoxville Register* also offered editorials. The *Charleston Courier* and *Star*, and *North Carolina Gazette* stayed true to their editors' vows of impartiality, producing no original material. They merely documented the events, keeping readers abreast of the controversy via reprinted articles and letters. The small frontier *Mississippi State Gazette* published little on the issue, obtaining its rare articles from the Washington and Richmond exchange papers.

What position did southerners take in the debate through the newspapers? Editors of the southern newspapers studied, with the exception of the *Richmond Enquirer* and *Georgia Journal*, offered little to no original editorial comment. Their selection of materials from other newspapers as well as the local essays and letters they published, however, reveal much about the southern position. Love of the Union and fear

for its safety are apparent. So is a desire for strict adherence to the Constitution, although southerners interpreted its tenets differently than northerners did.

The most vocal editors and other southerners whose writings appeared in the newspapers disliked the principle of slavery, blaming its existence on their ancestors. However, they promoted its spread both because of its benefits for agricultural advancement and for the detriment to the South and slave population that would result from confining slavery to a small region. They also saw the restriction of slavery as a states' rights issue, both in terms of southerners' ability to move west with their slave property, and in terms Missouri's sovereignty. Furthermore, they saw the restrictionists as power-hungry politicians who aimed to sway control of the Union in favor of the free states.

Debate over the Missouri compromises certainly contributed to the sectionalism that would only grow in the forty years between Missouri's bid for statehood and the start of the Civil War. In the mind of the southern writers, northerners were to blame for the rift. They perceived northern restrictionists as subverting the Constitution, threatening the harmony of the Union, and seeking to oppress the slaveholding states. In the mind of the southern writers, southerners alone could be counted on to defend the Constitution, the Union, and their own rights.

Endnotes

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- ² Gerald J. Baldasty, “The Charleston, South Carolina, Press and National News, 1808-47,” *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (1978): 519-526; Donald Lewis Shaw, “News about Slavery from 1820-1860 in Newspapers of the South, North, and West,” *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (1984): 483-492.
- ³ There are numerous biographies treating editors of antebellum southern newspapers. Among them are Ellis Merton Coulter, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); William C. Davis, *Rhett: The Turbulent Life and Times of a Fire-Eater* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); and William P. Trent, *William Gilmore Simms* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892).
- ⁴ Charles Henry Ambler, *Thomas Ritchie: A Study in Virginia Politics* (Richmond: Bell Book & Stationary Co., 1913); Moore, *Missouri Controversy*; Carl R. Osthaus, *Partisans of the Southern Press: Editorial Spokesmen of the Nineteenth Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).
- ⁵ Moore, *Missouri Controversy*.
- ⁶ One newspaper was selected from each of the states that a) had been admitted to statehood by the time of Missouri’s petition and b) later passed an Ordinance of Secession. Only newspapers for which issues could be located from the entire period of study were selected. No such newspaper was found from Louisiana. When more than one newspaper was located for a state, the newspaper with the highest circulation during the time of study was selected.
- ⁷ The end date of 30 September 1821 was selected to allow six weeks’ lag time for newspapers to report on the president’s proclamation admitting Missouri to statehood.
- ⁸ William L. King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S. C.* (Charleston: Edward Perry Book Press, 1872), 97.
- ⁹ William Rule, *Standard History of Knoxville Tennessee*, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co, 1900), 314-315.

- ¹⁰ Terry Alford, "Unbroken in Body and Mind," chapter 5 in *Prince Among Slaves*, (1977; reprint ed., Oxford University Press US, 1986); see the prospectus for Marschalk's Washington Republican, 13 April 1813, for an indication of his views on the purpose of newspapers.
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- ¹² Guion Griffis Johnson, "The Newspaper and Periodical Press," chapter 25 in *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 1937).
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- ¹⁶ *National Intelligencer*, 20 February 1819, p. 3 (Reprinted in *Charleston Courier*, 1 March 1819, p. 3; *Knoxville Register*, 9 March 1819, p. 2; *Mississippi State Gazette*, 20 March 1819, p. 3).
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- ¹⁸ *Annals of Congress*, 16 Cong., 1 Sess., 841, 363, 428-30.
- ¹⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1455-57, 1540, 457, 1553-55, 459, 1558, 1572-73, 467-69, 1576-77, 1587-90.
- ²⁰ *National Intelligencer*, 6 December 1819, p. 2; *National Intelligencer*, 10 December 1819, p. 2.
- ²¹ *Richmond Enquirer*, 11 January 1820, p. 3; *Richmond Enquirer*, 18 January 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Georgia Journal*, 7 March 1820, p. 2); *National Intelligencer*, 29 January 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Charleston Courier*, 5 February 1820, p. 2; *Knoxville Register*, 15 February 1820, p. 2); *National Intelligencer*, 22 January 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 25 January 1820, p. 2).
- ²² *National Intelligencer*, 14 January 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in *Charleston Courier*, 21 January 1820, p. 2, *Knoxville Register*, 1 February 1820, p. 3; *Georgia Journal*, 1 February 1820, p. 3); *National Intelligencer*, 22 January 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 25 Jan. 1820, p. 2); *Richmond Enquirer*, 29 January 1820, p. 2; see also *Charleston Courier*, 23 December 1819, p. 2; *Richmond Enquirer*, 22 January 1820, p. 3.

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- ²⁵ *Richmond Enquirer*, two articles, 29 January 1820, p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, 31 January 1820, p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, 1 February 1820, p. 2; *Georgia Journal*, 8 February 1820, p. 3; *National Intelligencer*, 14 February 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in *Richmond Enquirer*, 17 February 1820, p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, 21 February 1820, p. 2); *Niles' Weekly Register*, 12 February 1820, p. 415; *Star, and North Carolina State Gazette*, 11 February 1820, p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, 16 February 1820, p. 3; *National Intelligencer*, 11 February 1820, p. 2 (Reprinted in the *Star, and North Carolina State Gazette*, 18 February 1820, p. 3; *Charleston Courier*, 18 February 1820, p. 2).
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- ²⁷ *National Intelligencer*, 2 February 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 5 February 1820, p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, 10 February 1820, p. 2; *Knoxville Register*, 15 February 1820, p. 3; *Mississippi State Gazette*, 26 February 1820, p. 3); *National Intelligencer*, 24 February 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Charleston Courier*, 2 March 1820, p. 2; *Knoxville Register*, 7 March 1820, p. 2); *National Intelligencer*, 29 February 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 3 March 1820, p. 3); "Postscript," *National Intelligencer*, 29 February 1820, p. 3 (Reprinted in the *Charleston Courier*, 7 March 1820, p. 2).
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- ³⁰ *Richmond Enquirer*, 7 March 1820, p. 4; *Mississippi State Gazette*, 25 March 1820, p. 3; *Niles' Weekly Register* (26 February 1820, p. 441) paraphrased the article but did not attribute its source.
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- ³⁷ *Richmond Enquirer*, 25 January 1820, p. 3; 29 December 1819, p. 2-3; 1 January 1820, p. 2; 4 January 1820, p. 3; 8 January 1820, p. 3; 13 January 1820, p. 3; 15 January 1820, p. 2; 18 January 1820, p. 3; 20 January 1820, p. 3; 22 January 1820, p. 3; 3 February 1820, p. 2-3, 8 February 1820, p. 3; 22 February 1820, p. 3.
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- ⁴⁰ *Georgia Journal*, 7 March 1820, p. 2; *Georgia Journal*, 14 March 1820, p. 1.
- ⁴¹ *Richmond Enquirer*, 10 March 1820, p. 3.
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- ⁴³ *National Intelligencer*, 8 December 1820, p. 3.
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Contagion from Abroad: U.S. Newspaper Framings of Immigrants and Epidemics, 1891 to 1893

Harriet Moore

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the landscape of immigration changed. With a rash of deadly epidemics, sometimes traced to incoming ships from Europe and Asia, immigrants became associated with contagion. Also, immigration policies became more restrictive through the Immigration Act of 1891, the opening of Ellis Island as a port of entry in 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, the New York City Epidemics of 1892, the National Quarantine Act of 1893, and the rise of the Nativist movement (antipathy toward aliens, their institutions, and their ideas). These factors affected the immigration experience as well as press coverage of the issues. Much of the historical literature of press framing of immigration focuses on economics, labor, legislation, and public policy. This article examines the press framing of immigrants and immigration issues specifically within the context of epidemics in 115 articles from newspapers from 1891 to 1893.

With the danger of cholera in question, it is plain to see that the United States would be better off if ignorant Russian Jews and Hungarians were denied refuge here. These people are offensive enough at best; under the present circumstances they are a positive menace to the health of this country. Even should they pass the quarantine officials, their mode of life when they settle down makes them always a source of danger. Cholera, it must be remembered, originates in the homes of human riffraff.¹

- Excerpt from a lead article of the *New York Times*, 29 August 1892.

In the late nineteenth century, immigrants became associated with deadly epidemics, such as cholera,² smallpox,³ typhus,⁴ and leprosy.^{5,6} Because many immigrants lived in poor conditions or arrived from far away ports known for having epidemic outbreaks, America's newcomers often took the blame for epidemic diseases. The term "immigrant" became synonymous with "contagion." The above excerpt from a lead *New York Times* article illustrates a typical depiction of immigrants and epidemics in U.S. newspapers in the 1890s.

This research examines American newspaper framing of immigrants and epidemics in 115 articles, from 1891 to 1893. The articles came from the following eight American newspapers: the *New York Times*, *Boston Daily Globe*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Daily Inter Ocean-Chicago*, *Galveston Daily News*, *Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, *San Francisco Bulletin*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. These newspapers represent the North, South, East, and Western regions of the United States, also the locations of the four major U.S. entry points with immigration inspection stations – Ellis Island in the East (New York); Angel Island in the West (San Francisco); the Canadian/Michigan border in the North; and the Texas/Mexico border in the South.⁷

The concepts of framing theory are important to understanding the manner in which the newspapers framed immigration and epidemics. Framing can be an organizing device that can help journalists present information in ways that give salience to some news and events over others. For Entman, framing as an organizing device essentially involves "selection and salience – to frame is to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in a communicating texts."⁸ And some research indicates that negatively framed messages may have a greater impact on judgments than positively framed messages, and messages emphasizing losses may be more persuasive than those emphasizing gains due to action. Negative messages may be perceived as more "important, salient, vivid, fear-inducing, and/or consequential" in comparison to positive frames.⁹ Thus a detailed analysis of the various framing techniques is important. Considering these framing devices is important in understanding how the newspapers framed immigrant issues in the context of epidemics in the 1890s.

Immigration and Epidemics in the Nineteenth Century

The first major wave of immigrants, mostly from England to the United States, began early in the seventeenth century and ended around 1820. They totaled no more than 100,000.¹⁰ The second wave began around 1820 and ended in 1880. During this period, most immigrants came from Germany, Scotland and Ireland, totaling 10 million.¹¹ From 1880 to 1930, the third major wave brought 27 million immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia, and Mexico, marking a shift from “old” to “new” immigrants.¹²

In order to distinguish the new arrivals from Europe and Asia in the 1880s from earlier migrations of the English, Scottish, and Irish, many American commentators began to make distinctions between “old” and “new” immigrants.¹³ These new arrivals looked different and exhibited cultural values that were distinct from those of the old immigrants.¹⁴ These striking differences further divided the old and the new, and heightened the growing anti-immigrant sentiment of the late nineteenth century.

The number of immigrants who came to the United States increased sharply in the 1880s with the advent of steamships that reduced travel time. In the thirty-year period from 1870 to 1900, the population of the United States had doubled to 76 million.¹⁵ Between 1885 and 1898, 6 million people came to the United States from Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe.¹⁶ As newcomers flocked to American cities, many Americans became alarmed over increased immigration because they feared newcomers would take their jobs, spread anti-American rhetoric, and spread contagious diseases.¹⁷ Immigration became a divisive issue, galvanized by economics, politics, and public health.¹⁸ These changes coincided with what Frederick Jackson Turner later considered the “closing of the American frontier in 1890, and the end of the optimistic view of America’s future.”¹⁹

Anti-immigrant sentiment had been prevalent in the United States since at least the 1840s and epidemic outbreaks exacerbated America’s fear of newcomers. Many argued that America should “close its doors” to new immigrants. As new arrivals came, sometimes ships carrying people with cholera, typhus and smallpox from foreign ports disembarked in New York or San Francisco. In several cases in the 1890s, new arrivals suspected of bringing epidemics from Europe flocked to cities throughout the country.²⁰ These illnesses had been a public health problem prior to the influx of

immigrants, but newcomers often took the blame. Advances in scientific knowledge of disease transmission coincided with these viewpoints.

Between 1870 and 1900, remarkable advances in scientific knowledge changed the understanding of contagious disease transmission. Before the nineteenth century, the concept of a contagion, a bacterium or a virus that causes a contagious (communicable) disease,²¹ was not a widely accepted theory in the medical community. But the concept of bacteriology, the branch of medical science that studies bacteria in relation to disease,²² asserted that a tiny microbe could be responsible for a devastating epidemic.²³ The development of bacteriology coincided with the modern germ theory, also called the pathogenic theory of medicine, which associates most diseases with specific entities, such as bacteria.²⁴ These discoveries exacerbated the desire to exclude foreigners based on the fear that they would spread deadly diseases.

The United States has a history of exclusion and hostility toward foreigners, dating back to the eighteenth century.²⁵ The Alien and Sedition laws passed in 1798 during the administration of John Adams bear further testimony to the hostility felt toward the alien.²⁶ Under the Alien Law, the president of the United States was invested with power to send away all such aliens as he judged dangerous to the peace and safety of the country, or had reasons to think were hatching treason or laying plots against the government.²⁷ As Roy L. Garis points out: "Historical facts thus seem to refute the contentions of the past and present advocates of unrestricted immigration that we have always welcomed the immigrant with outstretched arms."²⁸ It is important to note that in the late nineteenth century, anti-immigration sentiment was not a new idea. The exclusionary laws of the 1880s and 1890s mirrored the early ideals that immigration should be controlled.

Considered the first general immigration law, the Immigration Act of 1882 established a system of central control of immigration through state boards under the Secretary of the Treasury and broadened restrictions on immigration by adding to the classes of inadmissible aliens to include persons likely to become a public charge. The 1882 act essentially only banned polygamists and contract laborers from entering the United States, but the new provisions of the 1891 act nine years later established stricter immigration guidelines.²⁹

The Immigration Act of 1891 updated the earlier law by adding

provisions that gave the powers to the authorities to deny entry to “convicts (except those convicted of political offenses), lunatics, idiots, and person likely to become public charges,” or those suspected of having “dangerous and loathsome diseases.”³⁰ The new law also introduced a tax of fifty cents on each passenger brought to the United States³¹ that defrayed the expenses of regulating immigration and caring for immigrants. The law also made responsible commanding officers of vessels bringing immigrants to the United States to report to the officials the “name, nationality, last residence, and destination of all such aliens.”³²

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 extended the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882,³³ the only nineteenth century law to restrict a specific ethnic group. Sparked by white workers’ fears of competition from Chinese immigrants, they lobbied actively for extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act when it came up for congressional renewal in 1892.³⁴ Essentially, the law suspended immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States for ten years; permitted Chinese laborers already in the United States to remain in the country after a temporary absence; called for the deportation of Chinese illegally in the United States; barred Chinese from naturalization; and permitted the entry of Chinese students, teachers, merchants, or those “proceeding to the United States ... from curiosity.”³⁵ A person of Chinese ancestry caught without such certification was to be deported by a federal judge unless he could prove with the aid of “at least one credible white witness” that he was a resident of the United States at the time of the passage of the law and that he had not, for a valid reason, been unable to obtain the required document.³⁶

As a result of the epidemics of 1892, in 1893, The National Quarantine Act created a national system of quarantine while still permitting state-run quarantines, and codified standards for medically inspecting immigrants, ships, and cargoes, and created the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.^{37, 38} The new law gave port officials more discretion to detain newcomers as a means for preventing the spread of disease, and gave the president the authority to halt immigration if necessary.³⁹ Many newcomers suspected of having a contagious disease were quarantined under the 1893 law. The bill essentially made immigration restriction a public health policy.⁴⁰ Some scholars have argued that the nativist movement played a major role in restrictive immigration

laws of the 1890s.

The nativist movement—also known as nativism—has been historically linked to nineteenth century immigration restriction. Nativism has been defined as “every type and level of antipathy toward aliens, their institutions, and their ideas.”⁴¹ Nativism appeared long before the phrase was coined in 1840, a label given to the nativists by their critics.⁴² The movement developed in American culture in the early 1800s during the first major wave of immigration.⁴³ The movement comprised of families who had been in the United States for more than a generation and gave voice to “anti-immigrant attacks.”⁴⁴ By the 1890s, Nativism had evolved into explicit hostility towards new immigrants.⁴⁵ The hostility was sparked by Americans’ fear of losing territory⁴⁶ and an economic depression in the late 1880s that threw millions of people out of their jobs.

Communications research suggests that negative coverage in the nativist press set the tone for the creation of restrictive legislation against immigrants in the late nineteenth century,⁴⁷ and prominently featured anti-immigrant rhetoric. Other research suggests that when some members of an immigrant group may or may not have a contagious disease that can cause others to become sick, the entire group is stigmatized by medicalized Nativism, each newcomer being reduced from a “whole and unusual person to a tainted, discounted one,” because of association with disease.

In the late nineteenth century, an influx of immigrants, a division between “old” and “new” immigrants, the rise of Nativism, and a new scientific understanding of the transmission of disease led to a distrust of the foreign-born and heightened anti-immigration sentiment. New arrivals increasingly faced hostility and anger from old immigrants. Newspaper coverage of immigrants and epidemics from 1891 to 1893 mirrored these events.

Immigration and Epidemics in the Newspapers, 1891 to 1893

The winter of 1891 opened with a smallpox outbreak along the Rio Grande, close to the Texas-Mexico border in the towns of San Antonio, Austin, and El Paso. Smallpox had been a sporadic problem in this region for months.⁴⁸ Texas governor, Lawrence Sullivan Ross, declared a state of quarantine, and people could not leave cities unless they showed certificates of health.⁴⁹ Mexican immigrants, long believed to be harbingers

of smallpox because of their “filthy habits,” took the blame for the outbreak.

Newspapers in Texas and across the country reported the stories of Mexicans and smallpox. With the headline, “Vaccinating the Mexicans: Efforts to Stamp Out an Epidemic of Smallpox Along the Rio Grande,” the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that the “Mexican government will use the soldiery to compel Mexicans to ‘submit’ to vaccination if objection is made.”⁵⁰ On January 30, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that there could be “no doubt of the present visitation [smallpox] coming from Mexico.”⁵¹ The article did not, however, present any evidence to support this assertions. The newspapers portrayed Mexicans as unwilling and resistant to vaccination, framing them as criminals.

The United States also had a great deal of immigration from Mexico in the late nineteenth century. Mexicans entered with relative ease through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, many on foot. Unlike Asians, Mexicans were continuously waived from the requirements of restrictive immigration laws, because they provided cheap labor to U.S. industries in American cities in the Southwest.^{52,53} U.S.-Mexican relations remained harmonious until the Mexican Revolution in 1911, causing alarm among American officials who became concerned with the open border and the growing number of insurgents, refugees, and temporary laborers, particularly in El Paso and Laredo, Texas. They, too, suffered negative treatment in the newspapers in the context of epidemics which will also be examined in this study.

In the Southwestern United States, Mexicans had a different immigration inspection experience than that of other newcomers. Inspection stations along the U.S.-Mexico border in the late nineteenth century had no standardization of physical examinations.⁵⁴ Standardized medical tests for Mexican immigrants were not put in force until the early twentieth century.⁵⁵ Mexicans could enter the United States after they had been cleansed and disinfected, but full examinations were not required.⁵⁶ This process made entry in the United States easy, but some scholars have argued that it worked to associate Mexicans with filth and disease.⁵⁷ Part of this study will examine the depictions of Mexican immigrants in the American newspapers, particularly in newspapers and periodicals in Texas.

By the beginning of February, the smallpox scare in Texas subsided, but the issue of immigration was still at the forefront of American society

and politics. The *New York Times* described the immigrant situation as, "... evident to anybody who goes about with his eyes open that the immigrants who are now coming over in great numbers, are for the most part not desirable citizens."⁵⁸ By 1891, many Americans viewed immigration as a "problem." The *San Francisco Bulletin* called New York City a "dumping ground for the refuse of Europe," and said that San Francisco "occupies the same position as regard to the countries of Asia."⁵⁹ As anti-foreign sentiment became more widespread,⁶⁰ a call for stricter regulations resulted in the Immigration Act of 1891.

