

LEGACY

A Journal of Student Scholarship

Volume 17

2017



LEGACY

Volume 17

2017

A Journal of Student Scholarship

Editorial Staff

Denise Diliberto
Geoff Lybeck
Gray Whaley

Faculty Editor

Hale Yilmaz

The editorial staff would like to thank all those who supported this issue of *Legacy*, especially the SIU Undergraduate Student Government, Phi Alpha Theta, SIU Department of History faculty and staff, our history alumni, our department chair Dr. Jonathan Wiesen, the students who submitted papers, and their faculty mentors Professors Jo Ann Argersinger, Jonathan Bean, José Najar, Joseph Sramek and Hale Yilmaz.

A publication of
the Sigma Kappa Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta
& the History Department
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
history.siu.edu

© 2017 Department of History, Southern Illinois University
All rights reserved

LEGACY

Volume 17

2017

A Journal of Student Scholarship

Table of Contents

The Effects of Collegiate Gay Straight Alliances in the 1980s and 1990s Alicia Mayen	1
Students in the Carbondale, Illinois Civil Rights Movement Bryan Jenks	15
The Crisis of Legitimacy: Resistance, Unity, and the Stamp Act of 1765, 1763 – 1766 Coleman Fitch	27
Freedom Summer: Going South for Social Justice Jesse Hinds	41
The Ghetto Brothers: Reconciliation, Music, and the Brokerage of Peace among Bronx Street Gangs in the 1970s Margaret McKinney	51
The Rise and Fall of Lighter-Than-Air Aircraft, 1783 – 1937 Marc Mercado	65
Contributors	81

Alicia Mayen

The Effects of Collegiate Gay Straight Alliances in the 1980s and 1990s

The word “homosexual” comes from the late nineteenth century German psychologist Karoly Maria Benkert.¹ The term refers to people who are sexually attracted to people of the same sex.² Homosexuals (hereafter referred to as “gay” people) existed in the United States for many years, eventually coming into the public eye in the mid-twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, openly gay characters appeared in Broadway plays and partook in events known as drag balls.³ While psychologist Evelyn Hooker observed that many gay neighborhoods existed in the 1950s,⁴ there were no gay or lesbian organizations until the emergence of the Mattachine Society in 1953.⁵ During that time, however, no official organizations existed for gay and lesbian students on college campuses. The organizations, which advocates and activists later referred to as Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs), did not emerge on college campuses until the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁶ GSAs came in response to the start of the Gay Liberation Movement and to the riots at the Stonewall Inn in 1969.⁷ Today GSAs can be found on many college and university campuses nationwide, including on the campus of Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC).

Examining the actions of Gay Straight Alliances at SIU, in conjunction with historical events and trends, sheds light upon the impact that GSAs have had on the local LGBT communities they serve.⁸ Using a local collegiate GSA, Saluki Rainbow Network at SIU (and its previous iterations), this study highlights the effects of collegiate GSAs on their local communities. These effects include the building of a community and an increased public awareness concerning health issues, such as HIV/AIDS. Due to a lack of records from other decades, the focus of this paper is the unfolding of these changes during the 1980s and 1990s. In order to better understand the effects of GSAs during this time period, one must first understand that they emerged out of the Gay Liberation Movement and the 1969 Stonewall events (a series of riots between gay civilians and police).⁹

Contrary to popular belief, the Gay Liberation Movement did not begin with the events at Stonewall. The movement, though slightly different than the post-Stonewall movement, began when Harry Hay established the Mattachine Society in San Francisco.¹⁰ Hay, a Communist Party member, established the group in the 1950s using the party itself as a model for the Mattachine Society.¹¹ Using a multi-tiered model, members of the Society viewed themselves as an

oppressed minority group and sought ways to voice those feelings in their biweekly meetings.¹² These meetings were popular in San Francisco, despite rumors of bar raids and what former member Konrad Stevens described as "... [fears of] the government getting a list of names and [expecting] that cops would come barging in and arrest everybody."¹³ Here, Stevens echoed a fear that many gay men during that time had, as many felt that they were under attack by the government. While the government did not openly persecute gays and lesbians prior to 1950, American communists or suspected communists were, due to the Cold War. During this time, the House Un-American Activities committee (HUAC) targeted many people, such as leftists in Hollywood.¹⁴ By 1950, the push against communism in the United States finally reached the gay community. Many people saw the actions and identities of "others" such as homosexuals as morally deviant, and the government deemed them dangerous as a result.¹⁵ Despite that fact, membership in the Mattachine Society continued to grow, as both gay men and lesbian women founded chapters in Berkeley and Oakland.¹⁶ Around the mid-1950s, the Society grew into a significantly more public foundation, which in combination with Hay's communist background led to a change in leadership and an eventual decline in membership.¹⁷

In 1956, Hal Call became the president of the society, and by 1961 he decentralized the society so that all of its chapters became separate organizations within the State of California.¹⁸ Decentralization led to the collapse of the Mattachine Society, leaving behind the Daughters of Bilitis, a social group for lesbian women, founded in 1951.¹⁹ These organizations never had extremely large memberships over their lifespans, each organization only having a few hundred members,²⁰ and they were not as radical as the later liberation movement.²¹ But they sowed ideological seeds within gay and lesbian communities in California and across the United States, laying the foundation for later movements by demonstrating that gays and lesbians could come together and make sure that "unjust laws would crumble."²² Activists built Gay Straight Alliances, including the first iteration of Saluki Rainbow Network, on this foundation, and the movement spawned by the riots at Stonewall.²³ In fact, the Mattachine Society served as the inspiration for the first student gay-rights organization.²⁴ The other spark, the Stonewall riots, inspired the first gay straight alliances.

The events that occurred at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York, took place between late June and early July 1969.²⁵ Stonewall Inn, prior to June 1969, was a mafia-run gay bar that saw hundreds of patrons each night.²⁶ To Martin Boyce and Dick Leitsch, who are former frequenters of Stonewall Inn, the bar was "like a watering hole in the savannah," as many considered gay bars the social centers of gay life during that time.²⁷ For many, gay bars like the Stonewall Inn were a sanctuary. Despite the presence of societies such as the Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis, homosexual men and women faced persecution during the 1950s and 1960s. Homosexuality became

criminalized (Illinois became the first state to decriminalize it in 1962)²⁸ and medicalized, with many states sending homosexual individuals to mental institutions for being “sexual psychopaths.”²⁹

During the 1960s, governmental officials, such as New York City’s mayor, came under significant pressure to crack down on the homosexuals in the city. This led to numerous police raids on gay bars during that time, which in turn led to many arrests.³⁰ In an interview featured in David Carter’s Documentary *Stonewall Uprising*, law professor William Eskridge stated, “at the peak, as many as five hundred people per year were arrested for the crimes against nature, and between three thousand and five thousand five hundred people per year arrested for various solicitation or loitering crimes.”³¹ Many of these solicitation arrests were for the solicitation of sex and alcohol.³² Loitering crimes included frequenting the Mafia-run Stonewall Inn.³³ In other words, police arrested between three thousand and five thousand five hundred people in New York City each year for being homosexual or for going to gay bars such as the Stonewall Inn.

Undoubtedly, this caused tensions between police and the gay and lesbian community, especially because police entrapped people prior to arresting them, or raided gay bars when they were full of people.³⁴ Stonewall Inn had been raided several times during this period, but the raid in June 1969 ended up differently than the previous raids. Instead of a routine bust, one patron stated that this police raid was different, as “you could feel the electricity going through people. You could actually feel it. People were getting really, really pissed and uptight.”³⁵ The crowd was much livelier that night and refused to vacate the bar peacefully as they did other times. The tipping point, according to Lucian Truscott, a local newspaper reporter who was there that night, was when “A rather tough lesbian was busted in the bar and when she came out of the bar she was fighting the cops and trying to get away. And the harder she fought, the more the cops were beating her up and the madder the crowd got.”³⁶ The crowd, though already quite rowdy, reached the point of no return as the police beat the woman.

However, Sylvia Rivera, another Stonewall patron, stated that an African American transgender woman named Marsha P. Johnson,³⁷ as well as drag queens such as Zazu Nova Queen of Sex, started the scuffle.³⁸ Author David Carter affirms this, stating that the riots began after Marsha P. Johnson threw a shot glass into a mirror at the club while shouting, “I got my civil rights!”³⁹ People soon referred to this event as: “... [The] shot glass heard round the world.”⁴⁰ After the shot glass incident, other patrons, including Puerto Rican transgender woman Sylvia Rivera, joined Johnson.⁴¹ In addition to the Stonewall Inn’s gay patrons, many other African American and Latina drag queens and transgender individuals followed Rivera and Johnson’s lead and participated in the rioting.⁴²

As the night went on, many people reported that some individuals threw pennies at police,⁴³ while others verbally attacked the police calling out phrases like “gay power” and “faggot cops.”⁴⁴ Eventually, the raid turned into physical violence, with drag queens knocking police out with their heels, and other patrons kicking police.⁴⁵ Soon, other rioters tried to get inside the Stonewall Inn after a number of police officers barricaded themselves inside.⁴⁶ According to John O’Brien, a Stonewall patron, “Our goal was to hurt those police. I wanted to kill those cops for the anger I had in me. And the cops got that. And they were lucky that door was closed, they were very lucky.”⁴⁷ It is evident that chronic mistreatment had fed up patrons like O’Brien. Enough anger and resentment turned to violence within them. As the crowd grew violence escalated. The tactical police arrived and forced the crowd back from Stonewall Inn. The police’s strategy did not work for long, as the patrons of Stonewall eventually surrounded them on all sides.⁴⁸ Crowds mocked the police singing: “We are the Stonewall girls. We wear our hair in curls. We wear no underwear. We shave our pubic hair. ...We wear our dungarees. Above our nelly knees!”⁴⁹ In response, the tactical police charged the singers, beating them down until eventually the crowd dispersed.

The following night, however, the Stonewall Inn opened again, with supporters such as the Black Panthers and anti-Vietnam protesters joining in the riot. Once again, the police arrived on the scene.⁵⁰ Lucian Truscott, also there the second night, related the crowd’s mentality stating, “They think that they could disperse us last night and keep us from doing what we want to do, being on the street saying I’m gay and I’m proud? Just let’s see if they can.”⁵¹ Building on the energy from the previous night, the confident crowd did not want police to silence or jail them for being gay or for being proud of their homosexuality. Their words echoed those of the people in the Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis Societies, only with a more radical and intense presence. After the riots, Danny Garvin, a patron of the bar, stated that gay people “became a people.” Continuing, he recalled, “We didn’t necessarily know where we were going yet, you know, what organizations we were going to be or how things would go, but we became something I, as a person, could all of a sudden grab onto.”⁵² Right after the riots, not everyone knew what would come for those in the LGB community. All they knew was that they felt a connection with others like them and felt that for the first time in a while, there was something tangible in the community to hold on to. Stonewall, in essence, changed the direction of the gay liberation movement,⁵³ making it focused on pride and community.⁵⁴

Author John D’emilio wrote:

Gay liberation propelled hundreds of men and women to act ... but two decades of work by homophile activists had made the individuals who were ready to respond. At the time of the

Stonewall riot ... homosexuality had already ceased being an invisible phenomenon and gay men and lesbian women more easily participated in the collective life of gay subculture.⁵⁵

In other words, after Stonewall, people in the gay liberation movement were ready to respond and advocate for change as they participated in the LGB community. Readiness and anger that came from the Stonewall riots led many people, especially college students, to join and officially organize and create a community. It is at that time that many of the GSAs that exist on college and university campuses today came into being.

In April 1964, Columbia College (New York) recognized the first collegiate GSA in the United States as an official student organization: the Student Homophile League of Columbia College.⁵⁶ Though established prior to the Stonewall Riots, its main goal became a means to serve as "a vehicle for students of all orientations to combat homophobia."⁵⁷ Between 1969 and 1970, other similar organizations, some more radical than others, appeared on the campuses of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, San Francisco State University, Rutgers University, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Boston University, University of Minnesota, and the City College of New York.⁵⁸ Some of these organizations were quieter in their activism prior to the Stonewall Riots.⁵⁹ A large number of GSAs formed after Stonewall as a response to a changing political climate, as well as to the need for equality and action against homophobia.⁶⁰ Duke University's first GSA, the Duke Gay Alliance, first formed in the fall of 1972, stating in a campus newspaper that "The changes since the 1969 Stonewall Riot are epochal; with Harvard, Princeton, MIT, etc., etc., in the van on campus gay liberation, could Duke be far behind?"⁶¹ Importantly, the organization made it clear that it formed not as a direct result of the Stonewall riots, but because of the larger gay liberation movement on college campuses. Within the Midwest, the University of Michigan established a chapter of the Gay Liberation Front on its campus in March 1970, in order to combat stereotypes of gay people, fight homophobia, and combat the mental illness model of homosexuality.⁶² The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign founded a chapter of the Gay Liberation Front in August 1972.⁶³

On April 14, 1971, activists founded the Gay Liberation Organization (GLO) at Southern Illinois University's Carbondale campus.⁶⁴ The organization, inspired by the fiery community at Stonewall and organized in order to create a place to support gay men, became the Saluki Rainbow Network many years later.⁶⁵ Founded by John Taylor, James Wright and five others,⁶⁶ this particular organization is one of the oldest GSAs in the United States.⁶⁷ Later on in the 1970s, GLO changed its name to Gay Peoples' Union (GPU), and when more women joined the organization, Gay People's Union changed its name to Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union (GLPU).⁶⁸ In the 1980s, Gay and Lesbian Peoples'

Union sponsored speeches in the free forum areas of SIUC's campus, created a support hotline known as the Pride Line, and became more of an AIDS advocacy and awareness group.⁶⁹

In the 1990s Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union changed its name to Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends (GLBF) and then fell into a brief period of inactivity before emerging in 1993 with a renewed commitment to the campus LGB community. In 1999, Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends changed its name to Saluki Rainbow Network (SRN), in order to become more inclusive.⁷⁰ During the 1980s and 1990s, SRN (and its previous iterations) partook in many activities both on campus and in the Carbondale community at large. Using primary sources from the SRN office (including phone logs and early websites), as well as secondary materials, in conjunction with outside sources on LGBT history, one can examine the effects of the SRN on the local LGB community during this time period.⁷¹ Those effects include the building of a community and increasing public awareness of health issues, such as HIV/AIDS.

While reading a book on LGBT history for this project, a flier dropped from the pages. Reading "Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union," the untitled flier presents information on what the organization does. Included in the list are women's and men's support groups, a speaker's bureau, and social events.⁷² The words "you are not alone!" fill the bottom portion of the flier.⁷³ The words "you are not alone" in the context of being printed by Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union informs the reader that they are not the only LGB person on SIUC's campus. Backed up by a list of activities by the organization, such as maintaining support groups and the holding of social events, the flier sends the message that there is a community of LGB students on campus within GLPU. This is one of the effects the Saluki Rainbow Network (or GLPU, as it was called in the 1980s) had on the LGB community during this period: the building of a LGB community on campus with other LGB college students. According to the Daily Egyptian article "Saluki Rainbow Network Celebrates 33rd Year," GLPU had "plentiful" amounts of social activities for the LGB community during the 1980s and became one of the original sponsors of the "Take Back the Night" march, which protested violence against women.⁷⁴ Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union not only hosted events for the LGB community, but also participated in events that promoted the wellbeing of women in the community.

Other events held by Saluki Rainbow Network and its previous iterations included weekly meetings⁷⁵ and yearly Gay Awareness weeks. Organizers filled one of those weeks, from April 7-14, 1991, with activities for the community. For example, the flier advertises events such as workshops on building bridges between LGB and heterosexual communities, as well as a semiformal dance.⁷⁶ Those events, while more social in nature than many of the other workshops and panels listed during that week, sought to bring not only people within the LGB community together, but people from the heterosexual community as

well. While there is no record of how successful events such as the ones held during 1991's Gay Awareness Week were, organizers meant for the events to help establish and bring together a community of LGB and pro-LGB people.

Weekly meetings also helped to build and foster a community on SIU campus. Upon examination of the Pride Line phone records from the late 1980s and 1990s, one finds that many of the people who called the phone line were looking for friends or some sort of community to belong to. Line workers recommended that all callers come to Saluki Rainbow Network meetings. In records from fall 1997, eight phone calls that semester mentioned the weekly Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Friends meetings to the caller explicitly stated by the line worker. On September 16, 1997, line worker Aaron wrote that the caller was "talking about loneliness and would try to make the meeting."⁷⁷ Informed of the GLBF meeting, the caller said that he would try to attend. We don't know for sure if the caller indeed attended that GLBF meeting, but it is clear that the Saluki Rainbow Network offered him the opportunity to become a part of a community of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals on campus. In another instance, on February 1, 1988, line worker Bill wrote that a gay male graduate student was looking for information on this support group, and was "looking forward to joining again."⁷⁸ The graduate student, having previously been in support groups for gay men, certainly found the support that he needed in the group, and would have found himself in a community of people like himself. Other Prideline records demonstrate the interest of people in attending these weekly meetings, even if they were afraid,⁷⁹ because they wanted to meet people similar to themselves.⁸⁰ Through Prideline records such as these, it is evident that Saluki Rainbow Network and its predecessors actively worked to build a community of LGB people at SIU. At the same time, this organization also wanted to build a community of LGB people that extended beyond the SIU campus.