In March, President Benjamin Harrison signed the Immigration Act of 1891, replacing the earlier act of 1882. The legislation expanded the powers to the federal authorities to deny entry to "convicts (except those convicted of political offenses), lunatics, idiots, and person likely to become public charges," or those suspected of having "dangerous and loathsome diseases."⁶¹ The law sent a clear message: people with illnesses were undesirable and should be excluded from the United States. A *New York Times* article on April 1, 1891 commended the new law:

The new immigration law has been remarkably fruitful in good results during the short period it has been in operation. If, under its provisions, the work of excluding undesirable immigrants is kept up as well as it has begun, the law cannot but have the excellent affect of diverting from those shores the outcasts of Europe.⁶²

President Benjamin Harris was probably more successful in temporarily halting immigration more than any other U.S. president, before and since, using the ground of risk of infectious disease.⁶³ In the final two years of his presidency, Harrison's unsympathetic, nativistic comments about "Russian Hebrew" immigrants between 1891 to 1892 outraged the Jewish American community.⁶⁴ In his third annual address to Congress in 1891, Harrison warned that the "sudden transfer of such a multitude under conditions that strip them [Russian Hebrews] of their small accumulations and... depress their energies and courage is neither good for them nor for us."⁶⁵ In 1892, presidential administration appointees met with several prominent Jewish community members to counteract what people perceived to be White House insensitivity to the

plight of East European Jews.⁶⁶ Harrison's unsuccessful re-election platform (in which he lost to Stephen Grover Cleveland) also contained strong calls for immigration restriction of Russian Hebrews.⁶⁷

The new law contained provisions to exclude newcomers who might carry diseases, and regular depictions of "sick" immigrants appeared in the newspapers. These depictions reinforced the growing fear of foreigners and framed immigrants as dangerous carriers of disease. A *San Francisco Bulletin* article applauded the 1891 law as a solution to the "lax administration" of previous years.⁶⁸ The article also said, "The country is full of those who should have never been permitted to land.... crowding the slums of our great cities, breeding want, disease, and crime."⁶⁹ The story does not highlight what types of "diseases" the immigrants brought, but focuses on "those who should have never been permitted to land." This article illustrates how the newspapers framed immigrants using themes of inferiority, danger, and exclusion.

Senator William Eaton Chandler (Republican - New Hampshire), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Immigration, is considered the "lynchpin" in the Immigration Act of 1891. He also lobbied for the Quarantine Act of 1893.⁷⁰ Nicknamed the "Stormy Petrel" after the seabird regarded as a harbinger of trouble, Chandler was one of the most powerful men in the federal government.⁷¹ He is perhaps the most notorious politician responsible for the passage of restrictive immigration laws in the nineteenth century. Chandler used his senatorial power to restrict immigration, and also used his journalistic power to inflame the immigration debate.⁷² Through the Chandler Bill, he took charge of the Senate's first standing committee on immigration and, together with a House committee, launched a determined drive for stiffer controls, which resulted in the new law.⁷³

Chandler's comments received attention in the newspapers. In a *New York Times* article on April 17, Chandler said, "It is a great question just how far to go in restricting the foreign 'element.' We have not yet reached the stage in this country's growth when we want to keep out 'good' immigrants."⁷⁴ Chandler did not say that immigration should be entirely restricted, but differentiated between "good" and "bad" immigrants polarizing the situation.

Following the enactment of the new law, some immigrant incidents received a great deal of attention in the newspapers. In April

1891, the steamship *Iniziativa* arrived with some Italians who bore symptoms of “loathsome diseases” although it was never specified which diseases they were suspected as having.⁷⁵ The *New York Times* depicted the rejected Italians as carriers of disease who “were debarred on account of loathsome diseases.”⁷⁶ The following week, The *New York Times* reported that three Italians “escaped” while authorities attempted to take them back to the ship on which they arrived.⁷⁷ Newspapers portrayed the new law as a necessary constraint coming “just in time for its enforcement to feel the impulse of the public excitement over the ‘Italian incident’.”⁷⁸

For several weeks, a manhunt ensued for the Italians dubbed, “the outcasts of Europe” who had “scattered” throughout the country, and newspapers exposed the Italians’ destinations, obtained through Ellis Records.⁷⁹ While Jews were typically described as “filthy, dirty, menaces” to society, Italians were often characterized as “criminally minded.”⁸⁰ Newspapers and periodicals across the country reported the events surrounding the Italians and the *Iniziativa*. On the West Coast, the *San Francisco Bulletin* alerted the public to “watch out for sick Italians: an objectionable class.”⁸¹ In Texas, the *Galveston Daily News* reported the events with the headline, “Undesirable Immigrants: The United States Not a Dumping Ground for Other Countries.”⁸² The following *Times Picayune-New Orleans* article also reflects a growing stereotype of contagious and dangerous Italians:

Nineteen Italian immigrants have been debarred from landing at this port and placed in charge of the captains of the steamers in which they came for return. Four of them have tuberculosis, a dangerous and contagious disease, and 11 are suffering from an affliction of the scalp known as alopecia which is due to uncleanness [sic].⁸³

On May 15, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that the people of New Orleans wanted to “put a stop to Italian immigration.”⁸⁴

European steamship lines came under fire in the spring. In the nineteenth century, the business of immigration increased for steamship companies and they earned a great deal of money charging premium ticket prices to bring newcomers to the United States. These companies were often viewed as profit-driven businesses with no regard for America’s

welfare. The law of 1891 made it the responsibility of the steamship companies bringing immigrants to the United States to report to the officials the “name, nationality, last residence, and destination of all such aliens.”⁸⁵

The newspapers reported stories surrounding the steamship lines. On April 9, the *New York Times* reported that the Florio line in charge of the Iniziativa refused to immediately return the ship to Italy and printed a letter from Phelps Brothers & Company, legal agents of the Florio line:

We hereby protest against your having put on the steamship Iniziativa a number of person that you have decided are to be returned to Italy on the ground that, under Section 10 of the last act, ‘such persons are to be returned on the same ship, if practicable.’ As this ship does not return to Italy, it is not practicable. We therefore decline any responsibility arising from their having been put on board, the same having been done, in the first instance without notice to us. We request you to take and keep them in charge until such time as we can send them back, which we will do as the earliest moment.⁸⁶

The same article reported the reply of Dr. John Weber, Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island: “Colonel Weber stated in his reply that it might not be profitable to return the ship to Italy, but that in his opinion it was at least practicable.... The Colonel knew of no reason why the paupers of Europe should be hoisted on America simply because of the business interests of steamship companies.”⁸⁷ In a different *Times* article on the same day, steamship lines received more criticism: “So long as the money is paid, it seems to be a matter of entire indifference to the officers of these immigrant steamers whether their steerage passengers are decent and healthy persons or paralytics, beggars, and criminals...”⁸⁸ The *Los Angeles Times* also revealed the growing dissatisfaction with the companies for “dumping the refuse of Europe in this country.”⁸⁹ These reports illustrate how immigration and epidemics intersected with issues of economics and business.

Enforcing the new law, authorities rejected many newcomers. In July, an immigrant named John Braml became the first reported person to have been “assisted” back to his home country from Milwaukee,

flag, denoting that someone on board was sick with a contagious

Wisconsin.⁹⁰ Authorities in Bavaria had sent Braml with a small amount of money to United States. He made it through New York, but in Milwaukee, officials determined him to be “diseased” and “likely to become a public charge.”⁹¹ Reluctantly, the steamship line that brought him to the United States took him back to Bavaria. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* told Braml’s story with the headline, “Sent Back to Bavaria: John Braml, a Pauper and Diseased Immigrant.”

The law expressively prohibits the immigration to this country of all idiots, insane persons, paupers, and persons likely to become a public charge, and Braml is the first person coming to Milwaukee to feel its effects.... He suffered for nine years from fever sores and was helpless.⁹²

Braml’s story shows how new arrivals could be excluded because of “dangerous or loathsome” or the “public charge” clause. The above articles uses frames of “inferiority”, “exclusion”, and “helplessness” to describe Braml, illustrating the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and Nativism in the press.

By mid-summer, Senator Chandler’s opinions about immigration made it to the papers. In an interview in Concord, Massachusetts, he discussed immigration restriction and assimilation. The *San Francisco Bulletin* reported Chandler’s remarks:

I am not sure that we may not, sometime in the not far distance future, reach a conclusion to limit the coming of good immigrants and exclude some of them, but so far as I am concerned that time has not arrived. For the present I am in favor of adhering to the old principle as satisfactory – to exclude the bad and allow the good to come in.... The good persons of these races [Chinese, Polish Jews, Hungarians, Italians] will assimilate, the bad we intend to keep out on other grounds.⁹³

In September, the *Galveston Daily News* said Senator Chandler reasoned, “that for one Jew who becomes a public charge nine hundred and ninety-nine will add to the wealth of the country and then will not allow the odd one to remain a public charge five hours after their attention is drawn to the exceptional ease.”⁹⁴ The reports do not reflect Chandler’s desire to completely suspend immigration as he would later.

Throughout the year, news of smallpox outbreaks surfaced in various states across the country. In June, the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported that the steamship, Oceanic, arrived with a Chinese person infected with smallpox and had later been quarantined on Angel Island for fifteen days.⁹⁵ In July, the *Bulletin* again framed Asians as dangerous by reporting that smallpox had “made its appearance in the Japanese cities of Tokio and Kavagawa”, and that “a society of people from these colonies had been formed in either California or Canada.”⁹⁶ In September, thirty smallpox cases were reported in Texas, and the *Galveston Daily News* said that local authorities blamed Mexican immigrants who were later taken to the “pesthouse” for vaccination.⁹⁷ In December, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the steamer City of Peking was quarantined in San Francisco with smallpox.⁹⁸ The *San Francisco Bulletin* reported the details in more depth:

On the arrival of the steamer City of Peking, yesterday, the yellow flag, denoting that someone on board was sick with a contagious disease, was flying... The Peking was immediately ordered into quarantine and the two men were removed from the vessel to the lazarette at the quarantine station on Angel Island... The baggage of the cabin passengers was fumigated on board by hot air from the large boilers.⁹⁹

West Coast immigration authorities were concerned with the great numbers of Chinese and Japanese entering the United States, for employment and health reasons. American organized labor viewed Chinese as a threat since they would often work for low wages.¹⁰⁰ Considered racially inferior, some of the more colorful ethnic slurs for the Chinese include: “yellow-bellied”, “coolie”, “moon-eyed leper”, “celestial,” and “slant eyes.”¹⁰¹ The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 established special registration for Chinese laborers residing in the United States as well as

stricter deportation regulations, and they needed to have certificates of work to obtain legal employment.¹⁰² Ronald Takaki argued that Americans had a far easier time supporting legislation that halted Chinese and Japanese immigration than they would limiting European immigration, perhaps because they believed that “the racial separateness between whites and Asians could never be blurred because Asians were so dissimilar to whites, particularly in appearance.”¹⁰³

Like newcomers from Europe, Chinese and Japanese immigrants suspected of carrying a “dangerous or loathsome” disease could automatically be turned away at Angel Island, the main immigration processing station in San Francisco Bay off the coast of California. Statistically, Asians were turned away more than any other immigrant group in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴ Newcomers suspected of having an illness were sent to the Twenty-sixth street hospital or a quarantine station on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay known as the “Pest-House.”¹⁰⁵ Also that year, stories about lepers appeared in the news. A *Los Angeles Times* article with the headline, “A Leper Cook in a Hotel,” appeared in March. The story reported that the proprietor of a hotel in Philadelphia had been arrested and charged for employing Charlie Wang, a Chinese leper who prepared food for guest and employees of the hotel.¹⁰⁶ The *Times* again reported a similar story in August with the headline “Lepers in the East: A Scare in New York—The Disease Declared Contagious,” giving the names of three Chinese immigrants isolated on Angel Island in New York because they were suspected lepers.¹⁰⁷ All of these articles illustrate the press’s heightened reaction to immigrants and epidemics.

By the end of the year, news from Europe reported typhus outbreaks among Russian Jews. On December, 26, 1891, the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported the situation in a prison in St. Petersburg, Russia:

Typhus and typhoid fever were prevalent among the prisoners at Samara. The doctors whose duty it is to attend the sick prisoners are in despair, and have not visited their charges for a month.¹⁰⁸

Reports such as this one may have set the stage for the public outcry against Russian immigrants during a major outbreak of typhus in New York City in early 1892 during which time they took the blame for typhus

from Europe.

Because of the need to inspect and monitor the massive wave of immigrants, Ellis Island opened in New York port on January 1, 1892. The new facility replaced Castle Garden, in Manhattan, as the New York immigration center. Ellis Island was designed, its architects claimed, to handle more than 8,000 newcomers a day.¹⁰⁹ Of the four major U.S. entry points, Ellis Island registered 75 percent of all newcomers in the 1890s.¹¹⁰ About 80 percent of those who entered Ellis Island received landing cards permitting them to board ferries for New York City. ¹¹¹ Ellis Island inspected the largest number of immigrants in the late nineteenth century.

The Island served as inspection site and medical facility.¹¹² Orderly lines funneled bewildered newcomers past doctors and officials who examined them for signs of disease. Under the 1891 immigration law, the physically and mentally ill could be refused admittance, forcing thousands of families to make the difficult decision to return home with a relative refused entry or continue on without them. A final interview by an immigration official determined whether the newcomers had already been promised jobs. Most new arrivals at Ellis Island were Eastern European Russian Jews, Hungarians, Polish, and Italians, many of who later settled in New York City. Many Russian Jews and Eastern and Southern Europeans suspected of having a contagious illness upon arrival to the Ellis Island were detained on North Brother Island, Swinburne Island, or Staten Island, all located in New York Port.

The steamship, Nevada, was the first to arrive at the new landing place.¹¹³ A young “rosy cheeked” Irish girl named Annie Moore became the first official newcomer from the Nevada to be registered. The *New York Times* reported the opening day’s events:

There were three big steamships in the harbor waiting to land their passengers, and there was much anxiety among the new-comers to be the first landed at the new station. The honor was reserved for a little rosy-cheeked Irish girl. She was Annie Moore, fifteen years of age. Her name is now distinguished by being the first registered in the book of the new landing bureau.¹¹⁴

The *Boston Daily Globe* reported that Colonel Weber presented Moore

with a \$10 bill.¹¹⁵

Although the average immigrant in 1892 came from Southern, Central, or Eastern European, the press highlighted the arrival of the “rosy-cheeked Irish girl,” supporting the desire of many old immigrants to include those of similar ethnic backgrounds and exclude all others. Highlighting the arrival of Annie Moore exemplifies an omission in news framing. Profiling Moore, a person from Western Europe, (demographically similar to old immigrants) and omitting positive stories about newcomers from the far regions Europe, sent the message that she represented the average U.S. immigrant. In reality, people from Ireland and other Western European countries represented the fewest numbers of immigrants in the 1890s. This omission contributed to the inferiority frame because it added to the public perception that Eastern and Southern Europeans were undesirable while Western Europeans remained desirable.

Like Moore, others from Western Europe enjoyed preferential treatment in the press. A description in the *New York Times* of an inspection of a group of Dutch newcomers on Ellis Island illustrates how the press depicted Western Europeans as superior to Eastern Europeans: “They were a fine looking bunch, far above the average immigrant.”¹¹⁶

After the immigration laws called for stricter inspection measure at U.S. immigration stations, politicians and officials criticized Canada for substandard immigration inspection procedures at Canadian borders. Although officials at Canadian-United States immigration stations did not process as many newcomers as U.S. stations, American politicians and health officials suggested ways to improve medical inspections. In a January 20 *Milwaukee Sentinel* article, Senator Chandler suggested stricter inspections of immigrants themselves, not just their baggage, at the Canadian and Mexican borders.¹¹⁷

Immigration stations located on Michigan-Canadian border differed from the other stations in the east, south, and west. Europeans entered the United States with relative ease through the immigration inspection stations at Port Huron and Detroit, Michigan. Newcomers who passed through these gates were considered “the more desirable northern or western Europeans.”¹¹⁸ Of all major immigration U.S. stations, these stations on the Canadian border have been historically viewed as having the least number of restrictions, possibly because these stations were often the second points of entry for many newcomers – many had already been

inspected when entering Canada.¹¹⁹ In fact, in 1892, newspapers reported that U.S. officials accused Canada of being too lax with their immigration inspections. And because only a small number of people entered through Michigan, the stations lacked proper medical equipment and hospital facilities,¹²⁰ which meant that those who were held for medical observation upon arrival were held in substandard quarantine facilities.¹²¹

Shortly after Chandler criticized Canada for lax medical procedures, Ellis Island experienced its first public health disaster. Shortly after Ellis Island opened, the steamship *Massilia* arrived from Germany on January 30, 1892, with approximately 100 Russian Hebrews and Italians suspected of having typhus, setting off a nationwide panic. Although U.S. officials had received telegrams that sick immigrants may be arriving, many infected people passed through immigration inspection without detention.¹²² A manhunt for the sick foreigners ensued, and the newspapers capitalized on the opportunity to warn readers that typhus would quickly spread across the country. The *New York Times* reported “over 200 Italians were on the *Massilia* and they have become scattered all over the country and may develop typhus fever in the communities where they have settled.”¹²³ The *Galveston Daily News* reported that the typhus scourge was “increasing hour by hour” and that “the plague will spread, despite desperate efforts being made to suppress it.”¹²⁴ The typhus outbreak marked the beginning of the period later known as the New York City Epidemics of 1892.

Russian Jews and Italians immediately became associated with the typhus epidemic and the New York City Epidemics of 1892. The *New York Times* wrote that of the 248 Russian Hebrews who arrived on the *Massilia*, at least one-third of them had been diagnosed with typhus, the “most virulent and menacing of the diseases which test the powers of sanitary officers.”¹²⁵ The *Los Angeles Times* reported “seven cases of typhus fever were discovered in nine Italians who were smuggled off the train and into a macaroni factory at auburn Park... It is thought that any disastrous results will be prevented.”¹²⁶ These examples illustrate how the papers focused on danger to report the issues.

The press regularly reported the typhus outbreaks surrounding Russian Jews, and they frequently blamed the typhus outbreaks on the Russians’ poor living conditions in lower East Side tenements. The *New York Times* said, “Ignorance and dirt are the chief characteristics of the

average immigrant.”¹²⁷ The images of sick, infected Russian Jews gained credibility as letters to newspaper editors poured in, such as the following in the *New York Times*:

We do not want and we ought to refuse to land all or any of these unclean Italians or Russian Hebrews. We have enough dirt, misery, crime, sickness and death of our own without permitting any more to be thrust upon us by any of the foreign powers and it is only such that they are desirous of getting rid of and send to us.¹²⁸

As more cases of typhus emerged along the eastern seaboard, newspapers printed the names of Russian Jews and Italians who became ill or died. Long suspected as being the harbingers of the deadly disease, these reports reinforced the fear of these new ethnic groups through frames of danger. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported the names and ages of five “New York Jews” who moved to Boston to “flee from Typhus,”¹²⁹ and three days later, reported that the “danger signal was raised in the village of Ackworth, in North Oxford, where four more of the immigrants who arrived on the ill-fated *Massilia* have been located. One of the four is down with the dreaded typhus fever. The four emigrants are Hirsch Greenburg and wife and David Scarefski and his bride of four months.”¹³⁰ This common technique of publicizing names and addresses of typhus “suspects” illustrates how the press commonly invaded individual privacy, another way to frame the immigrants as inferior.