During its history, Saluki Rainbow Network and its predecessors held many events that aimed to build a larger LGB community by either working with other collegiate GSAs or other local Southern Illinois LGB groups. One particularly important event that SRN (then GLBF) hosted and participated in with other collegiate GSAs was the 1995 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay College Conference (MBLGCC), which is a college conference held yearly for college students in the LGB community from the Midwest and beyond.⁸¹ The goals of the third annual MBLGCC (now MBLGTACC, or Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender and Asexual College Conference) were to provide information on "topics such as networking, outreach, forming pride weeks, dealing with college administrators, legal rights, AIDS/HIV on campus, legal rights, [and] group organization," as well as to gather for entertainment and keynote speakers. The conference sought to bring together at least five hundred LGB college students from across the United States⁸² in order to build "queer success in the Midwest," the theme of

the conference.⁸³ In fact, the conference brought three-hundred college students to SIU from across thirty states.⁸⁴

While the number of students that actually attended the conference was smaller than the expected number, the conference succeeded in bringing LGB college students together. In bringing these students together, they were able to build a community that extended beyond SIU. Conference organizers gave students the chance to gather together to learn about issues relevant to their lives and to get to know each other by participating in the conference events. Other GSAs across the country spent time building a larger collegiate LGB community during this period as well, either by coming to the 1995 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian and Gay College Conference, or by grouping up with other GSAs, such as Duke University, which hosted the Southeastern Conference for LGB College Groups in 1998. Duke University was also a member of the statewide North Carolina Federation of Campus Gay and Lesbian Organizations during that time.⁸⁵ It is evident that both Duke University's GSA and the different iterations of Saluki Rainbow Network both actively worked to build a community, not only on their own respective campuses, but also within the nationwide collegiate LGB community.

Organizations such as Saluki Rainbow Network built a community of students, both on and off campus, during the 1980s and 1990s. In the 25th anniversary booklet for Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Friends, one finds a large sampling of what the community looked like during that time. Filled with images of groups of people smiling and laughing as they posed for the camera,⁸⁶ the centerfold demonstrates that this organization succeeded in building a community. Holding events such as "Take Back the Night," students who organized and attended Gay Awareness Weeks, meetings of the MBLGACC, and Saluki Rainbow Network built a community of LGB students on campus. Upon building this community, SRN and its previous iterations worked to increase awareness and knowledge about the things that affected those in the LGB community during the 1980s and 1990s, including health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

An American Red Cross Manual from the 1990s remains in the current Saluki Rainbow Network office. While outdated, the manual covers the basic information a person would need to have in order to teach a course on HIV/AIDS.⁸⁷ It covers pedagogical approaches on how to teach HIV/AIDS through differentiated means of instruction, such as via lecture or simulation.⁸⁸ The manual would prepare any individual to talk about the disease. During the 1980s and 1990s, Saluki Rainbow Network ensured that those in the LGB community had the information that they needed about HIV/AIDS, thus allowing them sufficient information on this health issue. This service was absolutely necessary at that time, as the AIDS epidemic had become a global health crisis during the 1990s.⁸⁹

At the time, many people, especially gay men, contracted the disease. As researchers discovered HIV/AIDS in 1981,⁹⁰ not many people had adequate information on it. In fact, Gay Lesbian Bisexuals and Friends received numerous phone calls in the late 1980s and early 1990s regarding HIV/AIDS. Many of the phone calls involved the caller asking what AIDS was and how people contracted it. For example, a caller in 1988 wanted to know “how AIDS was contracted, and how safe anal and oral sex were.”⁹¹ Phone line workers during that time provided information to callers and even referred them to other services, such as the then Wellness Center or the Jackson County Health Department.⁹² Other callers talked about being worried about their friends, because their friend had contracted HIV/AIDS. One caller from 1993 stated that his friend had AIDS and was dying.⁹³ Another caller stated, “my best friend just died of AIDS. I don’t know what AIDS is.”⁹⁴ Even though those types of calls, where a friend of an HIV/AIDS positive individual would call in, were infrequent during this time, it certainly makes a statement about how much the rest of SIU’s campus knew about Saluki Rainbow Network’s (then GLBF) knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The campus at large had a good idea about how much the organization knew, as it often partook in events that would raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

During the 1980’s, Gay Lesbian Peoples’ Union held a “die in” in the middle of the Student Center in order to “dramatize the effects on the gay community of the AIDS epidemic.”⁹⁵ During events such as this one, students outside the LGB community were able to see and learn about HIV/AIDS, in addition to finding out about what the organization knew about the disease. Given the information that the organization provided to those within the LGB community and beyond, as well as the informational events it held, Saluki Rainbow Network played a role in making the community more knowledgeable about this particular health issue. On other campuses, such as that of Duke University, similar actions took place.⁹⁶ One of the effects of college GSAs, especially Saluki Rainbow Network, was that the community increased knowledge and information about HIV/AIDS. While this organization contributed to the community in other ways as well during the 1980s and 1990s, this was perhaps one of its most significant contributions.

Owing their beginning to early societies, such as the Mattachine and the Daughters of Bilitis, as well as to the riots at Stonewall, most collegiate Gay Straight Alliances emerged during the 1970s. Those groups, once established, provided support and information for their community during the 1980s and 1990s. GSAs such as Saluki Rainbow Network and its previous iterations built communities where they did not previously exist. They also provided the people with information on health issues, such as HIV/AIDS. Those actions significantly impacted the community by enabling its members to come together as a more knowledgeable body. There are still many avenues for further studies on Saluki Rainbow Network and other collegiate GSAs. While available evidence and

current research on this topic are quite limited, it is clear that GSAs significantly impacted those they worked with during the 1980s and 1990s. What is more, SIU still feels the full impact of SRN to this day. Saluki Rainbow Network continues to follow in the footsteps of its predecessors in community building and serving as a point of reference for issues that affect the LGBT community.

Notes

- ¹ Brent Pickett, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab, 2015).
- ² *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Homosexual," accessed November 26, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homosexual>
- ³ Michael Kazin, "Gay Rights before Stonewall," *Dissent*, April 2, 2013, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/gay-rights-before-stonewall>.
- ⁴ Joseph Harry, *Social Organization of Gay Males* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1978), 143.
- ⁵ James Sears, "Introduction," in *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine: The Hal Call Chronicles and the Early Movement for Homosexual Emancipation*, ed. Jack Nichols (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006), xiii.
- ⁶ Liz Highleyman, "First Student Homophile League Forms," *LGBT History, 1956-1975* (January 2005): 60-63.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ People did not use the abbreviation LGBT until the late 1980s or early 1990s, see Michelle A. Marzullo, "LGBT/Queer Sexuality, History of, North America," *The International Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality* (2015): 650. As LGB is the correct initialism for the period discussed in this paper, references to what is now known as the LGBT community will be referred to as the LGB community.
- ⁹ David Carter, *Stonewall Uprising* (United States: PBS Distribution, 2011).
- ¹⁰ John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 79.
- ¹¹ John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-170* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), 68.
- ¹² D'Emilio, *Making Trouble*, 27.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ¹⁶ D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 72.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 73-86.
- ¹⁸ Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 72.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.
- ²⁰ John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 71.

- ²¹ Ibid., 239.
- ²² Faderman. *The Gay Revolution*, 66.
- ²³ Gus Bode, "Saluki Rainbow Network Celebrates its 33rd Year," *Daily Egyptian*, 2004.
- ²⁴ Brett Beemyn "The Silence Is Broken: A History of the First Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Student Groups," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* vol. 12 no. 2 (2003): 205-223.
- ²⁵ Martin Dubermin, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993), 195.
- ²⁶ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Rita James Simon and Alison Brooks, *Gay and lesbian communities the world over* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 57.
- ²⁹ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Michael Kasino, *Pay It No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson* (N.P.: Redux Pictures, 2012), Film.
- ³³ David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 80.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Martin Dubermin, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton Books, 1993), 196.
- ³⁶ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ³⁷ Sylvia Rivera, "Sylvia Rivera's Talk at LGMNY, June 2001 Lesbian and Gay Services Center, New York City," *Centro Journal* vol. 19, no. 1 (2007): 119.
- ³⁸ Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots*, 162.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 298.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Tim Retzlloff, "Eliding Trans Latino/a Queer Experience in U.S. LGBT History: José Sarria and Sylvia Rivera Reexamined," *Centro Journal* vol. 19, no. 1 (2007): 146.
- ⁴² Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 97.
- ⁴³ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ⁴⁴ Dubermin, *Stonewall*, 197.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Dubermin, *Stonewall*, 201.