By the spring, some groups and citizens called for a ban on immigration. The U.S. government instituted several measures to avert the spread of disease from Europe.¹³¹ In an effort to keep infected persons from bringing typhus to U.S. shores, the government urged European families to keep their citizens from coming to the United States. Steamship lines were also encouraged to refuse Jewish passengers. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported, “The agents of the White State Line have cabled their agents in Hamburg not to take any Jewish passengers for the present on account of typhus.”¹³²

In addition to keeping new immigrants from arriving as a public health measure, the new scientific understanding of how germs travel resulted in the push for decontamination as a typhus prevention. In the

press, the “dirty” frame coupled with the concept of “decontamination” bolstered the negative image surrounding immigrants. These concepts After a young Russian Hebrew, Joseph Siegler, became sick with typhus after visiting a synagogue, President Harrison ordered all the east side synagogues be fumigated.¹³³ In another case, the *New York Times* described the typhus decontamination procedures of a Russian immigrant’s home:

The house, in which a large number of fever cases developed, is now vacant. It will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected and fumigated and the ceilings whitewashed and painted before the sanitary authorities will permit it to be again occupied.¹³⁴

The *Los Angeles Times* detailed the decontamination procedures of European ports to be used as a model in the United States, reported by a government official who had returned from an educational junket. This opinion from a government official gave credence to the public fear of contagious disease, and again illustrates the use of the “dirty” frame:

Assistant Secretary Spaulding, who has just returned... was much pleased with the system of inspection of immigrants at the ports named, and especially with precautions taken against the introduction of contagious or infectious diseases... Not only are the immigrants compelled to take baths in tanks especially provided for that purpose, they are compelled to submit their clothing and personal effects to thorough disinfection.¹³⁵

In the Spring, smaller epidemic outbreaks occurred across the country. Smallpox was reported in New York and San Francisco. The *Los Angeles Times* reported another “pest ship at New York,” from Liverpool with Russian passengers taken into quarantine.¹³⁶ The *New York Times* reported that an “unknown immigrant afflicted with the disease escaped from a hospital.”¹³⁷

Sparked by the Massilia disaster, a Congressional investigation of Ellis Island practices and procedures began in March 1892. The Massilia incident also triggered a proposition submitted by Senator Chandler,

head of the investigation, to “prohibit immigration for one year.”¹³⁸ Some newspapers outlined the steps of the investigation and the need for more manpower to inspect the vast number of arriving immigrants.¹³⁹ Throughout the investigation, Chandler blamed the wrongdoing on Ellis Island officials, particularly Ellis Island Commissioner John Weber. On February 16, 1892, the *New York Times* said in an article entitled, “An Investigation Wanted: Senator Chandler Sharply Attacks Commissioner Weber”:

Senator Chandler is after Commissioner of Emigration [sic] Weber... It was perfectly clear that those immigrants infected with that dangerous and deadly disease should not have been allowed to land. They should have been excluded by the Commissioner of Emigration in the performance of strict and imperative duty under the statute of the United States.¹⁴⁰

Two weeks later on March 6, in another *New York Times* article, Chandler described the “undesirable classes”, marking a shift from his earlier, less derogatory descriptions to a more caustic view of immigrants:

The alarm springs from the constantly increasing influx within our borders of classes of immigrants of a most undesirable character. The danger is the reduction of wages to the injury of the American workman, and of his home and family, the debasement of the suffrage, and wide contamination of society.¹⁴¹

The press publicized the battle between Chandler and Weber. A long-time critic of Chandler, Weber voiced his feelings about Chandler’s reforms. In a letter to the *New York Times* on February 19, Weber discussed the state of health of some arriving Russian Hebrews and criticized Ellis Island inspection practices:

I happened to be standing at the entrance through which they [Russian immigrants] passed on reaching here and saw what seemed to me to be a clear case of inhumanity on the

part of the ship's surgeon in permitting these cases to be brought down [for inspection], as it was evident that they should not have been directly transported or transferred but sent directly to a suitable hospital for treatment and care.¹⁴²

As tragic and sympathetic as this recollection is, this editorial portrays the Russian immigrants as helpless, another negative frame.

Following the typhus epidemic in the winter, on May 5, the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, which required Chinese in the United States to be registered and carry an identity card or face deportation. Also that month, a U.S. quarantine station opened on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. This law had far-reaching negatively affect Chinese for years to come, and some scholars argue that the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 was an outcome of the anti-immigration fervor during the first half of 1892 during the typhus epidemics in New York City.¹⁴³ Introduced into Congress in February, the *Los Angeles Times* reported the bill for the new law:

The presence here of Chinese is inimical to our institutions and deemed injurious and a source of danger. Recently the Pacific Coast was a new country and Chinese might have been a necessity at one time, but our own people are fast filling up and developing that rich and highly-favored land, and American citizens will not and cannot afford to stand idly by and see this undesirable race carry away the fruits of labors which justly belong to them.¹⁴⁴

But the *Boston Daily Globe* criticized President Harrison in an article entitled, "Mr. Harrison's Chinese Blunder," for mismanagement of funds to enforce the records part of the new law, rather than spending money on averting typhus fever. The article said:

The request for more office holders, and more funds to be expended chiefly in California and Oregon, is made at a time when money is urgently needed to provide against

the importation of infectious diseases from the East. The dread “famine fever”, commonly known as typhus, is rampant in Russia, and the government health officers need all the available appropriations to keep it from getting a foothold here through the heavy immigration from southern Russia.¹⁴⁵

Just when the country thought it had recovered from public health disaster, in the summer of 1892, a cholera epidemic threatened the nation. Exacerbated by the typhus epidemic earlier in the year, Americans panicked and newcomers from Europe and Asia who had moved across the Midwest caused widespread fear. Newspapers from coast to coast reported their arrival in various cities. The *New York Times* described Russian and Polish immigrants were described as “an ideal medium for the diffusion of cholera germs because of their extreme filth.”¹⁴⁶ The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported “alarm in Kansas over the arrival of Russian immigrants because of the fear they bring cholera.”¹⁴⁷ The *New York Times* again wrote:

With the danger of cholera in question, it is plain to see that the United States would be better off if ignorant Russian Jews and Hungarians were denied refuge here. These people are offensive enough at best; under the present circumstances they are a positive menace to the health of this country. Even should they pass the quarantine officials, their mode of life when they settle down makes them always a source of danger. Cholera, it must be remembered, originates in the homes of human riffraff.¹⁴⁸

As the fear of cholera heightened, many people wanted stricter quarantine laws to check immigrants for diseases before they entered the United States, evident in the following letter from New York mayor Hugh J. Grant to U.S. President Benjamin Harrison, reprinted in a *New York Times* editorial.

As Mayor of the City of New York, I deem it my duty to call your attention to the present condition of sanitary

affairs in this city. While there is no cause for alarm in the present condition, and while everything is being done by the authorities to prevent the spread of the cholera, every reasonable precaution should be taken to prevent its further introduction into this community....I therefore request that you, as President of the United States, exercise all the authority you possess to prevent further immigration to this country until all fear of the introduction of cholera shall have disappeared.¹⁴⁹

Again, like other official statements in press, the mayor's letter has frames of "danger" and "exclusion," and once again, bolsters the idea that immigrants should be excluded.

Medical experts added their voices to the newspaper columns. Printed in an August 7, 1892 *New York Times* article, Dr. Cyrus Edson, a New York physician and important figure in the New York City Health Department, gave a jaundiced view of Italians and Russian residents, portraying them as sneaky and underhanded in the face of authority during the cholera outbreaks:

They are sullen and suspicious and refuse all [health] information asked by Americans. When it comes to questions of disease, they will hide in closets, burrow in cellars, run away, do anything to avoid the visit of a physician and lie with the most magnificent elaboration as to all matters touching their own sickness or those of their neighbors.¹⁵⁰

If officials in New York heard of an epidemic outbreak in a neighborhood, Dr. Edson would send out his henchmen to "round" up immigrants as a means to collect sick and dangerous persons for medical examination and/or quarantine. They also conducted regular tenement inspections. Newspapers depicted immigrants as uncooperative and stubborn, evident from a *New York Times* excerpt from Dr. Edson, in which he stated, "They throw every possible obstacle in the way of the Board of Health in its regular rounds of the inspection of the tenements where they live."¹⁵¹ He viewed "round-ups" as a necessary step in separating

the sick from the healthy, the dirty from the clean.¹⁵² Edson's comments were in response to the difficulty he encountered when trying to "round up" frightened immigrants who feared that they and their families would be quarantined if suspected of carrying typhus. Expert opinions in the press, such as Edson's, reinforced the "danger" frame and added to the growing belief that immigrants were trouble-makers.

By September, a few outbreaks of the disease were reported across the county. These outbreaks were traced back to passengers from European steamships Fulda, Rugia, Normannia, Pennsylvania, and Stubenhak, and Moravia. On August 29, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that a sensation was caused by a report that cholera had been discovered among immigrants in Detroit who had arrived from New York.¹⁵³ Three days later, the *Sentinel* reported that twenty-two deaths on the steamer Moravia had been traced back to Hamburg.¹⁵⁴ The *Daily Inter Ocean* wrote, "Detroit is in grave danger of receiving a visit from the dread epidemic. Hundreds of German and Russian immigrants are landed weekly direct from foreign ports at Quebec and Montreal and take the trains at once for the United States, passing through here without inspections or quarantine."¹⁵⁵ Later in September, the *Los Angeles Times* asserted "the New York press thinks that between September 6 and 16 Asiatic cholera was present in the city without the public being aware."¹⁵⁶

The cholera scare meant strict quarantine rules at all U.S. borders including Canada and Mexico, not just the East and West coasts. A quarantine inspection commission was appointed to inspect all quarantine stations of the United States in all regions. The commission reported that coastal inspection stations were inadequate in many places and it would be part of the duty of the commission to hunt out these weak places and see that proper steps were taken to prevent the possibility of the disease being brought in.¹⁵⁷ The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that the Commission accused New York immigration officials of permitting smallpox to be brought into the United States earlier in the year.¹⁵⁸ On August 31, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a special cordon of inspection and disinfection had been established on the seaboard from Louisiana to Maine and along the Canadian and Mexican frontiers.¹⁵⁹ When reports circulated about a cholera outbreak in Mexico, the *Galveston Daily News* reported the tightened quarantine measures on the Texas-Mexico border:

Dr. Turpin, state quarantine officer at this point, has placed a guard at the international bridge, whose duty it will be to take the oath of all strangers coming into the state that they have not been within twenty days previous in any place infected with yellow fever or cholera. This precaution was taken on account of a report that cholera has broken out in Vera Cruz [Mexico].¹⁶⁰

As these reports of cholera surfaced, on September 1, President Benjamin Harrison had his surgeon general issue a circular (ruling) holding that “no vessel from any foreign port carrying immigrants shall be admitted to enter any port of the United States until such vessel has undergone quarantine detention of twenty days, and such greater number of days as may be fixed in each special case by the State authorities.” To ensure that only healthy people entered the country, entire shiploads of people were sometimes detained off shore for weeks. As part of the plan, physicians would journey out to the quarantined ships to inspect the passengers and from there, the sick would go to other quarantine facilities; others would stay on the ship until quarantine expired.

As part of President Harrison’s circular, baggage, clothing, and belongings on all arriving ships were fumigated and thoroughly disinfected.¹⁶¹ Like the typhus epidemic earlier that year, the terms “decontamination” and “disinfection” became popular in the press. Daily newspapers reported how clothing and belongings should be disinfected, as did medical journals with long reports by physicians on how to stamp out cholera through proper decontamination procedures.

From coast to coast, the press reported the twenty-day circular, many interpreting the new rule as a way for the government to halt immigration. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that immigration had been “stopped” through “vigorous measures adopted to keep out the cholera.”¹⁶² With the headline, “Putting Up Bars,” the *Milwaukee Sentinel* wrote that that federal government put forth all its power to prevent cholera into the United States. But the article also pointed out that the federal power was “rather limited and cannot supplant or contravene [sic] regulations of the states.”¹⁶³ Thus, states could override the new rule, which led to increased fear that contagious diseases could be spread through immigrants entering through lax state-run immigration points.

Similar to the typhus outbreaks in the winter, Canada received a great deal of criticism during the cholera outbreak. U.S. officials urged Canada to adopt the circular.¹⁶⁴ After the twenty-day circular slowed immigration through U.S. ports, health officials worried that immigrants would “smuggle themselves” via circuitous routes to the United States through Mexico and Canada.¹⁶⁵ Referred to as America’s “back door”, U.S. health officials criticized Texas-Mexico border towns for lax sanitation and medical examinations - ill-equipped to handle cholera coming from immigrants via Mexico.¹⁶⁶ Delegates of the international conference for quarantine inspection concluded that Canadian immigration stations were deficient, but that the Canadian government had no intention of prohibiting immigration through its ports.¹⁶⁷ As a result of the conflict between governments, Michigan notified railways that the state would refuse all immigrants via Canada if they came from infected ports.¹⁶⁸

Detroit health officials did not always agree on how to handle incoming immigrants from Canada, and they sometimes faced difficult situations with the new twenty-day rule.

On September 11, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that sixty immigrants from Windsor, Ontario, Canada had been quarantined in Detroit in two train cars. The report said:

The situation of the immigrants is pitiful. The two cars were sidetracked on the river bank at Walkerville, Ont., Saturday night, and this morning the passengers awoke fairly famished. But few of them possessed money, and the rest bid fair to starve. There is not a morsel of food on the cars and not one has had a warm meal since Thursday. At 4 o'clock hunger drove them out of the cars and they flocked to the neighboring houses for food, begging from door to door for what bites they could get. As soon as their condition was made known as number of kind-hearted ladies went to their relief.¹⁶⁹

Like other stories highlighted in this research, this disturbing account illustrates how a frame of helplessness surrounding immigrants developed in the press.

Physicians and health officials across the country favored

the twenty-day quarantine rule. Many of their opinions appeared in newspapers. On September 8, the *New York Times* reported the opinion of Dr. Cyrus Edson:

It is in the sense of the section [board] that, in view of Asiatic cholera in Europe at the present time, and the constantly-increasing number of foci of infection, immigration from European countries in which cholera exists should be temporarily suspended, as this action affords in our opinion, the only certain means of averting a threatened invasion of the countries of the American Continent by the disease.¹⁷⁰

By late September, reports of the “crisis past”¹⁷¹ appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times*. The *Times* reported that Dr. John T. Nagle, The Registrar of Vital Statistics, said, “The total number of deaths from cholera for the week of September 25 was seven, and that cholera cannot not become an epidemic if the rules of the Board of Health were carried out... the very few cases should not cause alarm.”¹⁷²

But even after the danger of cholera had passed, anti-immigration sentiment continued in the press. The *Boston Daily Globe* printed the report of John Crowley, the secretary of the Anti-Tenement Housing League, who warned that the tenement houses were so overcrowded, that the “public health was threatened through the danger from cholera germs manufactured in the sweating dens of that city.”¹⁷³ *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans* referred to the cholera situation as “the immigrant curse.”¹⁷⁴ The *New York Times* printed the following short article by the American Patriotic League, a known nativist group:

A foreign plague is at our doors and threatens with destruction our homes and all we love... Unrestricted immigration is the cause of all our woes... The American Patriotic League for the three last sessions of Congress has unsuccessfully endeavored to secure the passage of laws to restrict undesirable immigrants... we demand from the lawmaking powers and from the executive officers of this Government the adoption and

enforcement of such measures as will effectually protect our loved ones and ourselves from foreign contagion, whether it be in the form of Asiatic cholera or in the importation of the undesirable elements of the Old World's population.¹⁷⁵

The League probably viewed the president's circular as a move toward a climate of complete immigration restriction, so they took the opportunity to publicize their opinion. This illustrates how Nativism appeared in the press.

Since the danger of cholera had passed, President Harrison received criticism for subjecting ocean liners to the twenty-day rule and the quarantine measures. People questioned why shiploads of newcomers were still being detained offshore. With the headline, "Why are they Detained," even the usually pro-restrictionist *New York Times* wrote:

There was considerable astonishment in the cabins of both vessels when it was learned that the ships were held pending the pleasure of certain individuals in Washington. No one among them attempted to find any excuse for the proceeding, and it is not likely that they would have discovered any if they had. There was no sickness on board, and after the Health Officer had given clearance papers there was no good reason why the ships should not have been allowed to land their passengers.¹⁷⁶

Politicians also criticized Harrison for being powerless to effectively change immigration laws. The *New York Times* reported the opinion of a "prominent politician":

There would be no such danger in giving the President the such power [to halt immigration]. No president would dare abuse it. Everyone knows that there is a deadly menace to the health of the people of the United States in the ships now nearing New York and other Atlantic ports from cholera-infected regions of Europe. The great majority of the passengers are ignorant and

unclean. They know nothing of hygiene and sanitary requirements... The emergency is great, and if Mr. Harrison could order United States ports closed absolutely to vessels from every country in which cholera is known to be raging, he would absolutely protect Americans from a dreadful scourge.¹⁷⁷

At the end of the year, Senator Chandler emerged again with more anti-immigration bills. In November 1892, Stephen Grover Cleveland (Democrat) was elected president for a second, non-consecutive term, having defeated President Harrison and becoming both the 22nd and 24th U.S. president to serve. He defeated the Republicans and the Populists. Chandler may have viewed the “transfer from one great party to another”¹⁷⁸ as an opportunity to introduce his plan to keep immigrants out through the Alien Exclusion Act.¹⁷⁹ His act had three propositions, the last being the most important to Chandler.¹⁸⁰ For entering person, they must: 1) be literate (with the exception of young children); and 2) possess at least \$100; and 3) called for a suspension of immigration for at least one year beginning March 1, 1893.¹⁸¹ He estimated that such a law would take a year to execute.¹⁸²

Following the introduction of the bill for the Alien Exclusion Act, newspapers reported the provisions. The *Boston Daily Globe* warned those “foreigners who contemplate emigrating will have to start before March or find America’s ports willingly closed to them.”¹⁸³ A few days later, the *Globe* reported that “Senator Chandler says it is likely congress will pass the Alien Exclusion Act for one year on sanitary grounds.”¹⁸⁴ The American Public Health Association supported Chandler, saying, “We shall do our best to have a law to this effect passed.”¹⁸⁵

But unfortunately for Chandler, Congress did not pass his bill, but preferred the bill proposed by Dr. J.H. Gallinger, another senator from New Hampshire. In an a rather unfavorable article toward Chandler, using the headline, “Chandler Put Out,” the *Boston Daily Globe* wrote:

There has never been any love lost between Senator Chandler of New Hampshire and his colleague, Senator Gallinger... Chandler’s hobby for the past year has been the immigration question, and during that time he has

introduced innumerable bills on the subject, none of which has yet become law. Senator Chandler thinks that prohibition is necessary to prevent cholera from visiting us... As few days ago, Dr. Gallinger, who knows a great deal more about cholera than Senator Chandler will know, no matter how long he lives, introduced a bill to suspend immigration from any country or port where cholera is raging, and when, in his opinion, immigration from such places might cause cholera to be brought to this country. The Gallinger bill is regarded as a sensible measure... It is very galling to Senator Chandler to have Senator Gallinger occupy his own field, and to have him introduce a bill which is much more highly regarded than his own.¹⁸⁶

This article suggests that the press eagerly publicized the controversy surrounding immigration legislation sensationalizing the immigration debate and giving the issues importance.

Like Chandler's ill-fated bill, Gallinger's bill was later rejected, but at the end of 1892, Senator Isham Harris (Republican – Tennessee) and Congressman Isador Rayner (Democrat – Maryland) began writing the Harris-Rayner Compromise bill that was considered a compromise for all parties involved. A vocal opponent of Harris-Rayner bill, at the end of 1892, Chandler retreated with his Immigration Committee to re-write his bill known as the Chandler Suspension bill.¹⁸⁷

It would seem that Chandler saw the epidemics of 1892, the newly elected president, and the fact that the Republicans still controlled the Senate, as vehicles to serve his political agenda to restrict immigration. Undoubtedly, these events set the stage for immigration history the next year, in which Chandler found more opportunities to argue his cause.

At the end of 1892, with cholera no longer a threat during the winter months, coverage of public health issues declined.¹⁸⁸ But with the fear of another cholera outbreak during the upcoming World's Fair in Chicago in the spring of 1893, and several immigration bills in Congress that could result in severe immigration restriction, the U.S. press continued to report immigration news.

With several immigration bills in the Congress, a new president

in the White House, and the possibility of another cholera outbreak in the spring, the immigration debate continued to intensify in the winter of 1893 and appear in the press. The nation prepared for the Chicago World's Fair (also known as the World's Columbian Exposition), to begin in the May 1893 and continue through the summer. Because foreign visitors typically traveled from around the world to attend World Fairs, the possibility of a contagious disease outbreak that year became both a public health and economic concern. Americans were most worried about the dangers of visitors from the Baltic and North Sea, where cholera had prevailed in the early winter of 1892.¹⁸⁹

Since many immigrants became associated with epidemics in 1892, it was impossible to ignore the complexities surrounding the Exposition. With immigration suspension (as many politicians argued), foreign visitors may have been less likely to attend the events – this would have grave economic effects on the Exposition. But an epidemic would also keep people from attending. Thus, the situation proposed a major political challenge – should immigration be suspended or continue with the same provisions? Once again, Senator Chandler tackled the challenge.

On the morning of January 6, 1893, Senator Chandler delivered a three-hour speech to the 52nd Congress (1891-1893) on addressing what the *Los Angeles Times* called the “public health evils of immigration,”¹⁹⁰ and proposed his Immigration Suspension Bill calling for the suspension of all immigration for one year in order to protect the nation against “the danger from cholera in 1893.” Upon the surface, Chandler's bill seemed as if it would hurt the economics of the Columbian exposition since it depended on European visitors for income. Chandler addressed the issue, saying the Columbian Exposition would be a “failure” if immigration continued as it had been and that protection to the Exposition required suspension, but also added that European visitors would be essential to its success.

For weeks following Chandler's immigration suspension speech, the papers reported Chandler's anti-immigration rhetoric. Chandler continued to differentiate between steerage passengers and cabin passengers. In his bill, Chandler used his political adroitness to craft the provisions in such as way that the new law would exclude lower classes of immigrants while welcoming the upper Echelon of Europe by restricting steerage passengers (usually considered lower class passengers), but not cabin passengers, or the higher paying passengers. Cabin passengers were

also referred to as Europeans, not immigrants. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that Chandler saw a ban on immigration as the only way to safeguard the Exposition from financial ruin.¹⁹¹ By printing Chandler's distinction between Europeans and "swarms of immigrants", the press framed common immigrants (those who came as steerage passengers) as inferior. These reports also continued to frame the issues as dangerous.

Physicians and public health workers, anticipating the daily arrival of thousands of visitors to the Exposition, began plans to stand guard against the possible incursion of a "foreign cause of cholera." In Chicago, the *Daily Inter Ocean* warned of the dangers of giving the president the power to suspend immigration and said, "such power would be liable to almost illimitable abuse."¹⁹² But in support of Chandler's argument that associated steerage passengers with contagion, the article added: "It may be set down as reasonably certain that that there is no danger of cholera in Chicago or the United States generally in 1893 except as it may be brought over in the steerage of steamships."¹⁹³ Again, danger surrounded the issues.

Because the Columbian Exposition would take place in Chicago, Midwestern newspapers reported the issues surrounding immigration and the possibility cholera during the Exposition. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* devoted a great deal of ink to the Exposition and immigration. Milwaukee is near Chicago and was probably closely connected to the Exposition, especially financially. On January 5, the paper urged caution against total immigration suspension, but wrote, "We want all healthy and reputable immigrants who have within them the elements of good citizenship."¹⁹⁴ But a few days later, in a refreshingly pro-immigrant article entitled, "What Immigration Has Done For Us," the *Sentinel* wrote: "Before immigration began, it [United States] wasn't much of a country... When immigration set in, things began to improve. No one can dispute that immigration has done much for this country."¹⁹⁵ The article also discussed the nativistic thinking of old immigrants:

No greater contrast can be imagined than imagined than is afforded by the comparison of its condition before immigration began and its condition now after nearly three centuries of immigration. The immigrants have pretty much exterminated the original inhabitants who, at an early period, began to develop a nativistic

feeling, and to manifest a decided tendency to suppress immigration... We are all immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants.¹⁹⁶

This article exemplifies how the press sometimes printed immigration issues with a more liberal viewpoint than most of the other articles of the time. But it is important to note that in September, the *Sentinel* ran a story on page 4 with the headline, "They Should be Excluded," describing the "undesirable class of immigrants coming to this country, a dark, swarthy race, with long, dark, unkempt hair. The clothes they have on are invariably old and dirty, and the people themselves are never clean, not even their hands and faces."¹⁹⁷

Others held sympathetic attitudes about America's newcomers, many of which publicly opposed the fervent anti-immigration policies of the time. Senator Harris publicized his opposition to Senator Chandler's immigration reform in a January 1893 *New York Times* article:

I shall vote against it and take great pleasure in voting against it. The question of immigration is a tremendous one and the question of sanitation is only one of a thousand considerations affecting it. It should not be considered with reference to sanitation alone as the provisions of Senator Chandler's bill seem to show that he so regards it.¹⁹⁸

On January 11, 1893, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that Colonel John Weber also criticized the bill that proposed to give the president full authority to halt immigration at any time. Weber said, "It would be folly to stop immigration completely."¹⁹⁹

Throughout the winter and spring, publications across the country continued to report the issues of cholera. The *New York Times* reported, "The success of the fair depends in no small measure on the prevalent sense of security from the danger of an epidemic either in Chicago or elsewhere in the country."²⁰⁰ The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Dr. C. A. Ruggles, President of the States Board of Health of California, warned that the "greatest danger anticipated from infection is from people crossing the line from Mexico," and "but that the danger of infection by way of China or

Japan is believed to be at a minimum, for the reason that a steamer will require twenty or twenty-four days to reach the United States. Even should a ship have cases of the disease on board, they would have recovered or died by then.”²⁰¹

Ironically, as the country concerned itself with the dangers of cholera and the Columbian Exposition, the U.S. Bureau of Hygiene and Sanitation had an exhibit at the Fair showcasing the nation as a leader in sanitation and public health practices. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported:

The bureau continued with the assertion that the United States has been the pioneer and is still the leader in so many departments of the world's progress that it can scarcely be too enthusiastic to hope that she may rapidly forge to the front and assert her claim to be the leader in sanitation.²⁰²

Another irony of that year is the fact that the United States passed the most restrictive immigration law to that point, the very same year America showcased the Exposition, an international event that celebrated the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World.

On March 3, the president approved the National Quarantine Act of 1893, effectively giving the federal government the power to halt immigration at any time. The law gave the federal government control of quarantine procedures, and most importantly, said that the president could ultimately suspend immigration as he deemed necessary. Control was no longer in the hands of the local authorities.²⁰³ Quarantine had been a regular part of the immigration inspection process, but the 1893 law expanded governmental power to control those who wanted to enter the United States by virtue of health. Subsequently, port officials were given more discretion to detain newcomers as a means for preventing the spread of disease, particularly if a ship arrived with immigrants who came from an infected European port.²⁰⁴

The new quarantine law was chosen from the Harris-Rayner Compromise bill that began in 1892. No part of Chandler's earlier Suspension bill, that would have excluded the poorer classes of Europeans, was adopted as part of the new law. But he did, however, gain a major victory with the inclusion of the article that gave the president the power

to suspend immigration on a temporary basis with the threat of an impending epidemic. Chandler was solely responsible for this article.²⁰⁵ The *Boston Daily Globe* reported this article:

Whenever it shall be shown to the satisfaction of the president that by reason of the existence of cholera or other infectious or contagious disease in a foreign country, there is serious danger of the introduction of the same into the United States, and that notwithstanding the quarantine defence [sic], the danger is so increased by the introduction of persons or property from such country, that a suspension of the right to introduce the same is demanded in the interest of public health, the president shall have the power to prohibit, in whole or in part, the introduction of persons and property from such countries or places as he shall designate and for such a period of time as he may deem necessary.²⁰⁶

The expansion of power that gave the president the power to suspend immigration was in place, but never employed.²⁰⁷ Addressing this fact, Markel asserted that Americans still felt ambivalent about giving the president the power to halt immigration.²⁰⁸ Even in the midst of such a turbulent period in immigration history, perhaps the necessity to halt immigration never presented itself.

With the new law, not all states readily adopted the national quarantine rules. New Orleans state officials wanted quarantine decisions to be made by the state and local authorities, not the federal government. In January 1893, A *Daily Picayune-New Orleans* article exemplified the resistance to the new law:

The state authorities have from long and attentive experience, evolved a system of quarantine measures and appliances far in advance of any previously known, and of such merit as have afforded an example for imitation by the national government, which have been followed, and the existing quarantine appliances are but copies of the Louisiana plant.²⁰⁹

Later that year, *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans* again reiterated the state's exemplary quarantine measures that had been "recognized as the most efficient, and had been taken as a model by both federal and state health authorities."²¹⁰

As dirt and disease continued to be a public concern, in July, a reporter visited "Penitentiary Row" in the Old Seventh Ward, where the once "fashionable people" of the district were replaced by an "undesirable class" of immigrants.²¹¹ The report about filthy living appeared in a July 20 *New York Times* article, "Invaded by Filth and Dirt":

Penitentiary Row is on the south side of the street on Rutgers Place. It is a long row of low brick houses and is owned by a Mrs. Goldstein. Russians and Poles occupy it almost exclusively. It is filthy to a degree and must breed disease in the neighborhood. Frequent complaints concerning it have been lodged with the Board of Health... The street is strewn with decayed fruit and vegetables. Here and there were stagnant pools of water in which dirty-faced children dabbled. The steps and front yards of the tenements were closely packed with Russians and Poles. The men had thin sharp features and black beards and were dressed in filthy clothing. The women were even less tidy and children were left to their own caprices.²¹²

The National Quarantine Act of 1893 intertwined public health and maritime commerce. The quarantine measures that resulted from the new law further complicated issues of commerce and trade because incoming ships often brought goods to the United States. Part of the new law intended to stop steamship incidents like the one involving the *Iniziativa* in 1891 in which the Floria line refused to take a ship back to Italy. If immigrants were inspected before they actually arrived at a U.S. port, it would be less likely that sick immigrants would come to America. A quarantined ship could mean a lack of revenue for a company waiting to receive its products in the United States.

As part of the new quarantine law, newcomers were required

to prove that they were free from illness through “certificates of health” provided by physicians from their home countries. The *Los Angeles Times* outlined the consequences for falsifying health certificates:

The U.S. Treasury Department has provided the steamship companies with blank forms containing a series of twenty-one questions which must be answered by immigrants before disembarking from the other side. The statement is made that a ‘false oath will subject the immigrant to fine or imprisonment.’²¹³

The same article also reported that the Michigan State Board of Health “made a new rule making it practically a “criminal offense” for immigrants from any infected ports to enter the state of Michigan without permission of the state inspector.”²¹⁴ A neighborhood on New York’s lower East Side known as “Penitentiary Row” was known among police for its “frequent complaints about the many Russians and Poles living there.”²¹⁵

After the immigration laws tightened, “smuggling”, or illegal importation, of immigrants increased among some of the steamship companies. Newspapers commonly referred to illegal importing as “smuggling,” a dehumanizing term that portrayed newcomers as objects rather than people. As a provision of the National Quarantine Act of 1893, the U.S. Treasury Department made it the responsibility of the steamship captains to ensure their vessels imported healthy passengers. If immigrants arrived sick, the steamship company or the captain incurred a fine.²¹⁶

Detention of immigrants on North Brother Island or Swinburne Island located near Ellis Island exemplified the government’s treatment of immigrants as criminals. Physicians inspected newcomers upon arrival to U.S. ports, sending those believed to be ill to quarantine. Others who came through immigration inspection without being quarantined were rounded up by police and brought back to Ellis Island, particularly during disease outbreaks. Again, the press used the “criminal” frame to depict the incoming “suspects” as dangerous criminals unwilling to cooperate with officials.

As the summer spring approached, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported epidemics, starting with a smallpox outbreak among a “negro” and an “Italian child” in Akron, Ohio.²¹⁷ The *Sentinel* also reported that a German

immigrant, Engelbert Hoog, died of cholera in St. Paul, Minnesota but that those “emigrants” who accompanied him “bore clean health certificates from the New York city Health Department.”²¹⁸ On January 25, the Sentinel blamed “lax quarantine regulation at New York” for a smallpox outbreak in Michigan.²¹⁹ It would seem the Sentinel anticipated a major epidemic outbreak like those of 1892. But these were isolated incidents and cholera did not become an epidemic that year.

With the Columbian Exposition about to begin and stricter immigration guidelines in place, a group of Chinese actors hired to perform at the Exposition were taken into quarantine in Chicago because it had been reported that they had smallpox.²²⁰ The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the incident caused a “sensation” in Chicago. They came to the United States through Seattle, traveled to Chicago, where they stayed with a Sam Moy, a well-known Chinese merchant on South Clark Street. Once authorities learned of their supposed condition, police went to where they stayed, quarantined and vaccinated the men.²²¹

Other issues involving Chinese immigrants appeared in the press. In one case, a group of Chinese men were deported from San Francisco under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that “contraband Chinese attempted to land after arriving on the British steamer Danube,” but were soon returned home.²²² Another case involving falsified Chinese certificates of health surfaced in papers. The Times reported that the health officer reported that in the course of his health examinations, “nearly all of the 600 Chinese have bogus health certificates,” and that health officers advised, “exercise the greatest caution in examining the papers of this batch of celestials.”²²³

Throughout the year, only a few reports of typhus, smallpox, and cholera surfaced in the news. In January, reports of typhus and Mexican immigrants appeared in the newspapers.²²⁴ The *Galveston Daily News* reported that the outbreaks in Texas surely came from Mexican immigrants. The *Boston Daily Globe* even blamed Mexicans for an outbreak of typhus in New York City in January 1893, saying “the origin of the disease has not been determined, but Dr. Roberts, chief of the bureau of contagious diseases, is inclined to believe that it was brought by way of Texas from Mexico, in some parts of which typhus is now said to be an epidemic.”²²⁵ Like the *Milwaukee Sentinel* earlier in the year, it would seem as though the press looked for sensational stories about immigrants and

epidemics.

Closing in October, the Columbian Exposition was immensely successful, viewed as the model for all subsequent world fairs.²²⁶ Although it was feared, cholera did not interfere with the success of the Columbian Exposition, with only one reported outbreak of cholera directly related to the fair.²²⁷ Attendance had reached over 6.8 million paid visitors – doubling August’s 3.5 million.²²⁸ The concession stands brought in over \$4 million, the newly-invented Ferris Wheel turned a profit, and when all the calculations were complete, the Exposition itself more than broke even, with a \$1 million surplus to be returned to its 30,000 stockholders.²²⁹ The Exposition became the standard by which all future fairs were measured thereafter.

With the Exposition complete, in the fall, the press focused on the new immigration legislation, but the news of epidemics faded. Cholera never became an epidemic as some politicians and health experts had anticipated, as did no other epidemics during that year. Tighter quarantine procedures and the required health certificates probably accounted for fewer epidemics and contagious illnesses, and an overall decrease in the number of people who immigrated to the United States that year. Anti-immigration supporters, like Senator Chandler, continued to attempt to curtail immigration even further.

Also in November, the *Boston Daily Globe* reported that immigration figures for 1893 had decreased by over 100,000 as compared to the previous year, but warned that European immigrants might still continue to enter the United States through the Southern ports where manufacturers offered “immense employment attractions.”²³⁰ The overriding message here is that immigrants would always find a way “in”, no matter how hard some people worked to “keep the scum out.”

Conclusion

The pages of newspapers of the late nineteenth century told the story of immigrants and epidemics in the United States during which time immigration legislation tightened, and increasing numbers of immigrants were excluded on the basis of medical criteria. This study of newspaper framing of immigrants and epidemics is important to understanding the immigration experience from 1891 to 1893 and the laws and events in the decades that followed. Statistics show that between 1891 and 1898,

the total number of immigrants excluded based on medical criteria was between 1 to 2 percent.²³¹ By 1915, the figure rose to 69 percent.²³² Although epidemics and contagious illnesses declined by the early 1900s, ironically, the number of rejected immigrants based on medical criteria increased.

While the American press cannot be held responsible for restrictive immigration legislation, derogatory, framing of immigrants with regard to epidemics and illnesses undoubtedly made these issues more salient to the public. This probably also led to increased scrutiny of America's newcomers and tighter immigration laws that followed. As scholars have argued in their examinations of immigration laws and prejudice, it would be impossible to ignore the negative effects of the immigration laws of the 1890s on hundreds of thousands of immigrants.^{233, 234} In an era in which objectivity did not reign supreme in the publishing world, newspaper framing studied in this research usually presented one side of the immigration issue, depicting immigrants in a negative light.

In the eight newspapers of this study, the coverage of immigrants and immigrant issues in the context of epidemics is predominantly derogatory. Common framing themes found in the articles are: exclusion, inferiority, dirtiness, danger, crime, and helplessness. Within these frames, the most striking element is the overwhelming use of denigrating, hateful terms that portray immigrants such as, "scourge", "swarm" "shut the gates", "put up the bars", "keep the scum out", "stop them by all means," "dirty menaces to society", "danger," "dangerous," "escape", "guard", "suspect", "suspicious", "escaped", "sneaky", "underhanded", "fugitive", and "evil." Repetition of the frames of exclusion, dirt, inferiority, danger, crime and helplessness stands alone a framing pattern. Repetition of these frames undoubtedly gave salience to the issue of immigration in the context of epidemics and underscored the turbulent nature of immigration in the 1890s.

The events highlighted in this work took place over 100 years ago. But in 2009, we continue to live in an era of immigration reform. In an attempt to restrict immigration, reform bills have been introduced in Congress annually for the past several years. Media coverage of immigration will increase as the public discourse surrounding the issues intensifies. The manner in which newspapers use frames is critical to understanding how newspapers today shape messages about immigration.

Endnotes

- ¹ “Progress of the Cholera,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1892,2.
- ² Cholera, also known as Asiatic Cholera, is an acute intestinal infection caused by ingestion of contaminated water or food. [source: <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=cholera>].
- ³ Smallpox is a highly contagious viral disease characterized by fever and weakness and skin eruption with pustules that form scabs that slough off leaving scars. It can be passed from one person to another through coughing, sneezing, or breathing, or by contact with the scabs or the fluid from blisters. It can even spread from an infected person’s personal items and bedding. [source: <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/smallpox-topic-overview>].
- ⁴ Typhus is an acute, infectious disease transmitted by lice and fleas. [source: <http://www.pearlspad.net.nz/Medical.htm>]. Typhus is not to be confused with typhoid fever (the name came from the disease’s similar symptoms to that of typhus). Typhus is an infectious, often-fatal disease, usually occurring in the summer months – it is an intestinal inflammation and ulceration caused by contaminated water or food. [source: Wayne Biddle. *A Field Guide to Germs*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 165]. Press coverage of typhoid fever is not included in this study because it was not a reported major epidemic from 1891 to 1893.
- ⁵ Leprosy, also known as Hansen’s Disease, is a chronic disease caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae*, a distant relative of the tuberculosis bacillus. The bacilli tend to gravitate to the nerves and near the cooler parts of a person’s body. There they commonly affect such areas as a person’s skin, the mucosa of their upper respiratory tract, their eyes and/or their peripheral nerves, causing severely infected feet and hands. In some cases, bumps appear on the face [source: Wayne Biddle. *A Field Guide to Germs*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 105].
- ⁶ Currently in 2008, cholera, smallpox, typhus, and leprosy have been nearly eradicated in the developed world. [source: Wayne Biddle. *A Field Guide to Germs*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 47, 137, 169]
- ⁷ Smaller inspections stations existed, but these were the main stations.
- ⁸ Robert M. Entman. “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication*, 1993, 43(4): 53.

- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Leon F. Bouvier. *Peaceful Invasions: Immigration and Changing America*. (NY: University Press of America, 1992), 13-14.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Roger Streitmatter. "The Nativist press: Demonizing the American immigrant," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 1999, 76, 674.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ellis Island, (The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., 2000, accessed 17 July 2007); available from http://www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp; Internet.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Thomas J. Curran. *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930*. (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co, 1975), 93.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ John Higham. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (News Brunswick, New Jersey: Routledge, 1994), 35.
- ²⁰ The actual figures for confirmed cases of epidemics among immigrants are historically unclear. (Markel, *Quarantine!*, 128).
- ²¹ Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics, (Harvard University Library Open Collection Program, Harvard University, 2008, accessed on May 23, 2008); available from <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/germtheory.html>; Internet.
- ²² Howard Markel. *Quarantine! East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 4.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics, Internet.
- ²⁵ Roy L. Garis. *Immigration Restriction: A Study of the Opposition of Immigration to and Regulation of Immigration into the United States*. (New York: MacMillan Company, 1927), 32.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 33.
- ²⁹ The Immigration Act of 1891 established the Superintendent of Immigration office that later became the Office of Immigration and

Naturalization Service (INS) in 1906.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Immigration Legislation from 1790-1900. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2008, accessed on May 26, 2008); available from <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5600b9f6b2899b1697849110543f6d1a?vgnnextoid=6b7389eef3d4b010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD&searchQuery=1790&radioSearch=entireSite>; Internet.