- ⁵⁰ Carter, *Stonewall Uprising*.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 249.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Liz Highleyman, "First Student Homophile League Forms," *LGBT History*, 1956-1975 (January 2005): 60-63.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Melinda Miceli, *Standing Out, Standing Together: The Social and Political Impact of Gay-straight Alliances* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 16.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Jess McDonald, "Narrative History of LGBT Life at Duke," Duke Student Affairs, 2016, <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/csge/about-us/history-lgbtq-life-duke/narrative-history-lgbt-life-duke>.
- ⁶² Nick Burris, "Spectrum Center," Our History: Spectrum Center, 2016, <https://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/our-history>.
- ⁶³ "History," History: LGBT Resource Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016, <https://oiir.illinois.edu/lgbt-resource-center/about-lgbtrc/history>.
- ⁶⁴ Saluki Rainbow Network, "History," Saluki Rainbow Network, 2012, <http://srn.rso.siu.edu/history.html>.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Gay, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends, "GLBF 25th Anniversary" (Booklet), Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1996, 9.
- ⁶⁷ Gus Bode, "Saluki Rainbow Network Celebrates its 33rd Year," *Daily Egyptian*, 2004.
- ⁶⁸ Gus Bode, "Here and Queer', SIU's Gays Have an Organization That Cares." *Daily Egyptian*, April 11, 2001.
- ⁶⁹ Gus Bode, "GLBF Celebrates 25 Years of Gay Awareness, Activism," *Daily Egyptian*, 1996.
- ⁷⁰ Saluki Rainbow Network, "History," 2012.
- ⁷¹ Unfortunately, there is a lack of evidence (from both SRN and other collegiate GSAs in the Central and Southern Illinois region) or scholarship to compare to the following analysis. Additionally, the primary sources cited in the following pages have not been officially catalogued or archived, and thus do not have all the necessary or proper citation information such as archive number or location.
- ⁷² Gay and Lesbian People's Union, "Advertisement Handbill," Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1980.

- ⁷³ Ibid.
- ⁷⁴ Gus Bode, "Saluki Rainbow Network Celebrates its 33rd Year."
- ⁷⁵ Gay and Lesbian Peoples' Union, Pride Line 2/1/1988, Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷⁷ Gay Bisexual Lesbian and Friends. "Pride Line 9/1997." (Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1997.)
- ⁷⁸ Gay Lesbian Peoples' Union, "Pride Line 2/1/88," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁷⁹ Gay Lesbian People's Union, "Pride Line 4/5/88," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁸⁰ Gay Lesbian People's Union, "Pride Line West Frankfort," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁸¹ Pjsmith@Siucvmb.siu.edu. (1994).
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Midwest Institute for Sexuality and Gender Diversity, "Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference," SGD Institute, 2016, <https://sgdinstitute.org/mblgtacc>.
- ⁸⁴ Gay, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends, "GLBF 25th Anniversary."
- ⁸⁵ McDonald. "Narrative History of LGBT Life at Duke."
- ⁸⁶ Gay, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends. "GLBF 25th Anniversary."
- ⁸⁷ *American Red Cross HIV/AIDS Instructor's Manual*. (N.P.: American Red Cross. 1990).
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ "HIV and AIDS—United States, 1981 – 2000," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5021a2.htm>.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Gay Lesbian Peoples' Union, "Pride Line 2/1/88," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁹² Gay Lesbian Peoples' Union, "Pride Line 12/12/89," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1988.
- ⁹³ Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Friends, "Pride Line 10/14/93," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1993.
- ⁹⁴ Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Friends, "Pride Line '92," Phone Log, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 1992.
- ⁹⁵ Gay, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Friends, "GLBF 25th Anniversary."
- ⁹⁶ McDonald, "Narrative History of LGBT Life at Duke."

Bryan Jenks

Students in the Carbondale, Illinois Civil Rights Movement

Jim Crow laws persisted in a large part of the United States even after the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy vs. Ferguson* through its *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954. Many states, both north and south, continued to maintain the Jim Crow laws that kept black people and white people separated. In areas like Southern Illinois, schools had integrated, but many white businesses still maintained white-only service, with the most severe violations taking place in Cairo, Illinois. In the summer of 1962, students at Southern Illinois University (SIU) banded together in an attempt to organize an effort to stop segregation in Southern Illinois and created the Student Non-violent Freedom Committee (SNFC). This committee helped to coordinate and supervise different protests in the Southern Illinois region, and then later in surrounding states as well. Locally organized by students, the SNFC helped shape the national civil rights movement and had a dramatic effect on the effort to end Jim Crow in the Southern Illinois region.

The efforts of groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) helped to create an environment that nurtured the youth of the civil rights movement. In February of 1960, four college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, started the youth movement by participating in a sit-in, and within a matter of days the sit-ins had spread to fifteen cities in five southern states, with over fifty thousand students participating in sit-ins or demonstrations in the following months.¹ Those sit-ins did not have any unifying force except the desire by all involved to do something to change the oppressive policies of the time. They did not coordinate their efforts, however, which was the reason for the formation of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The goal of this organization was to coordinate the national effort of the youth into a single force that could challenge segregation across the USA. The youth involved in this movement believed in the use of non-violence. They suffered blows, beatings, and verbal abuses, and did not strike back, thus exercising an astounding level of will power and self-control.²

Before the 1960s, few civil rights groups participated in large scale protests, but with the awakening of the youth and the formation of the SNCC, non-violent protests became the center of the civil rights movement. The Montgomery Bus

Boycott had, up to that time, been the largest coordinated protest of the civil rights movement. Sit-ins and protests from college students almost eclipsed the scale of the Montgomery boycott overnight. While the NAACP and CORE made vital advances in the civil rights movement, SNCC took the lead in direct action by skillfully coordinating student involvement.³ The awakening of the youth changed the way the civil rights movement unfolded. Instead of court battles, most action now took place by local students who followed a non-violent form of protest aimed at integrating the entire nation.

The zeal and passion from the college movement spread across the nation, and groups all around the country formed in response. In the summer of 1962, a group of college students at Southern Illinois University wanted to participate in this nationwide movement. John O'Neal and Mary McCollum first formed a group of peers to look into housing for black people at SIU and in the Carbondale area.⁴ The self-run group soon expanded its activities. In early June of 1962, Reverend Blaine Ramsey, of the Word Chapel Church in Cairo, invited a group of around twenty SIU students to attend an NAACP meeting about discrimination problems in Cairo.⁵ A former student from SIU, Mary McCollum, spoke at the meeting and represented the students from SIU. McCollum, a white person and from Nashville, Tennessee, attended SIU in the spring 1962 semester and planned on returning for the fall 1962 semester. She was a SNCC field secretary and worked with the Freedom Riders the previous year.⁶ McCollum received training in, and had taken part in civil rights activism and knew how to implement non-violent protests. Her efforts proved invaluable to the protests carried out against segregation in Cairo throughout the summer of 1962.

At the meeting on June 11, the people of Cairo raised multiple concerns about discrimination in their town, and they formed the Cairo Nonviolent Freedom Committee (CNFC) with the help and support of the SIU students. Two SIU representatives acted as advisors to this group, one of whom was Mary McCollum. Sixteen-year-old Charles Koen headed the committee. Immediately following this meeting there was a ten-day training program where people in the community, mostly high school students, received training in nonviolent tactics.⁷ The two advisors from SIU took the lead in the training of Cairo youth in non-violent tactics. While adults and youth formed the CNFC in Cairo, students formed the vast majority of protesters, most of whom were younger than twenty years old.

Universal support for the formation of the CNFC did not exist at SIU. The student council at SIU failed to approve a resolution supporting the CNFC and its campaign in Cairo to end segregation. An article about the decision in *The Egyptian* titled "Student Council Fails" indicates some support for the group in Cairo and its SIU student supporters.⁸ Support for the group remained shaky at first, as people remained uncertain of what the group represented at that point. As the fight dragged on, people began to see that

the group would not quit. It gradually began to gain more support from both in and around the community.