³² Markel, *Quarantine!*, 164.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Roy Rosenzweig, Nelson Lichtenstein, Joshua Brown, David Jaffee. *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History, Volume Two: 1865 to the Present*, (University of California: Santa Barbara, 2000), 146.

³⁵ Immigration Legislation from 1790-1900, Internet.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 113.

³⁸ Markel, *Quarantine!*, 143.

³⁹ Ibid., 175.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 138.

⁴¹ Ibid, 4.

⁴² Higham. *Strangers in the Land*, 4.

⁴³ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁴ Streitmatter, "The Nativist Press", 673.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 680.

⁴⁸ "Vaccinating the Mexicans: Efforts to Stamp out an Epidemic of Smallpox along the Rio Grande," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 4 January 1891, 14.

⁴⁹ "Smallpox in Texas: It is Becoming Epidemic and a Shotgun Quarantine Prevails," *New York Times*, 6 January 1891, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "The Smallpox Scare," *Galveston Daily News*, 30 January 1891, 6.

⁵² Ibid. 1324.

⁵³ Other ethnic groups from Europe, such as Greeks and Syrians, often learned enough Spanish to enter America as Mexicans (Ibid., 1324).

⁵⁴ Howard Markel and Minna Stern. "Which Face? Who's Nation?"

- Immigration, Public Health, and the Construction of Disease at America's Ports and Borders, 1891-1928." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1999, 1323.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 1325.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 1325.
- ⁵⁸ "The Question of Immigration," *New York Times*, 2 February 1891, 4.
- ⁵⁹ "Undesirables: Another Phase of Immigration," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 May 1891, 1.
- ⁶⁰ Higham. *Strangers in the Land*, 99.
- ⁶¹ The Immigration Act of 1891 established the Superintendent of Immigration office that later became the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1906.
- ⁶² "The New Law Keeps Them Out," *The New York Times*, 1 April 1891, 2.
- ⁶³ Markel. *Quarantine!*, 145.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Benjamin Harrison, "Third Annual Address to the Congress, December 9, 1891," in J.D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, 1899), 9:188.
- ⁶⁶ Markel. *Quarantine!*, 144.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
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The Struggle for Justice: How the Media Convicted and Freed the “Scottsboro Boys” 1931-1937

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During the rape trials of the “Scottsboro Boys” from 1931 to 1937, media coverage had both negative and positive effects on the outcome. In the beginning, Southern newspapers excited fury in Alabama residents leading to hasty convictions and execution sentences. As journalists nationwide became involved, Americans of all races and classes united in the struggle for Justice. With several tests of the judicial system and important historical decisions, the media helped convict and save the Scottsboro Boys.

“The Scottsboro Nine”

On March 25, 1931, Andy Wright, his younger brother Roy, and their friends, Haywood Patterson and Eugene Williams, “hoboed” on a freight train traveling through northern Alabama in search of work in Memphis. Olen Montgomery, Willie Roberson, Clarence Norris, Charlie Weems and Ozie Powell were also on the train but none of them knew each other. All of the aforementioned were Negro youths from different areas in the South.¹ A few of the Negro young men fought a group of white young men also on the train, pushing all but one white boy from the moving vehicle.²

When the train stopped in Paint Rock, Alabama everyone was forced to evacuate while a mob of angry white farmers watched. The nine Negroes were arrested for what they initially thought were charges of stealing rides on the train. However, the young men ranging from twelve to nineteen years of age were actually arrested for raping two white women who had been riding the same train. They were taken to the nearest jail in Scottsboro, Alabama and from that point on they were known as “The Scottsboro Boys.”³

In the South, where Negroes were openly treated as inferior, the press asserted their discriminatory views against the defendants regarding the arrest. Reporting about them as brutes and fiends who deserved punishment, the newspapers in Northern Alabama and Tennessee

promptly made news of the arrest into what the *Pittsburgh Courier* called a “famous or infamous” case.⁴ In the book, “Scottsboro Boy”, one defendant recalled headlines in *Scottsboro’s Progressive Age* newspaper about “nine black fiends” who had “committed the revolting crime” against two white girls, Victoria Price, 21 and Ruby Bates, 18.⁵ News spread across the nation and the world, covering the front pages of publications with varying headlines and opinions.⁶

The day after the arrest, the *Chattanooga Times* reported that some of the boys had already had a history of trouble, although there were no facts supporting this claim. Haywood Patterson and the Wright brothers were allegedly labeled by the local police as “the worst young Negroes in Chattanooga,” having committed such crimes as transporting liquor, felonious assault and more. The publication claimed that the youths were under bond to the county’s grand jury for pilfering. The purported “Patterson-Wright gang” included Patterson’s brothers, and they all somehow managed to evade the law every time.⁷

To elicit further interest in the case as well as sympathy for the alleged victims, more false information was published. The *Times* claimed that on the day of the arrest, six defendants confessed to the charges while the other three denied the accusations, but no one had ever admitted to the crime. To enforce the images of pure white womanhood, Victoria was reported as four years younger than her true age and she was quoted claiming, “Mister I never had a break in my life. Those Negroes have ruined me and Ruby forever.”⁸ These accounts inspired a considerable amount of curiosity in the Southern people.

The Trials Begin

The circuit solicitor, H.G. Bailey, requested separate trials and Judge Alfred E. Hawkins agreed that the boys would be tried in pairs with the first one scheduled for April 6—less than two weeks after the arrest. With no one stepping up to the defense, the Scottsboro bar attorneys had been assigned to the defense, each one finding a reason not to follow through. The only man who would accept the case, Milo Moody, was known for taking unpopular positions.⁹ He appeared to have no interest in helping them, but there was not much he could do considering the attitudes the townspeople already had concerning the case. With the few words he said “now and then,” the defendants believed that he was against

them.¹⁰

As the small town of Scottsboro gained attention from newspapers across the country, people enlisted aid for the defendants by sending letters and money. A doctor in Chattanooga called attention to the case and helped raise money with the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance.¹¹ Together they hired a local attorney named Stephen Roddy, who was not experienced or talented in practicing law.¹² When asked if he was going to represent the defendants, Roddy noted that he did not intend to defend them but was merely present in the court to “sort of help out” and observe the Alabama laws. Since he was unfamiliar with the state’s procedures he asked for permission to work with Moody.¹³

Noticing how important the case was to the population as a whole, the historical Black press regularly covered the Scottsboro case, although most of the popular weekly publications were printed in Northern cities. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reported to its readers the atmosphere surrounding the opening day of the trials when more than ten thousand “mob-minded” people appeared in Scottsboro from different areas as far as Tennessee and Georgia. The event was a hot topic due to the press coverage. The first Monday of the month was normally a day for workers from surrounding communities to gather to swap horses and mules, a day to mingle and celebrate. With the trials taking place, the town was much more crowded than any other “Fair Day.” For their safety, the defendants were escorted to the courthouse by members of the National Guard. When Roddy and Moody requested a change of venue for the first trial, it was denied, even with the substantial feeling of tension felt throughout the community.¹⁴

The first defendant on trial was Haywood Patterson, who was tried alone and found guilty. The jury reached this decision despite the fact that the accusers’ testimonies conflicted when Ruby could not identify any of the defendants who had allegedly attacked her.¹⁵ When the guilty verdict was read, there was a “wild and thunderous” roar that went around the courthouse as a brass band entertained the crowd playing songs like “There Will Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” and “Dixie.”¹⁶

During all of the trials, the defendants argued that they could have fled the train but it was not necessary because they had done nothing wrong.¹⁷ When they testified, all but one remained true to their original statements. The *Courier* reported that Clarence Norris was forced to testify that some of the accused were indeed guilty. In doing so, he was told he

would be set free: otherwise he would undoubtedly face execution.¹⁸ Alas, following the trials, which ended April 9, the jury convened for less than two hours and found all of the defendants guilty. Eight of the defendants were scheduled to be executed by electric chair on July 10, 1931, to the delight of the trial's spectators. Norris recalled that he had never seen so many happy white people until the moment he watched them revel in his and the other defendants' terror.¹⁹ A mistrial was declared for Roy Wright, due to how young he looked. Instead he was sentenced to life in prison.²⁰

Arguments were made that the justice was not served for the defendants. The Communist-supported *Labor Defender* held that the plaintiffs' past as prostitutes proved they were not trustworthy and also acknowledged that Negroes had no chance at fair trials.²¹ Roddy requested approval for a member of the National Guard to testify that the cheers following the first verdict were loud enough to have been heard inside.²² He wanted to prove that the brass band could have influenced the jury during the other trials. Objectors asserted that the noise was produced by a calliope from an automobile that was advertising local products.²³ *New Republic*, a liberal journal, stated that there was in fact a parade of Ford trucks with a phonograph and amplifier in the courthouse square, and a brass band had indeed played victory songs at the announcement of the verdicts. Edmund Wilson reported that *Scottsboro's Progressive Age* commended the townsfolk for exhibiting patience during the trial, for "if ever there was an excuse for taking the law into [the people of Jackson county's] own hands, surely this was one."²⁴ This type of acclamation proved the emotions and mentalities of the local people considering this case of Negroes accused of raping white women.

In *Scottsboro, the Firebrand of Communism*, Files Crenshaw Jr. and Kenneth A. Miller, two Communist objectors, argued that white people had demanded the respect of white women from all Negroes, regardless of the woman's position in society from the time of African slavery in America. Behaving without said respect was thought to be a commission of the "unpardonable sin" from the perspective of Southern white folks, especially if it involved rape. Crenshaw and Miller argued that the defense's efforts to lessen the significance of the prosecution by berating the characters of the accusers should not have been taken into consideration by the courts.²⁵

Writers and prominent figures helped campaign for the defendants.

Langston Hughes wrote poetry and stories and Albert Einstein attended protests to raise awareness about what they saw as injustice. In the *Labor Defender*, renowned writer Theodore Dreiser was featured with a commentary noting that anyone aware of the mentality of Southern people would realize that news about “Negroes alone with white girls is enough to make rape a fact!” He called the attitude toward Negroes in the South “a national ill” and said the trials were “unreasoning and immensely unfair.” In his conclusion he said, “Study the Negroes’ past in America first, and then judge.”²⁶ He argued that Negroes, having suffered so much persecution in the U.S., deserved fairer treatment.

Chicago Defender, a historically Black newspaper, declared, “Alabama has had no lynching this year” but there would probably be a “wholesale ‘lynching’” due to the convictions and sentences of the boys. It was the first trial in a long time to stir up emotions in Alabama and the South as much as it had.²⁷ The Southern states were known for their mistreatment of Negroes and since the state of Alabama had nine Negro youths at their disposal—eight of whom were waiting to die—The *Chicago Defender* bore the responsibility of updating readers about the events. It was reported that before the first trial started, Hawkins admitted that he had received a telegram from Huntsville stating that the case was a “frame up.” As proven at the trial, he said he would ignore that information. Hawkins, known to reporters as “Judge Lynch,” commented that he thought the defendants were guilty and that the trial was a waste of time and money. Despite the lack of evidence, the court relied on the prosecution over the defendants.²⁸

The *Pittsburgh Courier* quoted the defendants saying, “We have been framed and sent to our deaths without the semblance of a fair and impartial trial.” It was reported that the accused men expressed “in no uncertain terms,” they were confined on false charges. Also published was a letter from Haywood Patterson to his parents saying he was upset to think that “[their] poor son is going to die for nothing.” Many newspapers, especially the black press and the Communist press, realized the position to involve the American Negro population in the case of “eight tortured and imprisoned youths” so they took every opportunity to cover the events.²⁹

In an interview with The *Chicago Defender*, Mrs. Ada Wright, mother of Andy and Roy, described the case in saying that the defendants’

lives “were juggled in a hat.” She pointed out that after the police brought all the prisoners together and convinced the girls to contrive a story of rape, they let the white youths who had all been arrested go free. The newspaper reported that Alabama was determined to “stage a carnival of executions.”³⁰ It had been the first time in the state’s history that so many people were sentenced to be executed at the same time.³¹

The *Courier* continued to update readers about the defendants as people increasingly believed they were framed and being “driven to almost maniacal frenzy” due to circumstances beyond any one defendant’s control. It was reported that the verdict was possibly handed down by a prejudiced judge and jury, done so with insufficient defense available to support the accused.³²

Chattanooga Times reported that the city of Scottsboro was proud of the trials’ outcomes because “Judge ‘Lynch’ was given a thorough snubbing.” The residents of Jackson County were lauded for remaining calm in face of what was proclaimed as the most scandalous misdeed in the history of Alabama. They all, including the defense attorney, were glad that the defendants received what they believed to be a fair trial.³³ Roddy was quoted saying “I don’t see how anyone can say that we are not striving to see that the defendants are getting the fairest trial from the defense attorneys.”³⁴

NAACP vs. ILD

The Communists needed to attract the Negro working population in order to increase participation in the United States. *New Republic* published a part of the “Thesis and Resolutions for the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States” saying:

Unless our Negro program is concretized and energetically pushed, the work of our party in winning the majority of the working class will be fruitless in the North as well as the South.³⁵

The Scottsboro case was a good opportunity to encourage hope with Negroes in the country. The Communists entered the case by assigning their defense team, the International Labor Defense (ILD) to send Hawkins telegrams saying they would hold him responsible for the

“legal lynching” of the prisoners. The ILD approached Roddy to act as their chief counsel but their proposition to pay him through a defense fund was not favorable to him so he refused to deal with them at all.³⁶ Communist objectors believed the deception employed by the ILD was to trick unwary Negroes into its organization.³⁷

The ILD turned to a Communist helper from Chattanooga named George Chamlee, a political rival of Roddy who was known for his representation of seemingly difficult cases—Negroes and radicals. The ILD sent two attorneys, Joseph Brodsky and Irving Schwab, to Scottsboro and they dressed like farmers so they could get inside to talk to the boys. The defendants were concerned at first because they had never known any White man to be good but they realized that the men were there to help them.³⁸

The Communists reported in one of their monthly publications, *Labor Defender*, that a “bloody holiday” was in the works by the state authorities as a reaction to the accusations made against the boys. The “age-old cry of ‘rape’” had been raised to validate the actions of the court. Reports like these and demands for letters to be written to sheriffs and judges in Alabama created a mass response across the nation and the world, especially in nations where Communism was strongly supported.³⁹

According to *Labor Defender*, if the defendants were not forced to face execution, it would be due to the courts’ “fear for the state” rather than a sense of justice.⁴⁰ In conjunction with The League of Struggle for Negro Rights the Communists published a pamphlet written by B.D. Amis to engage activism among all people, regardless of race. Amis wrote that Alabama had developed a “system of national oppression of the negro peoples” and the case was a “thunderbolt” that united the Black people and increased awareness of White workers.⁴¹

One question that stirred controversy dealt with the role of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the defense of the Scottsboro Boys. The NAACP was a nonpolitical organization known for protecting the civil liberties of Negroes. According to *New Republic*, the NAACP commonly tended to encourage Black people to resign to “white respectability” in order to assert equal rights.⁴² The Communists accused them of assuming they were “far too respectable to enter into the case of nine poor working class boys charged with rape.”⁴³ However, the NAACP did get involved with helping the defendants.

The *Courier* reported that a group had “finally aroused the Negro from his lethargy as a mass unit to join together in a fight against oppression and southern tyranny.” The NAACP retained Roddy for the defense and believed that with his assistance, the case would be “one of the most sensational legal battles ever fought on behalf of the Negro in the South.” Negroes nationwide could rest assured that the NAACP would take charge in a movement to check the “legal lynching” being attempted by the state.⁴⁴ The *Courier* interviewed the secretary of the NAACP, Walter White, who insisted the Association intended to take every measure to ensure that the defendants receive a fair trial. White claimed he had no objection to the ILD organizing or aiding in the defense but he felt their efforts were not sincere since they intensified the difficulty of defending the prisoners.⁴⁵

Although the Communists repeatedly attacked them for having not “stirred a finger until the fury of the masses forced them to act,”⁴⁶ the NAACP maintained that they had played an active role from the beginning, “contrary to malicious and untruthful reports.”⁴⁷ There still were Negro journalists who were uncertain of this argument. *Chicago Defender* raised concern over whether the NAACP entered the case at the start of the trial, as Walter White had stated in New York, or if they had made their first attempt after complaints arose over why they were not involved. The Midwestern weekly reported that Roddy told them White approached him after he already notified local newspapers that he had done so.⁴⁸

A *Chicago Defender* writer visited the national office and reported that he was told Walter White was fearful of traveling South. White had been told it was not safe for him to visit Alabama since his picture was published in so many newspapers. White refuted this suggestion, saying there never was a time when the NAACP expressed fear of taking any case. The reason that they did not publicize their involvement in the case was regarding the feelings in the state surrounding the case. They believed it was so bitter that the Association’s entrance would certainly have irritated the “mobbists” even more against the boys.⁴⁹

There were supporters of the defendants who expected Communist involvement in the case to ruin any chance for acquittal because of the ILD’s angry telegrams and radical views. White stated in the *Courier* that the Communists increased “the already inflamed sentiment in Alabama”

and they were not empowered to send telegrams demanding the release of the boys.⁵⁰ *New Republic* reported that the ILD believed Roddy and his supporters were helping the “southern boss” give the boys an unfair trial. They called White “a betrayer of the Negro” and said he only entered the case because the “rank and file of his organization” forced him to get involved and to connive with the authorities by getting the defendants’ sentences converted to life imprisonment.⁵¹

Negroes across the country expressed interest in the defendants’ cause and supported the NAACP in their efforts, especially the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Its editor believed that the ILD was trying to embarrass the NAACP, instead of cooperating with them, thus proving they did not have any real interest in protecting the defendants’ rights.⁵² The NAACP investigated the facts without the need for attention. The publication said the ILD was exploiting a chance to get “cheap publicity” and accused them of falsely giving the impression that they were going to release the prisoners immediately when they were only trying to arouse the public. They called them “hot-headed publicity seekers” trying to motivate Americans with their self-proclaimed competence in helping free prisoners:

It is our opinion that if the boys convicted ever receive one iota of consideration...it will not be due to anything the Communists have done...It is more likely, however that if mobs break out...it will probably be due to the nonsensical activities of the Communists who, by their misguided energies, will finally drive the citizens of Alabama to the point of desperation...[Citizens of Alabama] need not get excited over the circus staged by the Communists...⁵³

The *Courier* reported that all of the prisoners had chosen the NAACP for counsel, thus settling the ongoing quarrel. However, there was never a point when all of the defendants had decided on the NAACP. In fact, none of them had officially selected the NAACP because of the numerous conflicting stories they had heard.⁵⁴ Competition continued as the defendants simply signed and rejected several documents between the two groups. According to *New Republic*, the Negro population was divided into two factions: one consisted of those persuaded by Communist arguments and the other was made of people who, based on conservative

ideals, were against the Communist shakeup. In the end, because of their efforts in gaining public interest in their cause, all of the debates gave more publicity to the ILD and all of the defendants requested their aide.⁵⁵

Landmark Decision

After the NAACP withdrew from the case, the ILD continued to support the defendants. They insisted on the idea that the alleged victims' past as prostitutes made them less reliable. During the first trial, the doctor that had examined the two women testified. He stated that there was evidence of sexual intercourse but there were no visible signs of forced entry on either woman. His testimony was not considered by the judge or the jury. The ILD wanted to prove that the jury decided mainly because they were intimidated by the mob of people outside the courthouse armed with shotguns.⁵⁶

The laws of the South upheld the notion that anyone who did attack a woman would die. Yet the *Labor Defender* argued that "white citizens may have their way with Negro girls without running foul of the law."⁵⁷ Southerners would proudly declare that in their minds, the fact that a woman is immoral does not constitute an excuse to attack her. In the Southern newspaper, *Winston-Salem Journal* of North Carolina, a writer acknowledged the same rules could have been altered if a White man had been accused but felt "if amalgamation is permitted in the lower strata, it may creep upward." This suggested that their "desired objective: maintenance of racial purity" could not be upheld if Negroes were offered too many chances to mingle with white women.⁵⁸

On March 24, 1932, the Alabama Supreme Court affirmed all of the convictions, except for that of Eugene Williams, on the grounds that he was a juvenile when he was arrested. The U.S. Supreme Court viewed the defendants' case and on November 7, 1932, in the *Powell v. Alabama* decision, they reversed the convictions since the defendants did not have adequate counsel. The *New York Times* reported that the decision was hailed as a vindication of the ILD policy. The National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners credited the ILD for "coming to the aid of these boys when all recognized organizations and institutions hung back."⁵⁹ Although it was called a "great historic landmark" in the political advancement of the American people, it was not the last of the endeavors to protect the rights of the accused. The defendants were granted another

trial that would take place in another county but under the same state laws with the same type of jury.⁶⁰ The *New York Times* reported that a remarkable chapter was written in the history of liberty.⁶¹

In a letter published in *Atlanta Daily World*, Chamlee considered this a great fight that would stand as a monument in the ILD.⁶² In the *Afro-American*, a Black newspaper in Baltimore, he argued that the accusation of rape was easy to make but hard to prove as well as disprove. "If this had been a White man," he said, "he wouldn't have been tried but once and maybe not at all." In his experience as a prosecutor he learned that "half of the rape charges made in the South were false".⁶³ Chamlee's account of the trials helped readers understand how important the case would be for everyone, not just Black people.