The first decisive action took place at a restaurant called Mack's BBQ. A team tested and deemed the business worthy for protest. The facility refused service to the first test group, and when informed of Illinois's public accommodation law, they received overpriced food that was inedible.⁹ The ensuing protest was non-violent. A picket line holding signs outside the building did not harass or prevent people from entering the business, but a group gradually formed around the protesters. Mary McCollum led the protest, and as the crowd turned violent around them, a man charged the group with a knife. McCollum blocked him and received a knife slash to her thigh that required twelve stitches.¹⁰ Dedication in the face of extreme danger exemplifies how the youth of the civil rights movement were willing to sacrifice anything to achieve their goal of an equal society. The protests continued into July with six protestors arrested, and they finally ended when the owner served food to two black protestors.¹¹ Soon-to-be Vice President of the SNFC, Jim Adams, was in Cairo supporting the sit-ins when the police arrested him. They charged him with supposedly trespassing on church grounds. In response, *The Egyptian* published an article entitled "Jim Adams Day?"¹² The article supported the student's actions in Cairo, and it commended SIU for recognizing the brave action of one of its students.¹³ The support for the protests in Cairo began to grow as more publicity about the event spread and as more and more students began to rally behind the movement.

Students at SIU continued to travel to Cairo to support the protest. On July 8, the students at SIU formed their own organization, the SNFC, and elected John O'Neal as their president. Prior to the formation of the organization, support from SIU had merely been people acting on their own accord with no governing body. The group stated that their goal was to "coordinate activities against any racial discrimination they might find in Southern Illinois." They placed special interest for the summer of 1962 on Cairo.¹⁴ The group helped with the coordination of the efforts by organizing buses to take SIU students to Cairo. However, the group did not limit itself to one town or county. Rather, it stood against all segregation in Southern Illinois and beyond, which put it at the forefront of student activism in the civil rights movement in Southern Illinois.

The University also began to put its support behind the students and took precautions to stay on their side. On July 11, Dennis Trueblood, a professor in the Department of Higher Education, wrote to SIU President Delyte Morris outlining his opinion on the incidents taking place in Cairo, and about the SNFC. Trueblood made several important points in his letter to President Morris. He advised President Morris not to try to control the students, but to simply let the student exercise their rights as citizens.¹⁵ Trueblood also recommended that President Morris look into the school's own discrimination policies.¹⁶ In the

past two years the policies had become lax, and two instances of discrimination had occurred.¹⁷ Unintentionally, the SNFC caused the administration at SIU to begin its own self-examination to combat discrimination within the university. Trueblood's aim was to warn President Morris that the university could be at risk of the student-led group turning on SIU and that the university should take steps, such as hiring more black staff and enforcing non-discriminatory policies on campus, in order to prevent this from happening. Trueblood acknowledged that the youth would not submit to any control from above and that any attempt to do so could result in protests against SIU.

The SNFC acted swiftly and decisively in the coming months. They started by helping to organize two protests at the roller rink and swimming pool in Cairo. The pool proved an easier target because it was operated by the Rotary Club, a national organization with a non-discriminatory policy. The protests took place from July 14 to July 15, 1962. Police arrested over forty students (three from SIU). Of the forty arrested, only twenty were over the age of seventeen.¹⁸ Seventeen of the students chose to remain in jail, including the three SIU students, and went on hunger strikes in protest of the arrests.¹⁹ One of the three SIU students arrested was Jim Adams, vice president of the SNFC. He organized the hunger strikes in the jail. In response to the arrests, students at SIU held a morale drive where sympathizers wore white arm bands to show support. Students estimated that they distributed over five hundred arm bands.²⁰ The student population rallied to show their support for their fellow students in jail, for the courage they embodied by going on hunger strikes, and for their dedication to the cause. The jailed students cared more for the movement than they did for their personal health and well-being. The SNFC helped to spread the news of the fight going on in Cairo and proved essential in organizing the transportation of students to Cairo to participate in the protests. That helped to expand the scope of the action taken in Cairo, and generated support from other towns in the area.

Trials for the arrested protestors took place on July 20. They ended with the court charging and fining twenty-one people for their actions. When the protestors appealed the charges, the courtroom filled with black people from the town of Cairo and supporters from SIU and people overflowed outside of the courtroom. While the trial took place, the crowd outside sang freedom songs in protest of the trials, showing their unity against the oppression being committed against them.²¹ The court charged and convicted the three SIU students. Jim Adams, vice president of the SNFC, was charged \$300, and the two others charged \$100. The three students' cases continued until August 17, but the court released the students from jail six days after their arrest after they posted bail. Following the trials, the CNFC and the SNFC held a meeting, and afterwards, they organized a march where over three hundred demonstrators marched silently through the main part of town. Thirty-five of the demonstrators were

SIU students.²² The CNFC and the SNFC kept the pressure on the City of Cairo to make it clear that the fight would not stop until justice and equality existed there. The black people of Cairo joined together to demand that they receive equal rights. The march showed how support for the movement in Cairo gained more and more momentum, as publicity from the non-violent protests continued to reach people. The resolve of the people involved did not falter when the police tried to end their protests. Instead, the SNFC used the arrests as a rallying cry that only strengthened their will to keep fighting. They continued to show their support for Cairo by encouraging its members to travel there to participate in the protests.

The marches and protests attracted attention to SIU. On July 20, 1962, John O'Neal wrote a letter to President Morris reaffirming the purpose of the SNFC. O'Neal did not want the university to see the group as negatively representing the university, but instead as a positive mark on its record. John O'Neal stated, as in the constitution of the SNFC:

We affirm our faith in the ultimate value of every person as asserted by the religious and ethical traditions of our civilizations, and by our present commitment. We affirm our belief in the right of every person to the freedom and respect, implied by this faith regardless of distinctions among persons. We consider racial discrimination contrary to this belief. We affirm our belief in the principles of non-violence as that way of bringing about the social change, while respecting the dignity of those persons who oppose such change. We affirm our duty as students to work toward furthering these ideals and principles in our community and in society as a whole, with the firm conviction that, only by these principles can this or any nation be truly democratic.²³

The steadfast values the students of the SNFC had in pursuing their goal of equality through non-violent means always remained embedded in how they operated and represented themselves. John O'Neal admitted to President Morris that the SNFC had been responsible for much of the action taking place in Cairo but that the SNFC believed what they were doing was a necessity for the community in Cairo.²⁴ The last line about creating a truly democratic nation demonstrates how the group saw itself as participating in the larger movement to give equal rights to all people in the United States and how the group saw itself as performing actions that bettered society as a whole.

Later in the week, a reporter from *The Egyptian* interviewed John O'Neal about the SNFC and their actions in Cairo. The main issue at hand concerned the "violence" that had taken place in Cairo and why non-violent protests seem to inevitably lead to "violence." O'Neal responded to those accusations by saying

that people do not change overnight and that the protestors had not broken any of their nonviolent codes.²⁵ He stated that "in terms of violence worked on us, that is something that each individual who participates has to work out for himself. If he is willing to suffer violence and accept it and still maintain an attitude of love and respect, as much as possible then he's ready to participate."²⁶ The SNFC believed not in creating violence, but in stopping it from happening again by changing the people who brought violence onto them. The protests aimed "to be corrective in terms of that individuals own moral sickness."²⁷ The SNFC and the larger civil rights movement sought to eradicate racism through the use of non-violent tactics and policies. The act of protesting instead of holding court cases brought the issue to each individual person in Cairo so that they could no longer claim this problem did not exist. By not fighting back and maintaining a friendly, humble, calm, and forgiving attitude the protestors earned respect.²⁸

On July 24, *The Egyptian* published three articles written by students showing multiple views held at SIU. One article, titled "Education vs. Demonstrations," argued that authorities should stop the actions taken by students because the upheaval and the drastic changing of culture would only lead to more turmoil. Instead, the article's authors posited, authorities should integrate at a slow pace to let education and social economic gains gradually change the population.²⁹ The students who wrote this article claimed to be in support of equal rights, but the article clearly shows they disapproved of the integration attempt in Cairo. The fact that *The Egyptian* published this article revealed that the view shared by two authors of the article was common. Another article in *The Egyptian*, "Questions Need Answering," written by a member of the student council, took a neutral stance on the issue. It stated that students may act as they wish (regarding Cairo), but that the student council was not involved in the movement, nor was it backing the movement.³⁰ The last article titled "Students are Involved," written by Wendell O'Neal, vice president of the SNFC and younger brother to John O'Neal, called for active support of the demonstrations in Cairo. O'Neal's article contended that "We are involved; each of us, whether white or Negro."³¹ Wendell O'Neal spoke directly to each individual student on campus when he said that "I think that it is painfully evident that until each of us realizes his personal involvement in this situation that confronts us that we are shrinking our responsibility and abusing our privilege as people, as Americans, as Individuals."³² The student body at the end of July did not know where to stand, many simply ignored the problem, and only a small percentage decided to not shrink from their responsibility. However, the movement, compared to where it had started, had grown immensely. The whole campus, the whole city of Carbondale, and much of Southern Illinois knew of the SNFC and the fight taking place in Cairo.