New Trials Granted

Samuel Leibowitz, a New York attorney, was appointed as the defendants' chief counsel for the trials. Leibowitz immediately sought to prove the qualifications of Negroes to serve as jurors within the meaning of Alabama statutes. It was the first time an attempt had been made to prove racial discrimination in the selection of Southern juries. Attorney General Thomas Knight Jr., the prosecutor, claimed that Alabama laws did not disqualify Negroes as jurors. Negroes simply failed to satisfy the jury commissioners appointed by the Governor. The *New York Times* reported that the defense moved to quash the indictments against the defendants based upon the allegation that Negroes were excluded from the grand jury that indicted them.⁶⁴

In the last week of March 1933, the trials opened in Decatur, Alabama of Morgan County starting with Haywood Patterson.⁶⁵ Documentary reporter, John L. Spivak wrote in New York's Black newspaper, *Amsterdam News*, that two boys selling a pamphlet called "The Unpublished Inside Story of the Infamous Scottsboro Case" in the Morgan County Circuit Court lobby were arrested for contempt of court. The pamphlet, written by a Huntsville reporter named J. Glenn Jordan, criticized the ILD for defending the Scottsboro Boys and clearly stated that they all deserved to be executed. Leibowitz called the pamphlet sales an effort to influence public emotion especially that of any juror passing through the lobby. Judge James E. Horton had all of the pamphlets confiscated but there was a chance that some influence had already been

drawn.⁶⁶

When Victoria Price testified in Morgan County, she was revealed as a probable liar. Journalist Raymond Daniell of *New York Times* reported that when Leibowitz asked Price questions regarding her character she retorted using colloquialisms of the “poor white.” She repeated the vulgar comments defendants supposedly made to her without a second thought and in a strong voice that went against ladylike characteristics, considering the topic. Her lip curled as she entered an angry denial to Leibowitz asking if she had contrived the story of being raped by the defendants, the forced Ruby Bates to do the same. Daniell stated that coercing Bates to uphold her end of the story was easy because she wanted to avoid being arrested for another crime.⁶⁷

Spivak also covered Price’s testimony saying that ever since the world learned of her story, she was proud to be a “somebody,” even if it cost lives. She planned on sticking to her accusations, never battered an eyelash while using words over which most ladies would stumble out of embarrassment. She aggrandized her initial story with “scenes that might have come from a melodramatic movie.”⁶⁸ The adamant explanation of the alleged crime did not sound completely credible.

Several months after a letter written by Ruby Bates denying the defendants raped her had surfaced, she appeared to testify again. Having signed an affidavit against the letter’s validity, Bates was expected to be “the star witness” for the prosecution. Daniell reported that when Leibowitz announced Bates a witness, Knight and the prosecution team were nervous. He stated that Price was “panting with anger and excitement” as Knight warned her to stay calm. In this “dramatic appearance,” Bates rebutted her original testimony and said that Price had framed the defendants. Bates confessed that she and Price had spent the night prior to the arrest with two men and that the accused never attacked either of them.⁶⁹ *Chicago Defender* reported that her testimony was straightforward and direct and in contrast to Price’s from beginning to end.⁷⁰ Bates’ repudiation of the original testimonies angered local residents and violence was expected but never occurred.⁷¹

After her testimony, Bates disclosed in-depth information to Spivak in *Labor Defender*, describing her understanding of the situation. Even as a lower class girl growing up, all she knew was that Negroes were beneath her. On the day the defendants were arrested, she and Price were offered

witness fees if they pretended to have been raped. In their minds, “the lives of a dozen niggers do not matter when a white’s liberty is a stake.” These accounts further proved she was what Spivak called a “symbol of White supremacy.”⁷² Haunted by her conscience, Bates was convinced by a minister she met in New York to tell the truth. Her trip to Alabama was paid for by the ILD and the prosecution used that knowledge against her. Knight led the jury to believe that Bates “had sold her soul-and the South-to northerners and Communists.”⁷³ He persuaded them not to make it seem as if Alabama justice could be bought.

As pleased as the mothers of the defendants and other supporters were about Bates disclosing the truth, her attempt to correct a wrong action was done in vain. On April 9, 1932 Haywood Patterson was convicted again and sentenced to death.⁷⁴ When asked how the jury could reach a guilty verdict even after such an electrifying testimony, Leibowitz reportedly responded “If you ever saw those creatures...those bigots...you would not ask me how they could.” Naturally that comment angered residents of Alabama including the prosecutors and Horton. Leibowitz apologized for offending Horton but maintained that the jurors were “Hitler-crying bigots.”⁷⁵

Judge Horton granted Patterson a new trial due to the insufficient evidence against him. It was suggested that if Patterson could be acquitted then the state would probably move to dismiss the other cases.⁷⁶ Horton was convinced of the defendants’ innocence and tried to instruct the jury in a manner that would assure their acquittal or, at least, a sentence other than death. In a pamphlet he published later, he said “the vital ground of this motion is whether or not the verdict of guilty is contrary to the evidence.”⁷⁷ After making his opinion public, Horton lost re-election. Judge William “Speedy” Callahan was assigned to re-try the cases. In December 1933, Patterson and Clarence Norris were convicted and sentenced to death again.⁷⁸

Hamilton Basso, a writer from the South, admitted in *New Republic* that Southerners hated when Northern newspapers printed criticism against the “honor of the South” that they were often compelled to defend. That honor could be defended either in the way the case was handled or by admitting that the trials were “cruel, tragic and unnecessary.” Basso reported that Callahan was living up to his nickname by keeping his promise to speed the trials up.⁷⁹

When the defendants were asked about their treatment by jailers, only Roy replied in saying, "What's the use of saying anything about it again? Nothing ever seems to be done." As the most outspoken he argued on behalf of himself and Eugene to *Call and Post* of Cleveland, Ohio. In reference to the habeas corpus proceedings which had been filed before Judge Horton, Roy declared "What we want is for the people on the outside to get our case before the President or the Federal Court." The laws of Alabama provided that those under sixteen would be tried in the Juvenile courts. If they were convicted, they would have had a different defense angle and faced far less severe penalties. Knight fought the proceedings and succeeded in preventing them from being heard.⁸⁰

On April 1, 1935, the U.S. Supreme court reversed the convictions of Patterson and Norris in *Norris v. Alabama* because there were no Negroes on the jury that indicted and convicted them.⁸¹ As James Horton wrote in his pamphlet, "deliberate in *Justice* is more fatal to the one who imposes it than the one on whom it is imposed."⁸² *Amsterdam News* acknowledged the courage some Negroes exemplified in trying to prove their qualifications to be jurors. It was the first time in the history of the South that the upper white ruling class had to share their rights with Negroes.⁸³

Chicago Defender reported that special precautions had been taken so white men would not have to sit with Negroes; extra chairs were placed outside the jury box. Knowing the dangers they could face, not many Negroes showed any real desire to be selected; especially after Callahan made it clear that previously formed opinions or beliefs in the inferiority of Negroes would not be held against any juror. In the end, the only "race man" selected for the jury was Creed Conyers of Paint Rock, Alabama.⁸⁴

Progress Made

After frustration with juries hating him for being a "New York Jew,"⁸⁵ Leibowitz became secondary. C.L. Watts of Huntsville acted as chief counsel out of hopes that a Southern attorney would have a better chance with an Alabama jury.⁸⁶ In January 1936, Patterson was tried and convicted for the fourth time and he was sentenced to 75 years in prison. *Amsterdam News* regarded this as an attempt by the state to negotiate on the cases since three previous Alabama juries called for the death penalty. The following year, Norris was convicted with a death sentence for the

third time. Andy Wright and Charlie Weems were tried and convicted for the second time, sentenced to 99 and 75 years in prison, respectively.

For the others, a different move was made by the court. On July 25, 1937, “life came to four of the Scottsboro Boys with the impact of a blow to the stomach in a climax that was as sudden as it was exciting,” reported the *Chicago Defender*.⁸⁷ The prosecution concluded that there was not enough evidence to convict Olen Montgomery, who was nearly blind, and Willie Roberson who was sick with a two venereal diseases at the time of the alleged attacks. The other two defendants, Eugene Williams and Roy Wright were juveniles at the time of the arrest.⁸⁸

F. Raymond Daniell reported that the four defendants, “who for six and one half years...lived in the shadow of the electric chair, were set free...in a dramatic finale of the famous Scottsboro case.” The four young men were released right away and headed for New York with Leibowitz. The fifth defendant saved from the rape trial was sentenced to twenty years in prison for assault with intent to murder.⁸⁹ Following taunts about his possible execution, Ozie Powell had, in 1936, attacked Edgar Blalock, a Morgan County deputy. Powell cut Blalock’s neck with a penknife he had found in his Decatur cell window. He pleaded guilty to the assault charge.⁹⁰

Leibowitz considered the freedom of the boys a great victory for the defense and many believed it was unlikely that any of them would be executed. They even believed that all except Powell would be freed by executive action in less than five years. People recognized that although it was a great victory, the Scottsboro case was not closed and it was not the end of the struggle. The young men’s release was not the result of a deal or compromise with the state.⁹¹

Afro-American and Communist writers continued to report on the victory, recognizing the battles that the defendants overcame. Days after the four prisoners were freed, former prisoner Angelo Herndon wrote in a Communist-published pamphlet,

The whole world knows that the boys are not guilty. Nobody will be fooled by the insidious move of releasing four in order to murder the other five. When the history of the Scottsboro prosecution and frame up is written it will go

down in the shame and infamy which it earned for itself. On the other hand, the lessons of Scottsboro will be a medium through which will be cemented indestructible bonds of unity between Negro and white workers.”⁹²

Soon after the four defendants were granted freedom, they received much less media coverage but were given the opportunity to experience life without worrying about the death penalty every day. Although they lost many years, the media helped America remember the “Scottsboro Boys” as heroes of the struggle for justice.

For the most part, the mainstream Southern press reported the defendants negatively: as brutish, violent, Negroes. This influenced their readers to see the defendants in a poor light inciting anger and demands for the immediate execution, or at least major punishment for attacking White Southern women. On the other hand, the mainstream Northern press aimed to stray from bias. With the significant lack of evidence on the side of the prosecution, it was easy for the Northern press to express their support for the defendants. This view persuaded readers who were expecting bias to get more involved with the case, also showing support. From the beginning, the Communist press and the historical Black press reported views that supported the defendants and sought to prove they had been wrongfully convicted. These reports of injustice led to support from the nation’s population that could not be ignored by the courts. The press, as a whole, presented a wide spectrum of views concerning the Scottsboro Boys’ trials and the opposing views with regard to race and class in America led to the conviction, and eventual freedom of the Scottsboro Boys.

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- 4 "10,000 Hear Boy Rapists Sentenced," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 April 1931, p. 1.
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The Different Faces of Scarlett: Media Coverage of Differing Views Concerning The Atlanta Premiere of *Gone with the Wind* and the *Gone with the Wind* Phenomenon

Alexandra Sowers

*News coverage of the premiere of *Gone with the Wind* in Atlanta showed many perspectives regarding the Antebellum Old South, Confederate Americans, and racial inequality. While the African-American community experienced and documented hardships in civil rights, white society romanticized the past through a collective memory of the Old South and the Confederacy. Such mythology and collective memory intensified the gulf between the ways blacks and whites remembered the past as well as the ways they dealt with civil rights and racial strife. The different views regarding the film and premiere portrayed the different faces of Scarlett in the American public and what these views meant to our changing country in all aspects of life and culture.*

The 1939 premiere of *Gone with the Wind* in Atlanta and other cities around the United States garnered different perspectives concerning the film's portrayal of the Old South and African-Americans, its effect on civil rights, and the combined effect of the film, book, and premiere on the commercial market. While most media coverage was positive, negative views brought to light the harsh realities faced by blacks in the South, as well as the region's continued struggle for economic parity since Reconstruction. While providing detailed descriptions of premiere events, Atlanta society, backlash from Communist and African-American newspapers, and civil rights struggles, this paper also relates the media coverage to collective memory and the cinematic mythology of the Old South. Memories of the Confederacy and the Old South were illustrated in many newspapers, praising the era. The press coverage given to this event as well as the romanticism given to the Confederacy and the Civil War greatly differs with views of the Confederacy today, which do not

include the same amount pride and positive connotation. By entering the past through the historical press coverage of December 1939, one may distinguish the cultural differences between today's media and that of yesteryear.

The December 1939 premiere of *Gone with the Wind* stirred excitement in Atlanta and the surrounding areas. Media coverage of the three-day event illustrated the city's preparations to receive the film's starring actors and producers, state and local dignitaries, and other important people. Since the publication of the novel in 1936, audiences around the world exhibited interest in Southern and Antebellum traditions. As popularity increased, so did negative opinions of the film asserting the degradation of blacks and efforts to aid their civil rights struggle. Many found in the film pride for the lost cause of the Old South and the Confederacy. The premiere activated Atlanta society, as well as businesses and other communities in the nation; events focused on the heritage of the Confederacy, a longing for the idealized Old South, and sentimentalities of the bygone era.¹

The festivities planned for the December 15th premiere affected the daily routine in the city districts of Atlanta. Governor E.D. Rivers declared a state holiday for the opening of the film, saying that the state should observe the occasion as a "day of thanksgiving" and ordered all departments of the state government closed for a full Holiday; Mayor Hartsfield decreed a three-day holiday for the city.² The town was "decked out in festive attire, with banners flying at every corner and at least a third of the citizenry sporting appropriate dress."³ The Confederate "Stars and Bars" fluttered from every building along the street and flapped from arches above the street. Hotels were completely booked; no rooms were available.⁴ Local businesses would have suspended entirely were it not for the Christmas rush.

On December 14, Georgia Power Company officials notified citizens that "Peachtree and Whitehall streets [were] to be denuded of street cars and buses during the parade of the stars...but Atlantans who must reach their destinations in spite of their excitement [could] find transportation without a great deal of trouble."⁵ Fulton county schools and the city board of education dismissed their pupils that afternoon so they could see the *Gone with the Wind* parade. Mayor Hartsfield reminded Atlantans to be "good, genial, but not rowdy hosts."⁶ He saw the premiere

as an opportunity for Atlanta to present her best foot to a world that wanted to know more about the city that was the setting for *Gone with the Wind*. All plans for special celebrations were cleared through the *Gone with the Wind* Festival headquarters at 63 Peachtree Street, N.E.

Atlanta police also planned for the week's events. For Thursday afternoon and night, 300 city policemen, 60 state troopers, 100 firemen, 1,000 boy scouts, and other uniformed students helped maintain order.⁷ Chief Hornsby of the Atlanta police declared that "autograph hunters... [were] prohibited from approaching the stars at any time of their public appearances...[adding] that no one [would] be permitted to loiter in front of the auditorium the night of the ball."⁸ Hornsby instructed policemen to "treat all visitors with the utmost courtesy, and hold your tempers... Newsmen, as well as other people from all over the country will be here, and I want you to look clean and neat."⁹ Police were told to aid the reporters wherever possible.

While police attended to the movie stars and fans, crooks took the opportunity to help themselves. The *Atlanta Georgian* printed several accounts of "holdup men, purse-snatchers, and pickpockets" terrorizing the city's citizens and guests.¹⁰ Ticket scalpers were also present, but unhappy because they could not obtain any tickets to the premiere or the Junior League charity costume ball. Customers were willing to pay any price, but there was not a single pasteboard available.¹¹

Businesses reflected the Antebellum theme of the film for the premiere festivities. Many stores displayed "Civil War and pre-war finery, photographs, and weapons."¹² While Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lent some artifacts, many were family heirlooms. One lady even displayed a bed in her home that was once slept in by General William Tecumseh Sherman.¹³ Scarlett O'Hara dolls filled toy store shelves, while street posters of Scarlett and Rhett covered the walls of buildings. Employees of Atlanta businesses dressed for the occasion as well; "waitresses in the hotels and clerks in drug stores wore antebellum and Civil War outfits."¹⁴ Even shoppers attired themselves in dresses seventy-five to ninety years old. *Atlanta Constitution* journalist, Robert Quillen, described the movie's influence and Atlanta's elevated status:

Already the ladies are wearing "Gone-With-the-Wind" costumes and jewelry and buying "Gone-With-the-

Wind” drapes and furniture. And if there is anybody in this Coca-Cola drinking land who isn’t Atlanta-conscious now, he will be when this movie gets around.¹⁵

The premiere and its preparations put many Atlantans in a *Gone with the Wind* mindset.

False fronts “representing Atlanta of the Eighteen Sixties” decorated business district buildings.¹⁶ The greatest of these fronts was that of Loew’s Grand Theatre on Peachtree Street. Its facade portrayed the columned exterior of Twelve Oaks, “constructed in typical, authentic Georgian style and above...a 16 foot by 23 foot cameo of Rhett Butler and Scarlett in a gold frame.”¹⁷ Stationary floodlights and roving spotlights illuminated the square in front of the theatre, renamed “celebrity square” for the night. According to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer officials, these lights were “the greatest wattage of lights ever used in lighting a theater front for a film premiere.”¹⁸ On premiere night, more than twenty thousand Atlantans congregated in front of Loew’s Grand Theatre to see the celebrities arrive.

Atlanta society leaders organized the events preceding and following the premiere. The Atlanta chapter of the Junior League sponsored a charity costume ball held the night before the premiere at the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium. The *Atlanta Georgian* advertised for butlers and chauffeurs to help clear chairs from the floor at the ball and move cars.¹⁹ In the weeks preceding the event, Atlanta Junior Leaguers and debutantes entered for a chance to wear one of Scarlett O’Hara’s gowns to the ball. The winner, Miss Margaret Palmer, was chosen because her physical measurements were closest to those of Vivien Leigh; she received a kit containing beauty preparations as a prize as well as the honor of wearing the gown.²⁰ Junior Leaguers continued their volunteer work at the Henrietta Egleston Memorial Hospital, where they comforted and helped sick children. Proceeds from the costume ball maintained local welfare projects sponsored by the League.²¹

Atlanta’s elite society attended the ball, as well as the film’s major stars, producers, and local dignitaries. Charity ball guests received a souvenir program containing one hundred pages of illustrations of historic Atlanta including scenes from the film, pictures of prominent Confederates, autographs of the film’s leading actors, and a photographic

preview of Junior League activities. Margaret Mitchell declined her invitation to the ball, due to a recent illness.²² Accompanying Clark Gable for the evening was Miss Mildred Hartsfield, daughter of Mayor William B. Hartsfield; reports described her as an “unassuming lass who had the town’s socially elite green with envy over her luck.”²³ Other events included Gable and Leigh visiting the Cyclorama, as well as various luncheons, receptions, and press parties.²⁴

Some who could not obtain tickets to the premiere or the charity ball held their own *Gone with the Wind* parties. One businessmen’s club held “A Premiere of our own!” on Friday December 15, declaring, “You won’t even have to stand in line for your tickets.”²⁵ Another interesting event was the showing of an “ideally decorated Christmas home” by the Lullwater Garden Club. Numerous artistic and beautiful Christmas presents and tables were on display, authentically decorated from the *Gone with the Wind* era.²⁶ At twilight, junior members of the Garden Club sang Christmas carols.