Possibly in response to the publicity to the SNFC and the continued demonstrations in Cairo, Reverend Lockard of Shiloh Baptist Church in Cairo wrote a letter to President Morris, on July 24. The contents of the letter asked two questions. One question asked about what jurisdiction the university has over its students, and the other asked if the actions of the protestors represented only themselves or the university as a whole.³³ The reaction of Reverend Lockard to the actions of the SNFC sheds light on the impact that the group had in Cairo and how the students became viewed as a serious threat to segregation there. President Morris drafted a response but never sent it. In it, he stated that the students were not under the control of SIU and that the students did not represent SIU as a whole, but in the ending paragraph Morris said that "The issues being explored in Cairo are critical to the welfare of all mankind."³⁴ President Morris, while never directly stating that he backed the movement in Cairo, unofficially supported the efforts of his students and thought their endeavor was a just one from the beginning.

The efforts of people like Reverend Lockhart and others did not deter the SNFC, and on July 28 the group expanded itself further. It sent a testing team into Murphysboro, Illinois to investigate any discriminatory practices there. Upon finding some discriminatory practices, John O'Neal spoke to the community, asking if it wanted to take a stand against segregation. He stated that "We're here to help you, but we won't do things for you."³⁵ The reason for not protesting themselves remained the same reason why the SNFC helped to form the CNFC: the people needed to change their own mindset in order to make the changes permanent. The people of Murphysboro responded by inviting the SNFC back on August 7, 1962 for a community meeting. They appointed a subcommittee from the SNFC to help organize the people, and they decided to test the swimming pool. The following day they found that the pool did not allow black people to enter. Due to the publicity about Cairo, and for fear of protests from the SNFC, the pool owners and others in the community quickly changed their discriminatory policies.

The SNFC built a reputation as a group that was not afraid to take a stand against discrimination. The sheer determination and commitment of the group made multiple business owners in Murphysboro change their ways without the need to stage public protests. The Murphysboro Nonviolent Freedom Organization (MNFO) formed on August 16, 1962 to continue the fight against segregation and discrimination. A sub-committee formed to study employment problems, and another human relations sub-committee formed to pinpoint goals in order to work toward an understanding with civic and business leaders in Murphysboro.³⁶ This organization differed from the SNFC and the CNFC in that students did not lead the organization, but students actively participated in this group as facility testers and as protestors. The SNFC continued its role as an advisor and supporter of the MNFO after its formation.

Meanwhile, the movement in Cairo became increasingly volatile as the summer progressed. The CNFC and the SNFC continued their protests of multiple businesses in Cairo. On August 10, 1962, President Morris received an anonymous letter from Cairo. The letter was very hostile, with the opening paragraph stating:

Mr. president I just know that you are delighted to send your stuges [*sic*] down to Cairo to disturb the community and create a lot of publicity for your great University, you load them up at the beautiful student center that the tax payers built, and send them down to Cairo to form mobs and try their best to put our business people out of business, (needless to say communistic) [*sic*].³⁷

Some people became desperate to keep the status quo in Cairo, and this letter revealed some of the anger and hatred from the racist people there. Other lines from the letter said that "If nothing else we can find out why you send them down here so dirty they stink they are filthy, have them take a bath before the come down they stink up our streets and our jails."³⁸ When compared to the letter from the Shiloh Baptist Church, a dramatic change in attitude becomes apparent. The tone became very hostile and vengeful, which demonstrates the impact the SNFC had in Cairo. The SNFC successfully broke down barriers, and the people who had resisted them realized that they were losing the fight.

The anger and hatred in Cairo came to a climax on August 17, 1962 during protests at the Roller Rink. Since the July 20 trials, protests continued at the pool, supermarket, and the roller rink. Charles Koen and Mary McCollum led the protest group at the roller rink. The group encountered the normal racial slurs and comments as they maintained their peaceful conduct. However, the situation quickly turned violent as a crowd gathered around the group. An elderly man struck Charles Koen viciously across the forehead with a black jacket knife and then proceeded to strike another protestor, Charlene Williams, multiple times across the head, shoulders, right arm, and back as she tried to shield Charles.³⁹ The hostile crowd quickly surrounded the group and struck multiple protestors with bats, chains, clubs, sticks, and shot at them multiple times; several students received severe wounds. When the sheriff arrived on the scene, McCollum asked for help in finding injured protestors who were still missing, but he completely ignored her. When she asked for help in taking wounded protestors to the hospital, the sheriff told her that "You got them here, you get them back." Not only did the angry mob violently and maliciously attack the group of protestors, but they received no support from the local sheriff or state police in getting medical help or in looking for suspects in the attack.

The SNFC and the CNFC fought an uphill battle. They fought not only against many of the common people in the town, but also people in authoritative

positions in Cairo. The police and city government did not carry out their duties to protect the black and white protestors or uphold the law. The sheriff finally arrested four men. Clifford Jones took part in the attack, and repeatedly pointed a pistol at the group of students. Nonetheless, the Sheriff ignored that until multiple people directly brought it to his attention, and even then he seemed reluctant to arrest him. Even with those few arrests, the police did not intend to convict any of the men involved. Only with the arrival of the Reverend Blaine Ramsey and Dr. L. C. Holman (state president of the NAACP) did the police bring any real charges against the assailants. In total, seven students went to the hospital for the wounds inflicted upon them by the mob. The oldest student was twenty-two and the youngest was only thirteen years old.⁴⁰

The events of August 17, 1962 affirmed the determination of racist people in Cairo to maintain their power. Yet, as with the other arrests, trials, and setbacks of the summer, the CNFC and the SNFC used the incident to strengthen their cause. The organization sent telegrams to the governor looking for support and acknowledgement of the situation. On August 20, Charles Koen, John O'Neal, Reverend Ramsey, Dr. Holman, and Roger Nathan met with the governor along with one hundred individuals who were ready to protest if the meeting proved unsatisfactory.⁴¹ The meeting resulted in the governor saying that "the group should continue to demonstrate whenever it was deemed necessary," and the attorney general stated that his office would now prosecute in any case of unlawful segregation.⁴² While the violence that happened on August 17 was tragic, the results brought the full support of the State of Illinois.

The support from the Illinois government affected other communities in addition to Cairo. After the meeting with the governor, John O'Neal and Charles Koen spoke to the MNFO encouraging them to continue their fight, as well.⁴³ Barriers swiftly fell in Murphysboro following that meeting with state officials. The CNFC made progress in Cairo, too, with admission granted to black people by the owners of the roller rink, cafes, and hotels. They also made significant progress in the independent voter's league, which helped black people obtain a voice in government and to run for office.⁴⁴ The achievements accomplished over the summer likewise had effects in Carbondale, Illinois. In October, the student council at SIU passed a resolution supporting students' nonviolent activities against segregation and the continued fight to achieve equal rights for all citizens.⁴⁵ While only passing by one vote, the resolution shows how the SIU campus began to recognize the importance of the SNFC and their fight against discrimination.

At the end of 1962, the SNFC said that "The Movement has as its goal the enlightenment and freedom of all men, all mankind."⁴⁶ The SNFC did not limit itself to one area or one battle, and in the years to come it continued to expand its fight against racial discrimination. The SNFC newspaper created in 1964 reveals how the group continued to expand its reach and prestige. In November

of 1964, it launched a campaign to help with the voter registration movement in Mississippi. Ten SIU students went to Mississippi to act as leaders, to help register black people to vote, and to organize protests. Jane Adams, an SIU student and member of the SNFC, became the coordinator of federal projects for the State of Mississippi.⁴⁷ The students fought to allow black people to assert their power at the polls, and many gave up a semester of schooling to participate in the movement. In January of 1965, The SNFC continued to wage battles in Carbondale by launching a series of protests against businesses that practiced discriminatory hiring.⁴⁸ While protesters did eliminate some areas of blatant discrimination, other areas such as hiring, housing, and pay remained unequal between black and white people in Carbondale. In April of 1965, the SNFC also helped send students to a march on Washington to protest discriminatory voter registration in the United States.⁴⁹ The SNFC fought against discrimination at home and lent its support to the national movement by sending volunteers and financial contributions.

The SNFC made significant breakthroughs against Jim Crow in the Southern Illinois region, and the group expanded to help fight in the larger civil rights movement across the country. The group helped form not only a local organization in Carbondale, but also two other organizations in Murphysboro and Cairo. Together, these organizations reduced segregation in Cairo and achieved support from the state government. The local SNFC continued to push for integration in nearby states and also fought for equal employment opportunities in Carbondale and in surrounding communities. The courageous actions of students like John O'Neal and Marry McCollum helped shape the driving force behind those movements and organizations. Students emerged as an essential force in the effort to end segregation in Southern Illinois. They performed extraordinary acts that helped to shape the local, regional, and national civil rights movements, and they formed a solid foundation for the fight to end segregation and discrimination.

Notes

- ¹ Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 16.
- ² *Ibid.*, 14.
- ³ "SNCC: Freedom Movement in the South," Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴ *The Egyptian*, June 29, 1962, *Online Archives Daily Egyptian*, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁵ *The Egyptian*, July 24, 1962, Interview with John O'Neal, Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁶ *The Egyptian*, June 29, 1962.

- 7 "SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report," Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 8 *The Egyptian*, July 10, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 9 SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report.
- 10 *The Student Voice*, October 1962, Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 11 SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report.
- 12 *The Egyptian*, July 10, 1962.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 *The Southern Illinoisan*, July 9, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 15 *Dennis Trueblood to President Morris*, July 11, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report.
- 19 *The Egyptian*, July 16, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 20 SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report.
- 21 *The Egyptian*, July 20, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 22 SNFC Cairo Southern Roots report.
- 23 *John O'Neal to President Morris*, July 20, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 *The Egyptian*, July 24, 1962.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 *SNFC Nonviolence Key to Dignity report*, Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

- ²⁹ William J. Ball and James M. Bail, *The Egyptian*, July 24, 1962.
- ³⁰ Robert K. Gray, *The Egyptian*, July 24, 1962.
- ³¹ Wendell O'Neal, *The Egyptian*, July 24, 1962.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ *Shiloh Baptist Church to President Morris July 26, 1962*, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ³⁴ *Drafted response to Shiloh Baptist Church from President Morris September 10, 1962*, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ³⁵ *SNFC Murphysboro report: Citizens Take the Lead*, Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ *Letter from Cairo to President Morris August 10, 1962*, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ "SNFC Cairo Action Report", Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Cairo: Southern Roots.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Murphysboro: Citizens Take the Lead.
- ⁴⁴ Cairo: Southern Roots.
- ⁴⁵ *Southern Illinoisian*, October 19, 1962, Box 373, University Archives: Office of the President and Student Activities, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴⁶ "SNFC Future Proposal: Intensified Student Involvement", Beatrice Stegeman Collection on Civil Rights in Southern Illinois, Special Collections Research Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴⁷ *SNFC Newsletter*, November, 1964 Vol. I no. I, Box 8, Campus Newsletters, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴⁸ *SNFC Newsletter*, January, 1965 Vol. I no. 4, Box 8, Campus Newsletters, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- ⁴⁹ *SNFC Newsletter*, April, 1965 Vol. I no. 7, Box 8, Campus Newsletters, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Coleman Fitch

The Crisis of Legitimacy: Resistance, Unity, and the Stamp Act of 1765, 1763 – 1766

Two thousand citizens marched on the streets of Boston the day of November 5, 1765, and they paraded burned effigies through them later that afternoon. Street leaders roamed the city while men of “genteel society” hid behind closed doors, fearing the destruction of their property and themselves.¹ Massachusetts Bay Governor Francis Bernard retired to Castle William outside of the parade’s path, as he “thought it not suitable ... to be present in town, when a gross affront on his Majesty’s Government at home was to be publically passed.”² The gathering of such “a gross affront,” not at all unfamiliar to the city, was a Boston tradition known as “Pope’s Day.” It commemorated the failed conspiracy to destroy Parliament in 1605. Traditionally, street gangs from the city’s north and south ends quarreled by throwing stones and engaging in fisticuffs to see which side received the honor of torching the celebratory bonfires used in burning images of the Pope.³ However, the tensions felt surrounding the 1765 celebration stemmed from legislation—not tradition. Its reserved day, November 5, bore a close proximity to November 1, the notorious date beginning the implementation of the Stamp Act in the colonies.

Three months earlier, Massachusetts and its neighboring colonies took action in one of the first mass resistance movements in the colonies. Not even two weeks had passed since delegates in New York dismissed a convention founded to collectively voice opposition to the Stamp Act. The timing of such a brutish holiday could not have been less conducive in the eyes of royal leaders, but despite their worst fears, the events that took place on November 5 did not culminate into the “barbarous” action that so many dreaded. Instead of capitalizing on the riotous behavior still alive in the colonies, North and South Enders set their differences aside for that occasion and marched together in opposition to the Stamp Act for local leaders to witness. The events on November 5 in Boston illustrate two opposing aspects of the Stamp Act crisis experienced in the colonies—one of violent upheaval and one of solidarity. Both played roles in the years leading up to the American Revolution, and both of their roots grew from that crisis. The Stamp Act of 1765 simultaneously produced resistance and a foundation of unity in the American colonies.

Neither the resistance nor the unity derived from one of Great Britain’s most resounding diplomatic victories two years earlier. The “Peace of Paris”

formally ended the Seven Years' War and settled Europe into a brief state of peace. In the eyes of the British Parliament, the creation of the Stamp Act and the duties that preceded it necessitated the steps in governing an expanding empire on the North American continent. Britain acquired an extraordinary amount of land as the victor, gaining most of France's North American territory east of the Mississippi River, as well as Spanish Florida and its Gulf Coast.⁴ The acquisition of land along the Mississippi River Valley and the trans-Appalachian area also gave Britain the resources to control and dominate most of the fur-trading business.

These businesses resided on the frontier of an expanding empire in America, predominantly occupied by a large number of Native American peoples. They benefited from a long tradition of gift-giving and generous trade agreements with the French on French occupied lands. However, for Great Britain the acquisition of such territory added administrative woes to those in charge, primarily due to the large scope of responsibilities that accompanied the expansion, as well as the near fiscal deterioration of the British Empire.⁵ These shortcomings threatened many of the ways of life on which Native American peoples had grown dependent. As a result, insurrections, collectively known as "Pontiac's Rebellion" (after the Ottawa chief that led the movement), occurred on new British frontier posts.⁶

Although British forces ultimately put down the rebellions, the attacks made it obvious to Britain that it must maintain a peaceful relationship with Native American peoples as the French had—even at the expense of the restless colonists who were eager to cultivate the rich land that lay outside of colonial boundaries. On October 7, 1763, King George III issued a proclamation outlining the new governments created out of the newly acquired territories, namely Quebec, East Florida, West Florida, and Grenada.⁷ The last section of the proclamation aroused the most unfavorable interest from colonists. The King forbade "all our living subjects from making any purchase or settlements whatsoever, or taking any possession of any of the lands above reserved," for the Native American peoples, "in order therefore to prevent such irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our justice. ..." ⁸ Colonists, who felt a great deal of patriotism toward their mother country over the course of the war, could not reap the rewards that victory had seemingly granted Great Britain, regardless of whether they had contributed to the conquest.

The need for armed forces in these new territories appears as a solution agreed upon by the British Parliament before Pontiac's Rebellion occurred. An entry in the *Journals of the House of Commons*, dated March 7, 1763, includes a resolve recommending provisions for troops on the North American frontier, including newly acquired Quebec.⁹ An earlier entry, dated February 23, estimated the number of garrisons stationed in these areas to reach ten thousand.¹⁰ Native American insurrections did not occur until later that

summer, which showed the necessity of a standing army in those territories as an essential defensive measure to maintain the safety of the British Empire—not as a simple precaution.

However, the idea of deploying ten thousand troops to the frontier did not resonate well with those already vexed by Britain's financial crisis. In February 1763, national debt dramatically increased with the onset of the war to £122,603,336.¹¹ Postwar Great Britain desperately sought new forms of revenue. Although the fertile lands of the Mississippi River Valley promised gains for the distant future, they needed to take immediate action. The new Ministry, headed by George Grenville, acknowledged the significant lack of taxation in America in comparison to that within England.