Atlanta socialites and debutantes prepared for the premiere events by practicing Antebellum social etiquette. Ladies engaged in buggy-riding etiquette as the *Gone with the Wind* festival and parade approached. Along with accepting appropriate assistance from gentlemen, ladies were advised to “be guilty of no loud talking or laughing, and by all means avoid conspicuous flirting in so public a place!”²⁷ One debutante who went against proper etiquette was Miss Martha Scott Clayton, who “cut classes” from Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts to attend the charity ball and premiere. Although Clayton’s penalty for departing from school without leave was “strict camping for one month,” she claimed that “it [was] well worth it.”²⁸ Arrangements were under way for Miss Clayton to dance with Clark Gable as a reward for her desire to attend the festivities, but plans failed. She was not disappointed, commenting, “I’m interested in writing and I want to see what they’ve done to Margaret Mitchell’s book. That’s the only reason I’m here.”²⁹

The frenzy of preparation and the rush to obtain tickets and reservations seemed excessive to some; one journalist posed a warning. Ralph Smith, reporter for the *Atlanta Journal*, wrote that “the intensity and nature of the enthusiasm are a potential threat to the very ends sought, if, we are led to believe, the object of the jubilee is to bring visitors to Atlanta.”³⁰ He recalled poor turnouts from the Baptist World Alliance

Convention and the presidential visit of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1936. Smith did not suggest that “Crackers are crowd-shy.” His use of the term “crackers” refers to Southerners. Whether a derogatory term or a colloquialism, the use of the term in Smith’s phrase suggests that Southerners would come to town for the premiere festivities. Yet, to assure out-of-towners of available accommodations and full participation in events, he agreed with the hotel association that “everybody will be comfortably sheltered and fed during the jubilee.”³¹

The movie’s Antebellum story stirred community pride in Confederate heritage. A surviving gas lamp from the Battle of Atlanta was relit and rededicated as the Eternal Flame of the Confederacy.³² As the Atlanta Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy presided over the ceremony, their president declared, “May this flame ever illuminate our pathway and guide us in the building of a better city and southland [sic]. May it never burn out for a free and independent people over whom no tyrant may ever rule. In the name of a deathless spirit, I dedicate this perpetual flame to the living south [sic].”³³ The ceremony presented the Confederacy as a noble and valiant establishment to be honored and never forgotten. The city also placed informational markers at historic Confederate and Atlanta sites. Tarleton Collier of *The Atlanta Georgian* claimed that “all the intimations of [the] past and of the labors, inventions and sacrifices that went into the building of Atlanta will be revived.”³⁴

Members of other Southern civic associations, patriotic societies, and memorial bodies visited the studios of the Selznick production in Hollywood. Their presence ensured that the film portrayed the ideals for which the heroes of the Southern Confederacy fought and died, to preserve and respect the traditions and customs of the Old South.³⁵ The Confederated Southern Memorial Association praised David O. Selznick for producing the film without partisanship or prejudice to the North or South. The United Daughters of the Confederacy used the occasion to criticize the way in which Confederate memorials were portrayed. The New York and California chapters protested against the model of a Jefferson Davis statue to be assembled in Montgomery, Alabama. The ladies claimed that “the type of statue to be erected has placed him [Jefferson Davis] in an ‘embarrassing’ position.”³⁶ The matter was later referred to the state art commission.

In their stories, Southern journalists referred to the Confederates as

“great men, the best fighters the world has ever known.”³⁷ Writer Colonel Thomas Spencer rebuked the efforts of the Daughters of Union Veterans to condemn *Gone with the Wind* by calling the book “an outrageous attempt, as a historical novel, to palliate the treason of the south [sic] and smirch the reputation of Sherman,” and by stating that the burning of Southern homes and supplies was not done by Sherman, but by the Confederates. Spencer contradicted the Daughters by pointing out facts from the “Personal Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman.”³⁸ He also indicated that the old war wounds are not yet healed, and that there should be no more fighting over the subject.

Many Southerners still seemed to be feeling the wounds of the old war. Journalist Ralph McGill wrote that during Reconstruction, “the south [sic] was, of course, a conquered nation. It was so treated.”³⁹ He compared the Northern occupation and oppression to the recent Nazi occupation of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. McGill described the North’s occupation as “as cruel and as despotic a military dictatorship as ever existed...as any established by Adolf Hitler.”⁴⁰ After civil rights, property, and lives were lost, he said that the tyranny of the North molded the political mind of the South. McGill asserted that “if the research visitors would forget to say, ‘Ah you southerners [sic]! If you’d only forget Appomattox,’” then they would understand the South’s strong feelings.⁴¹

Some journals from other regions of the nation sensed the tension, sensitivity, and differences between themselves and the South. John C. Flinn of *Variety* wrote, “although three-quarters of a century have passed since the war between the states, there are plenty of folks in Atlanta who never have seen ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin.’...It’s a brave Northerner even today who mentions the Civil War until after he is spoken to.”⁴² Differences were apparent even in reference to the war. Ruth Campbell of *The Atlanta Georgian* declared, “And, by the way, THIS is for all damn Yankees. It IS the War Between the States and not the Civil War, and you’ll get the FEEL of THAT too after you have seen the Cyclorama.”⁴³ Other regional journalists felt that the premiere developed into a civic event of almost national importance, calling the affair the top ballyhoo of the season. All national angles drew together, however, in the concentration of publicity for the Atlanta premiere. Yet, only Atlanta newspapers published special *Gone with the Wind* editions, featuring the premiere, celebration coverage, and photographs from the film.

The *Gone with the Wind* premiere and festivities honored a few surviving Confederate veterans. Four veterans at the Old Soldiers' Home were "as excited as five-year-old children going to their first party" and "reckoned they were pretty lucky [to be] guests of Clark Gable."⁴⁴ Ann Rutherford, who played Scarlett's sister Careen in the film, visited the veterans at the Confederate Soldiers' Home who "tried to defend Tara Hall." The old men still remained loyal and sentimental to the Confederacy and Old South. As Rutherford visited one veteran, he laid a little corsage in her hands that consisted of "roses and [was] tied with the colors of the Confederacy."⁴⁵ The actions of the veterans and of Atlanta were not viewed as expressions of sectionalism, but as "emblems of gallantry in combat and in the more cruel ordeal that followed."⁴⁶

Most Southerners prided themselves on their differences from the North, but dialectical differences worried the *Gone with the Wind* publicity department over whether Northern and Western audiences would understand the jargon. The use of Southern vernacular necessitated a dialect coach on the set of the film. Susan Myrick, a journalist from Macon, taught Southern speech to the actors on the set. The publicity department and Myrick also issued a "brief 'Southern dictionary' [explaining] the expressions [used] in the film."⁴⁷ Myrick was not only a dialect coach for the actors, but also advised Selznick and his crew on authenticating Southern culture in the film. During the premiere festivities, Myrick talked to various journalism societies about her work as technical assistant to the film and her career as a journalist.⁴⁸ Theta Sigma Pi, the honorary journalism sorority at the University of Georgia, even held a banquet in her honor.

Although Myrick was popular in the South and with those working on the film, others criticized her and claimed that she biased her views and advice on Southern culture. Angelo Herndon from *The Daily Worker*, a Communist daily newspaper, claimed that her status as the daughter of a plantation owner slanted the movie's perspective and guarded against incongruities that would "make true Southerners squirm the plush off theatre seats."⁴⁹ The *Worker* claimed that her corrections in mannerisms "to have Negro children remove their shoes [and] to have a Negro servant take off his hat at the proper moment" exemplified the barbarous treatment of slaves on Southern plantations.⁵⁰ Herndon stressed that Myrick helped to camouflage the disenfranchisement of blacks and make the "[bourbon]

traitors, secessionists, and traffickers” appear as heroes and heroines. While making his accusations, however, Herndon ended certain passages with the phrase “emphasis mine” in parentheses; such editing suggests that some quotations were taken out of context.

Some Northern newspapers did not intend to praise any part of *Gone with the Wind*. The *Daily Worker* published a scathing attack and demanded that readers boycott the film. However, Howard Rushmore, the original movie reviewer for the paper, refused to follow the Communist party’s line and criticize the film. He saw the film as mainly historically true and praised its technical achievements. The editorial board, which included an African-American member named Ben Davis, Jr., ordered Rushmore to “blister” the film by condemning its depiction of a “congenial, feudal Southland and anti-Negro sequences.”⁵¹ Because Rushmore and Davis could not compromise, Rushmore resigned. The dispute was one of several reasons for Rushmore’s leaving; he was not being paid due to a shortage of funds. Rushmore also deliberately stopped paying dues so that he could be dropped from the Communist party. He claimed that the party was deviating from its “Americanism” policy and that control had transferred from New York to Moscow.

The *Daily Worker* linked their admonishment of Rushmore with their dislike of publisher William Randolph Hearst. One article announced, “it is sufficient for decent Americans to know that [*Gone with the Wind*’s] publicity campaign is apparently being led by the yellow Hearst press.”⁵² While calling the film an inflammatory attack upon American democracy, the paper interpreted a Hearst article as stating that the racial hatred of *Birth of a Nation* was “streamlined on a more grandiose scale” into *Gone with the Wind*. The Waterfront Section of the Communist Party commented to the Worker, “What a logical development for Rushmore! One day, white chauvinist, next day, war-monger and pen peddler for Hearst.”⁵³ The paper identified Hearst in relation to the “imperialist” government actions of the United States during World War I; Woodrow Wilson had ordered him to cut out all anti-Japanese sequences from the film *Patria*, when Japan joined the Allies.⁵⁴ The Worker exposed Hearst’s hypocrisy; for years, American films slandered the Japanese as a result of propaganda by Hearst and Wall Street.

Although African-American newspapers did not specifically

write about the *Gone with the Wind* premiere, some individuals viewed the film's content as an insidious glorification of the slave market. Ben Davis, Jr., on the front page of *The Sunday Worker*, belittled the plot as "a cheap story spun around the love foibles of Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler."⁵⁵ He noted that the production attempted to "show how the Civil War unjustifiably dislocated the feudalistic economy of the slave owners, broke up their land empires, and brought misery and ruin to the happy Southern colonels."⁵⁶ Davis claimed that the film incited race hatred. His condemnation of *Gone with the Wind* encouraged other African-Americans to speak out against the film. Three leading Harlem blacks condemned the film, calling the production "a sinister plot against the Negro people and American democracy."⁵⁷ James H. Hubert, head of the New York Urban League, said that the film was so effective in re-winning the war for the Confederacy that "in States like Connecticut and others, the Negro [was] treated just as bad as in the South."⁵⁸

David Platt, another writer at *The Daily Worker*, wrote an extensive article comparing *Gone with the Wind* to David Wark Griffith's 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* and its relation to World War I. Platt asserted that by cultivating racial prejudice, *Birth of a Nation* helped create the basis for war propaganda. He pointed out that the film heightened the confusion of the time, adding, "Thomas Dixon whose obscene book 'The Klansman' furnished the thesis for Griffith's film said at an interview that 'the only purpose of the film was to create a feeling of abhorrence in white people... against colored men.'"⁵⁹ Dixon's writing translated to his films which also attacked native-born trade unionists, pacifists, and Germans; they wrongfully depicted Mexicans and the Japanese as plotting to overthrow the United States government. Calling World War I an "imperialist war," Platt contemplated the position of *Gone with the Wind* in the era of the second world war of the same attribute. He did, however, confidently label the film as the successor to *Birth of a Nation*.⁶⁰

Because of stringent segregation and prejudice in the South, the African-American members of the cast could not attend the premiere. The Georgian Terrace Hotel on Peachtree Street, where the majority of the stars were staying, did not even allow African-American maids, stating "no accommodations for colored maids available."⁶¹ Before the premiere trip, Selznick's representative in Atlanta, Legare Davis, expressed concern for the African-American cast members. He claimed that their inclusion

in the premiere activities “might cause some comment and might be a handle that someone could seize and use as a club.”⁶² Mayor Hartsfield acknowledged the actors’ efforts at the premiere, however, asking the audience to “applaud the Negro members of the cast, none of whom was present.”⁶³ He specifically asked that Selznick and others from Hollywood take back to actress Hattie McDaniel a tribute of praise from Atlanta. The actors’ absence was, undoubtedly, an effort to avoid confrontation and hostility.

Other African-Americans praised the film. Hattie McDaniel, who played the role of the slave, Mammy, wrote “this is an opportunity to glorify negro [sic] womanhood. Not the modern, streamlined type of negro [sic] woman, who attends teas and concerts in furs and silks, but the type of negro [sic] of the period that gave us Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Charity Still.”⁶⁴ She explained that she “knew that Mammy would have to wear a handkerchief on her head, to depict her people in slavery, but this would only serve to emphasize the improved status of [her] race today.” The *Los Angeles Times* called her acting “a scene-stealing effort.”⁶⁵ Jimmie Fidler of the *San Francisco Chronicle* pointed out, “I don’t think it will be easy for me to laugh at Hattie’s comedy in the future, for I’ll never be able to overlook the tragic fact that a very great artist, whose skin unfortunately happens to be black, is being wasted.”⁶⁶ Hattie’s riveting portrayal of Mammy earned her an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in February 1940.⁶⁷

Yet, her role emphasized racial stereotypes. Journalists referred to McDaniel as a “negro [sic] actress,” whose plantation laughter and black looks were quite convincing.⁶⁸ An article, “‘Mammy’ of Tara Paid High Tribute,” did not pay respect to her acting talents, but praised her abilities in vaudeville song and dance.⁶⁹ African-American choir members attending the premiere wore “antebellum plantation garb, great wide-brimmed straw hats, bright cotton shirts and dresses, and red bandanas, while singing ‘Thank the Lord.’” Newspapers portrayed African-American spectators as “Negroes [standing] on the porches of blackened tumbledown shacks,” while the celebrity motorcade passed through Atlanta on its way to the premiere.⁷⁰ Even advertisements displayed illustrations of African-Americans in slave dress, such as Aunt Jemima.⁷¹

Butterfly McQueen’s role in the film did not aid the African-American persona either. Her portrayal of Prissy captured the stereotype

of blacks as stupid, silly, and the cause for a joke. Director George Cukor even commented that McQueen played the “nigger through and through.”⁷² In a later article, Malcolm X commented on his childhood, “I remember one thing that marred that time for me...I was the only Negro in the theatre, and when Butterfly McQueen went into her act, I felt like crawling under the rug” (X and Haley 42).⁷³ Although McQueen was a great actress who concentrated on embodying the character, Prissy was not a popular representation among and for the African-American community.

Despite her unfortunate portrayal of Prissy, Butterfly McQueen made strides in the acting community for racial equality. In early December 1939, she was the first African-American professional to become a life member of Equity, a Broadway labor union. Soon after her purchase of lifetime membership, all “colored pros in B’way shows” were required to join.⁷⁴ Equity conditions applied only to Broadway and traveling performances, excluding colored shows in Harlem.⁷⁵

From the screen to the street, segregation and racist tones were heavily felt in the South. In the *New York Age*, a front-page article covered the story of an African-American man from a small town in Georgia, petitioning to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P) for an anti-lynching bill. The man, whose identity was withheld for his protection, pleaded, “the colored people have got no liberty and no freedom down here. Listen, the colored people have been to two wars and come back home, and the white people come and beat and treat us bad than any nation in the world.”⁷⁶ The article added that African-Americans had no say or representation in government and education; some did not even make enough money to buy food or clothing.

The N.A.A.C.P. received a signed petition from African-American Georgians, all of the signatures showing “a labored writing that bespoke grimy toil, high courage, and real hope.”⁷⁷ In response to the petition, executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. Walter White stated that there should be funding and other help to “put the Federal Government squarely behind this fight.”⁷⁸ In South Carolina, a white attorney named Joseph A. Tolbert urged Federal action to be taken against the Ku Klux Klan for the abduction of Elrod Neely, a colored World War I veteran.⁷⁹ Tolbert provided District Attorney Oscar H. Doyle with a full report of the Neely incident, but was told that the government was without jurisdiction in

the matter. In many cases, even with help from white supporters, the N.A.A.C.P. and other African-American civil rights activists could not employ government action against the travesties bestowed upon their race.

Despite the negative comments, attacks on the film, and publicity of the African-American civil rights campaign, *Gone with the Wind* achieved great success in the box office. The *Wall Street Journal* said the fine realism of the death struggle of the wounded South and its shattered men reflected similar scenes enacted in Europe and Asia because of World War II.⁸⁰ While the United States was officially neutral until 7 December 1941, the nation and its people were audience to the battles in other parts of the world. Such relation to the war was, undoubtedly, a positive factor in its success. Although the American people were not directly involved in World War II at the time, they could sympathize with the soldiers and families of those at war through the film. *Variety* reported that first week box office returns from initial showings of the film revealed “hefty grosses.”⁸¹ Correspondents in Boston, Cincinnati, and Atlanta, the only out-of-town venues open to the film at the time besides Broadway, stated that the film held down receipts despite box office queues. The Atlanta premiere opening finished the first week with a “capacity biz of \$25,000, showing two-a-day.”⁸² With such success, *Gone with the Wind* commanded the highest rental charge of any film at that time.

Although the film triumphed at the box office, some journalists questioned the stars’ lasting-power. Jimmie Fidler of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wondered, “Where does Vivien Leigh go from here? Will ‘*Gone with the Wind*’ be her springboard to top-flight stardom—or will it be a millstone around her pretty neck?”⁸³ He pointed out the danger that Leigh might not be able to top her portrayal of Scarlett O’Hara. Yet, he also advised readers not to condemn her as a “one-picture flash-in-the-pan” simply because her future roles may fail to measure up to her portrayal of Scarlett. Fidler sadly acquiesced to the fact that Hattie McDaniel would return to playing “incidental, comedy maids, of course.”⁸⁴ He maintained that “an actress comparable to the immortal Marie Dressler has flashed like a dark meteor across the screen—and now must disappear because Hollywood can’t give her adequate parts.” Clark Gable’s position was not questioned, as he was a top male lead actor of the era.

The fashions in *Gone with the Wind* impacted women’s dress and appearance.⁸⁵ With the announcement of Scarlett O’Hara’s 18-inch

waistline, every woman in America wanted one too. Scarlett's slender waist influenced the feminine world to keep calories low and increase exercise.⁸⁶ Atlanta saw a rise in corset sales as the premiere approached. The Eager & Simpson corset shop advertised "The Waist of the Wasp Without the Sting!" while promoting a new line of girdles: "Try the new 'Le Gant' Girdles...They are here with '*Gone with the Wind*.'"⁸⁷

In department stores, window dressers had difficulty in clothing mannequins that were too large for the Old South styles. Fashion designer Walter Plunkett, who designed all of the costumes for the film, and the chief of the film's wardrobe department, Edward P. Lambert, determined that modern women were already wearing at least double the amount of cloth that had been used in dress for many years.⁸⁸ Monte Westmore, in charge of Selznick's make-up department, predicted that women would wear hoop skirts and bustles, accompanied by longer hair. In effect, curves would replace straight lines and color tones would be richer; the achievement was extreme femininity.

The movie also influenced the commercial market. Two new *Gone with the Wind* fragrances were made available, just in time for Christmas. Packaged in gleaming plastic bottles with gold finish, the colognes resembled the figure of an Antebellum woman.⁸⁹ With a ribbon around her waist and encased in a transparent box, the fragrances retailed at one dollar. New fashions derived from the film essentially boosted cotton sales. Plunkett and Lambert expected that many dresses would be made of cotton, rayon, or artificial silk, the latter two being made from a cheap grade of cotton called linters. This awaiting expectation pushed Southern organizations, such as the board of directors of the Memphis Cotton Festival, to intensify their campaigns and induce the women of the nation to wear more cotton.⁹⁰

The cotton industry appointed a special committee to tackle dress industry problems. The committee launched "an intensive campaign...to organize the unorganized portions of the rayon and cotton dress industry throughout the country."⁹¹ The general manager of the Dress Joint Board, in contrast, explained, "there is very little difference between the cotton garment shop and the regular dress shop...the only difference is in selling."⁹² The organization of the cotton dress shops and firms, which were not all unionized, would level out competition opportunities as well as save conditions in the silk dress shops. Reports showed a 4.9 percent increase

in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee cotton mill operations.⁹³ The South also won its first victory in the long fight for freight rate parity when the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled that rates on certain Southern products were “unreasonable, unjustly discriminatory and unduly prejudicial to the Southern market.”⁹⁴ Southern rates were placed on parity with rates for competing goods manufactured in the North.

Atlanta businesses also banked on the movie’s influence. The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) saluted Atlanta in their Friday, December 8, morning program, drawing attention to Atlanta as the “colorful ‘Crossroads of the South’ and its advancement in the affairs of the nation and the world of commerce.”⁹⁵ Advertisements described Atlanta as majestic, supreme, and cultured; they honored those who survived Sherman’s burning of the city and Reconstruction. Some businesses focused on their own survival from the war. The Atlanta Gas Light Company ran an advertisement that read, “Not even during the Battle of Atlanta did gas service fail.”⁹⁶ Other institutions related themselves to characters of the film, as well as its author, Margaret Mitchell. Washington Seminary advertised itself as “An Institution of Cultural Education for the Careens and Suellens of Today.”⁹⁷ The women’s school also praised its many graduates, “among those of whom [it was] justly proud, the renowned Margaret Mitchell.” The romantic nature of these ads appealed to the heart and pride of Southern citizens.

Special exhibits presented material related to *Gone with the Wind*. The Carnegie Library transformed into “a *Gone with the Wind* museum for the week,” displaying all fourteen foreign editions of Mitchell’s book in the main hall. In addition, each library department featured a special display of Atlanta Civil War days. The collections included full color costume plates from the film, a series of wash drawings used in designing production settings, a children’s department with dolls costumed in the Antebellum style, and other presentations of old photographs, flags, Civil War artifacts, and memorabilia.⁹⁸ Some items were loaned from private collections, while others were available from Selznick Co. An elaborate miniature model of 1860’s Atlanta became permanent property of the Atlanta Historical Society as the gift of David O. Selznick. The models included a large scale model of Tara, a smaller rendition of Peachtree Street during Reconstruction, and the old Atlanta train shed and its surroundings.⁹⁹

Not only were Atlanta establishments affected by the premiere,

but those across the nation felt its significance as well. In New York City, “for the first time since the twin premiere of ‘Hell’s Angels,’ in 1930,” pedestrians had to show a movie ticket to walk along parts of Broadway.¹⁰⁰ At the New York premiere, 300 policemen controlled the crowds near the Capitol and Astor Theatres. A harried taxi driver growled, “And to think a rebel had to start all this.” In Los Angeles, the 13th Annual Doll Show exhibited Rhett Butler and Scarlett O’Hara dolls “as the central figures... in one glass case.”¹⁰¹ Sororities at the University of Southern California and the University of California in Los Angeles, chose *Gone with the Wind* themes for social events; Sigma Kappa pledges “chose ‘*Gone with the Wind*’ as the motto for their party.”¹⁰²

The premiere of *Gone with the Wind* stirred up emotions for the citizens of Atlanta. Author Margaret Mitchell said in a speech at the premiere, “This has been a great emotional experience for me. To me it was a great thrill. I feel it has been a great thing for Georgia and the South to see the Confederates come back.”¹⁰³ Atlanta society leaders reflected her sentiments. Robert Strickland, president of the Georgia Trust Company, told friends, “I’ve been sitting in there crying, and, by God, I’m not ashamed to say so.”¹⁰⁴ Tarleton Collier of *The Atlanta Georgian* wrote that even if the film’s depiction of the Old South never really existed, the important point was that Southerners believed in that ideal; they clung ardently to it as a faith.¹⁰⁵ He believed that the film’s conception of the Old South was noble, and that Southerners were ennobled by it. Even Northern writers saw the movie’s effects. Edwin Camp, writer for the *New York Times*, suggested that the movie gave new generations a romantic interest and sentimental feeling for the Confederacy that they were unable to obtain from textbooks or from those who fought in the war. The South experienced great pride that was not seen by the nation as sectionalism, but as the sentimental spirit of gallantry.¹⁰⁶

News coverage of the premiere of *Gone with the Wind* in Atlanta showed many perspectives regarding the Antebellum Old South, Confederate Americans, and racial equality. The extravagant celebrations emphasized the separation between white and African-American communities. The elite society members of Atlanta were proud of their Confederate heritage, and newspapers reminisced of that era. Southern newspapers did not cover stories concerning African-American civil rights or even portray them in a positive, equal manner. The only publications

to print African-American viewpoints and struggles were their own newspapers and the Communist press. Circulation of these newspapers did not fully or easily extend to the white community, where segregation and racism was strong. The film became so popular among white Americans that a *Gone with the Wind* phenomenon spread throughout the nation, especially in Atlanta. The book and film affected Atlanta business and dress, even improving the Southern cotton industry. *Gone with the Wind* not only captivated moviegoers, but also caused communities to reflect on the history of the South and its people.¹⁰⁷

The popularity of the *Gone with the Wind* film and premiere turned into a sectional and cinematic mythology of the Old South; their beliefs about the war and the era outweighed the historical facts. Janice Hume and Noah Arceneaux observe that the construction of these monuments and rituals “form a crucial element of an imagined community through which disparate groups envision themselves as part of a collective with a common past, present, and future;” Carolyn Kitch points out that media serve as “important sites of meaning-making, community-building, and reminiscence.”¹⁰⁸ Atlanta’s focus on the Confederacy, Confederate memorials, and Antebellum traditions allowed the white community to romanticize the era and form a collective that was proud of its past while forgetting the tragedies and struggles of former slaves and the current African-American community. As the African-American and Communist press attacked and disapproved of the film, the cinematic mythology created by the premiere festivities seemed to justify the segregation and inequality of the time period. American Studies scholar Hayden White affirms this note, stating, “history’s greatest source of strength is its intimate connection with its literary basis...journalism also provides an intimate connection between history and the public.”¹⁰⁹ Atlanta society’s intimate connection with the *Gone with the Wind* film, novel, and media coverage formed a mythology that disregarded realistic, historical truths.

In conclusion, through the phenomenon of *Gone with the Wind* and its highly successful premiere, Atlanta and Southern society found a collective memory of the Old South and the Confederacy that romanticized the past. The power of the film and press coverage surrounding the premiere manifested the way white people wanted to remember the Old South. Such mythology and collective memory also intensified the gulf between the ways blacks and whites remembered the

past. Not only were their memories different, but also their willingness to work toward civil rights and liberties was affected. The media coverage of differing views concerning the Atlanta premiere of *Gone with the Wind* demonstrates the culture of 1930s Atlanta and the beginning of change in that culture, evidenced in the responses from the African-American and Communist newspapers. The different views regarding the film and premiere portrayed the different faces of Scarlett in the American public and what these views meant to our changing country in all aspects of life and culture.

Endnotes

- 1 Herb Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: The Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999) 1-24, 49-55, 131-35, 97-219.; Richard Harwell, ed., *Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind Letters 1936-1949* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976) 297-98, 311-14.. *Gone with the Wind* became so popular that Selznick and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer faced pirating from several countries. In August 1940, reports from Japan and Greece described plans for movie production and serialization of the novel in newspapers. Informed of the incidents, Margaret Mitchell claimed that she would like to see a Japanese movie of her novel. "If they placed it back in the sixties," she said, "the Japanese Confederates would doubtless be marching to defend Atlanta in Samurai armor and Scarlett would be dashing about in a 'ricksha instead of a buggy." Though this comment expressed light-hearted humor, Mitchell and Selznick demanded contracts and payment for pirated material abroad.
- 2 "Gone with the Wind Day Proclaimed," *Atlanta Georgian* 6 Decemer 1939.; John C. Flinn, "Film Showmanship," *Variety* (20 December 1939).; Louella O. Parsons, "'Gone with Wind' Hailed Biggest Picture in Years," *Atlanta Georgian* 4 December 1939..
- 3 "Tumultuous Atlanta Prens for Premiere," *Memphis Commercial Appeal* 15 December 1939.
- 4 Meyer Berger, "Atlanta Is Won by Film of Past," *New York Times* 16 December 1939.. Berger was sent by the *New York Times* to cover the premiere in Atlanta. His accounts over two days were spread on page one and carried over with art layouts. "Atlanta Is Won By Film of South" has different content than "Atlanta Retaken By Glory Of Past." *Variety* also pointed out that Hearst's *Georgian* went defunct on 17 December, 1939.
- 5 "Car, Bus Routes Are Rearranged for Festival Days," *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 6 "Details of Star Parade Here Revealed," *Atlanta Georgian* 1 December 1939.
- 7 "Police and Aides Ready for Festival," *Atlanta Georgian* 13 December 1939.
- 8 "All Seats Sold for 'Gone with Wind' Ball," *Atlanta Georgian* 8

December 1939.

- 9 "Policemen Get Premiere Instructions," *Atlanta Georgian* 13 December 1939.
- 10 "Crooks Celebrate 'Gone with Wind'," *Atlanta Georgian* 15 December 1939.
- 11 Inez Robb, "Scalpers Here Tear Hair; Price Okay, but No Tickets," *Atlanta Georgian* 14 December 1939.
- 12 Meyer Berger, "Atlanta Retaken by Glory of Past," *New York Times* 15 December 1939.
- 13 "Atlantan Owns 'Sherman's' Bed," *Atlanta Georgian* 3 December 1939.
- 14 Berger, "Atlanta Retaken by Glory of Past."
- 15 Robert Quillen, "Atlanta Should Be Proud of Tribute to South," *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 16 "Atlanta to Recall War," *New York Times* 12 December 1939.
- 17 Lee Rogers, "New Generation to Learn of Old from Epic Film," *Atlanta Constitution* 15 December 1939.; Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: The Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta.*; Anne Edwards, *Road to Tara: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (New Haven, CT: Ticknor & Fields, 1983).. Newspaper reports describing the Loew's Grand Theatre facade stated that it portrayed Tara, home of Scarlett O'Hara, while others claimed that the facade was reminiscent of Twelve Oaks, Ashley Wilkes' ancestral home. Margaret Mitchell did not think the exterior of the theatre looked anything like the Tara from her book. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1936).
- 18 Rogers, "New Generation to Learn of Old from Epic Film."
- 19 Polly Peachtree, "Butlers and Chauffeurs Wanted for Service at Premiere Ball," *Atlanta Georgian* 5 December 1939.
- 20 Berger, "Atlanta Retaken by Glory of Past.;" Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: The Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta.*
- 21 Keeler McCartney, "League Ball Fund to Aid Charity," *Atlanta Georgian* 10 December 1939.
- 22 "Mitchell Tells Gratitude," *Atlanta Georgian* 3 December 1939.. In one article, Margaret Mitchell declined the Junior League's invitation to the charity costume ball because she needed to take care of her ailing father. The article "Margaret Mitchell Tells Gratitude" stated that she was in poor health. In actuality, she denied the invitation to square an old grudge between herself and the Junior League, as they had refused her

membership years earlier.

- ²³ Harry Martin, “*Gone with the Wind* Premiere Climaxes a Big Day in Atlanta,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal* 16 December 1939.
- ²⁴ Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: The Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta.*; “Charity Ball Guests to Get Souvenir Book,” *Atlanta Georgian* 12 December 1939.; Edwards, *Road to Tara: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* 282-83.; Luke Greene, “Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh Marvel at Cyclorama,” *Atlanta Constitution* 16 December 1939.; “Gone with Wind’ Festivities Bring Many to Atlanta,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune* 13 December 1939..
- ²⁵ Polly Peachtree, “Club Issues Invitations to Own ‘Gwtw’ Premiere,” *Atlanta Georgian* 12 December 1939.
- ²⁶ Polly Peachtree, “More ‘Gwtw’ Doings,” *Atlanta Georgian* 12 December 1939.
- ²⁷ Yolande Gwin, “Buggy-Riding Etiquette of the ‘60’s Reviewed for Approaching Festival,” *Atlanta Constitution* 1 December 1939.
- ²⁸ “Debutante to Spend Month ‘on Campus’ as Penalty for Attending Ball, Premiere,” *Atlanta Constitution* 15 December 1939.
- ²⁹ “Debutante to Spend Month ‘on Campus’ as Penalty for Attending Ball, Premiere.”
- ³⁰ Ralph Smith, “In Crackerland,” *Atlanta Journal* 3 December 1939.
- ³¹ Smith, “In Crackerland.”
- ³² “Atlanta’s Gone Completely ‘Wind’; Premiere Becomes a 4-Day Civic Fest,” *Variety* (13 December 1939).
- ³³ “Atlanta’s Gone Completely ‘Wind’; Premiere Becomes a 4-Day Civic Fest.”; “‘Eternal Flame of Confederacy’ Relit, Rededicated,” *Atlanta Constitution* 15 December 1939.. The Constitution stated that the flame was of the Confederacy, while *Variety* called it “Atlanta’s perpetual light.”
- ³⁴ Tarleton Collier, “Lest We Forget,” *Atlanta Georgian* 14 December 1939.
- ³⁵ Annie Laurie Fuller Kurtz, “Tribute from South,” *Atlanta Constitution* 5 December 1939.
- ³⁶ “Jefferson Davis Statue Row Grows,” *Atlanta Constitution* 2 December 1939.
- ³⁷ Colonel Thomas Spencer, “Colonel Spencer Laughs at Northern Criticisms,” *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.

- 38 Spencer, "Colonel Spencer Laughs at Northern Criticisms."
- 39 Ralph McGill, "One Word More," *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 40 McGill, "One Word More."
- 41 McGill, "One Word More."
- 42 Flinn, "Film Showmanship."
- 43 Ruth Campbell, "'Heaven Bound' Recommended to Visitor as a Must See! 'Damnyank' Asks About City's Sights," *Atlanta Georgian* 4 December 1939.
- 44 Luke Greene, "Four Confederate Veterans Will Attend Premiere in Sunday Best --- and an Actress or Two May Get Kissed," *Atlanta Constitution* 13 December 1939.
- 45 "Careen Visits Veterans," *New York Times* 15 December 1939.
- 46 Edwin Camp, "'Gone with Wind' Stirs the South," *New York Times* 17 December 1939.
- 47 "Southern Phrases Puzzle the Yanks," *Atlanta Constitution* 3 December 1939.
- 48 "Sorority to Hear Miss Myrick Talk," *Atlanta Georgian* 5 December 1939.
- 49 Angelo Herndon, "Where That 'Rebel Yell' Came From! Daughter of Dixie Planter 'Advised' Gwtw Producers," *Daily Worker* 28 December 1939.
- 50 Herndon, "Where That 'Rebel Yell' Came From! Daughter of Dixie Planter 'Advised' Gwtw Producers."
- 51 "*Daily Worker* Critic Forced out of Job on Refusal to Attack '*Gone with the Wind*,'" *New York Times* 22 December 1939.; "Finds Little to Laud in 'Gone with Wind,'" *New York Times* 28 December 1939.; Sean Matgamna, Reason in Revolt: An Injury to Whom?, Available: <http://www.workersliberty.org/node/926>, 27 November 2006.. Howard Rushmore went unpaid as movie reviewer because of the Stalin-Hitler Pact. On August 23, 1939, Stalin and Hitler signed a Soviet-German non-aggression pact. This ensured Hitler that he would not have to fight a war on two fronts and lined Russia up as a supplier of raw materials to Germany for the war. With such economic strain on Russia and the decline of Communist factions outside of Russia, funding declined. After the Nazis attacked Poland and World War II began, Soviet troops occupied eastern Poland. Union of Soviet Socialist

- Republics, Available: <http://www.britannica.com/ebi/article-209261>, 27 November 2006.
- 52 “An Insult to the American People,” *Daily Worker* 15 December 1939.
- 53 “Party Seamen Greet ‘Daily’ Stand on Anti-Negro Film,” *Daily Worker* 25 December 1939.
- 54 David Platt, “Fanning the Flames of War,” *Daily Worker* 20 December 1939.
- 55 “Red Paper Condemns ‘*Gone with the Wind*,’” *New York Times* 24 December 1939.
- 56 “Red Paper Condemns ‘*Gone with the Wind*.’”
- 57 Angelo Herndon, “Harlem Negro Leaders Slam ‘*Gone with the Wind*,’” *Daily Worker* 27 December 1939.
- 58 Herndon, “Harlem Negro Leaders Slam ‘*Gone with the Wind*.’”
- 59 Platt, “Fanning the Flames of War.”
- 60 Platt, “Fanning the Flames of War.”
- 61 Carleton Jackson, *Hattie: The Life of Hattie Mcdaniel* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1990).
- 62 Jackson, *Hattie: The Life of Hattie Mcdaniel*. The African-American members of the cast were not specifically told that they were not invited to the premiere, but stayed home just to be safe. Selznick and his team did not want any harm to come to the actors while in Atlanta.
- 63 Berger, “Atlanta Is Won by Film of Past.”
- 64 Hattie McDaniel, “Woman Who Plays Role of Mammy Tells of Opportunity to Aid Race,” *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 65 “‘Gww’ Called Masterful Work of Screen,” *Los Angeles Times* 13 December 1939.
- 66 Jimmie Fidler, “Hattie Mcdaniel Tops ‘Gone with Wind,’” *San Francisco Chronicle* 21 December 1939.
- 67 Not only was Hattie McDaniel the first of her race to receive an Academy Award, but she was the first Negro ever to sit at an Academy banquet. Jackson, *Hattie: The Life of Hattie Mcdaniel* 6.
- 68 “Negro Actress Settles Down to Hate Gable,” *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 69 “‘Mammy’ of Tara Paid High Tribute,” *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 70 Berger, “Atlanta Retaken by Glory of Past.”

- 71 "Aunt Jemima in Person...at Big Apple Super Market," *Atlanta Georgian* 14 December 1939.
- 72 Darden Asbury Pyron, ed., *Recasting: Gone with the Wind in American Culture* (Miami: University Presses of Florida, 1983) 137.
- 73 Malcolm X and Alex Haley, eds., *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).
- 74 "Butterfly Mcqueen 1st Colored Pro to Achieve Equity Life Membership," *Variety* (6 December 1939).
- 75 "Butterfly Mcqueen Gets Membership for Life in Equity," *Richmond Afro-American* 16 December 1939.
- 76 "'We Want Liberty and Freedom' Says Georgian Who Got Signers for Anti-Lynch Bill Petition," *New York Age* 23 December 1939.; "Oppressed Georgians Plead for Lynch Bill," *Richmond Afro-American* 23 December 1939.; "'War Means More Brutality for Us,' Negro Worker Says," *Daily Worker* 18 December 1939.. All three articles contain the excerpt from the man's letter, and all clearly contain the phrase, "They have been to two wars and come back home," but none states what two wars the man is referencing. The wars could be World War I and the Spanish-American War or World War I and the Civil War.
- 77 "Oppressed Georgians Plead for Lynch Bill."
- 78 "Oppressed Georgians Plead for Lynch Bill."
- 79 "Dixie White Man Asks U.S. Act to Halt Klan," *Richmond Afro-American* 9 December 1939.
- 80 "The Theatre," *Wall Street Journal* 20 December 1939.
- 81 "'Wind' Goes Big in 4 Keys," *Variety* (27 December 1939).
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- 83 "Will Vivien Leigh Fade after 'Gone with the Wind?'," *San Francisco Chronicle* 20 December 1939.
- 84 Fidler, "Hattie Mcdaniel Tops 'Gone with Wind'."
- 85 "Atlanta Girls Valiantly Wiggle into Corsets for Ball; Find Coveted Tiny Waists of 60's Gone with Wind," *Atlanta Constitution* 2 December 1939.
- 86 Ida Jean Kain, "Blame the Wee Waist Fashion on Scarlett O'hara," *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 87 "The Waist of the Wasp without the Sting!," *Atlanta Constitution* 14

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- 88 “Bustles Come Back with the Cyclone of Margaret Mitchell’s ‘Gone with Wind’,” *Atlanta Constitution* 14 December 1939.
- 89 Lillian Mae, “Novel ‘Scarlett’ Perfume Presentation Ideal for Christmas Gift,” *Atlanta Constitution* 15 December 1939.
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- 91 “Nationwide Cotton Dress Drive Begun,” *Justice* 1 December 1939.
- 92 Harry Wander, “Cotton Dress--Big Issue,” *Justice* 1 December 1939.
- 93 “See Happy B.O. Days in Dixie,” *Variety* (6 December 1939).
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- 104 Berger, “Atlanta Is Won by Film of Past.”
- 105 Collier, “Lest We Forget.”
- 106 Camp, “‘Gone with Wind’ Stirs the South.”
- 107 Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: The Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta* 11-20, 150-51, 88-95, 203-19.
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