To offset the expenses of the army, Parliament resolved to levy a series of direct and indirect forms of taxation on its colonies. The realities surrounding both the need for troops in the colonies and the need to formulate ways to pay for them created a keen awareness in Grenville. When he took office, he acknowledged the preposterously low revenues accumulating from the current customs duties. This lack of revenues had resulted from an ineffective customs administration in charge of regulating colonial trade and collecting duties. Customs deputies preferred to accept duties. Even after Grenville tightened the administration, laws on the books regarding the Acts of Trade, still extremely inadequate, could not produce a sufficient revenue during such a financial crisis. Grenville determined that the Acts of Trade required revisions. On March 9, 1764, he announced his planned changes to the House of Commons in a series of resolutions that, when enacted, became known as the Sugar Act.¹²

The resolutions added new duties affecting colonial commerce, which included new duties on wine, coffee, and pimentos. In addition, the resolutions ended refunds, or drawbacks, on re-exported European and Asian textiles.¹³ However, the most controversial resolution came with the lowering of the duty on foreign molasses, from six pence to three pence per gallon.¹⁴ Due to their ability to dodge customs duties altogether under the former and weaker customs administration, merchants dreaded this new provision, as three pence seemed unbearable. Shortly after its proposal, an amendment added to the list of resolutions called for the increased jurisdiction of the admiralty courts in the colonies.¹⁵ These courts, located in Halifax, could try violators of the new duties without the privilege of juries. Admiralty courts also gained clear jurisdiction over common-law courts, freeing them from local judges under the possible influence from the merchants standing trial.

It is clear that Grenville sought to strengthen the role that Britain played in regulating colonial trade. The predicted revenues expected from the Sugar Act largely failed to address the British debt or the cost of the expanding empire. In the fifteenth resolution to Parliament announced in March, Grenville introduced not only the resolves which constituted the Sugar Act, but also the possibility

of another duty—a direct tax on the colonies. Grenville suggested, “It may be proper to charge certain stamp duties in the said colonies and plantations.”¹⁶ Although postponed for another year, the proposal for the Stamp Act became a law by March 1765, forcing the colonists to address it. The Act prescribed taxes for a number of legal documents, customs documents, diplomas, newspapers, pamphlets, even playing cards and dice. All printed materials required specific stamped parchment paper purchased from colonial stamp distributors.¹⁷ Unlike the Sugar Act, largely a merchant’s burden, nearly every colonist faced the possibility of the burdensome duties of the Stamp Act at some point.

As the probability of stamp duties levied in the colonies became more plausible, colonists believed that their implementation violated the very nature of the relationship between Great Britain and the colonies. The nature of that betrayal found roots in the question that many people, British and American alike, attempted to answer time after time in the coming years: did the sovereignty of Parliament imply the right to directly tax the colonies? Grenville recognized that the proposal of the Stamp Act sparked controversy within Parliament itself.¹⁸ However, he appealed to the notion that Parliament, as an authority, could levy duties on the colonies. According to Edmund S. Morgan, Parliament “was not likely to reverse its opinion when asked to exercise the right.”¹⁹ Parliament’s assertion of its authority added another element to the Stamp Act. Aside from raising revenue, the Act reinforced the notion that Parliament held sway over the colonies’ charters.²⁰ From the colonists’ perspective, the Stamp Act reflected a disregard of the very nature of colonial assemblies and representative government as a whole. Since the founding of their colonial charters, assemblies had acquired some level of home rule. Each colony, whether headed by a royal governor or a popularly-elected one, enjoyed the right to administer itself. Due to the absence of colonial representation in Parliament, this became the only method by which English citizens living in the colonies found representation by a governing body.

While introducing his intentions to impose stamp duties on the colonies, Grenville half-heartedly gave the opportunity for colonial assemblies to raise money themselves, as opposed to Parliament levying the Stamp Act. In March 1764, Grenville postponed any action regarding stamp duties until Parliament’s next session. The postponed action came as a means “to consult the ease, the interest, and the good will of the colonies ... to offer any objections they might have to the tax, or to suggest some more satisfactory tax.”²¹ The colonies, more than willing to submit their own forms of taxation, lacked correspondence from Grenville and his secretaries as to the extent to which their alternative taxes would be sufficient. Neither Grenville nor any person assigned to draft a potential bill provided the assemblies with any instruction. Various assemblies addressed these grievances to their colonial agents in Parliament, partially the ill-manner in which Grenville announced the opportunity for alternative measures.

These colonial agents met with Grenville at least three times in an attempt to inquire the means necessary for colonial assemblies to devise their own forms of taxation. However, each meeting concluded with the same realization: Grenville, perhaps from the beginning, had no intentions of allowing the colonies to tax themselves, as he willingly withheld information from the colonies that would have allowed them to do so. Instead of distributing the necessary information, Grenville told the agents during a meeting on May 17, 1764 that the assemblies should instead “signify their assent to such a bill in general.”²² Grenville also made clear in these meetings that Parliament felt little sympathy, and that petitions or protests concerning financial responsibilities would not be tolerated.²³ It became apparent to the colonists that formal means of voicing opposition to Parliament were not going to change the nature of the deteriorating relationship. If the colonists wished to stand firmly behind what they regarded as important values of the British Constitution, such as taxation under clear representation, unprecedented measures would have to take place. Over the course of several months, these measures incited both resistance and unity within the colonies.

The passage of the Stamp Act resulted in the first collective resistance movement in the American colonies. Long before discussions about colonial taxation began, colonists implemented lasting traditions of exerting civil authority when formal means of policing failed to defend local interests. Uprisings, though, as Pauline Maier puts it, “were extra-institutional in character more often than they were anti-institutional.”²⁴ They acted in part due to the absence of a law, or when local leaders’ ability within the constraints of the law failed to cope with a problem. No matter the cause, because interpreting the legality of the uprisings found no precision in practice, Parliament did not respond with any legal action. Should a conflict emerge, distinguishing which party exerted force lawfully and which did not proved difficult.²⁵ However, only conflicts that truly needed them allocated such means. The more authority exerted, the more it spoke of the shortcomings on behalf of a government.²⁶

During the 1760s, the notion of citizens with the right to exert force became a strong unifying element in the colonies, both in the North and South. The use of extra-legal authority paralleled the political philosophies of those who considered themselves “Real Whigs.” A definitive principle in Whig justification concerning uprisings consisted of people, creators of government, were free to reclaim political authority if lost to failed magistrates.²⁷ Although followers of Whig ideology believed in the exertion of force, its purpose consisted of strengthening current governments and preventing them from further decay. Force used as an initial response to tyranny was unacceptable. According to Whig ideology, every means possible to rid spoils in government found primacy before resorting to force. Submission was the sign of good government, the end result for which people should fight. In the context of the Stamp Act,

however, not many people in the colonies wanted to fight for submission under this particular act of government. Colonial assemblies originally pursued the route of appeasing the “Real Whigs.” Through petitions and protests sent to their colonial agents and presented to Parliament, they met with no real address or debate whatsoever. A different approach voicing opposition was needed.

The initial stirrings of resentment toward Parliamentary authority came in part with elite leadership. Before massive crowds would take to the streets, privileged men took to the halls of colonial assemblies thereby beginning the resistance movement that gained momentum in the following months. In Virginia, May 1765, during a meeting of the House of Burgesses, the newest member of the body, Patrick Henry, waited until the majority of Assemblymen were on their way back to their plantations before he began the great debate.²⁸ He then submitted a series of resolutions against the Stamp Act to the House, arguing that colonists carried as many rights as if they were subjects living in Great Britain and that taxation by colonial assemblies would be less burdensome on the people, given that assemblies knew what their constituents could bear.²⁹ When leaked to the press, the four original resolves now contained an additional three resolves more radical in language. These additional resolutions claimed that Virginia’s assembly had the sole right to tax colonists, its habitants were not bound to yield to any form of taxation not created by the assembly, and that any person sympathizing with Parliament’s measures of taxation would be deemed “an enemy to His Majesty’s colony.”³⁰ These resolves served as a catalyst for other colonies to write their own resolutions, and publish them in various newspapers. Every other colony, aside from Georgia, New Hampshire, and North Carolina, produced resolves against the Stamp Act. Some resolutions, such as ones in Rhode Island, contained even more radical language.³¹

Opponents of the Stamp Act not only objected to the taxation but also derailed the weaknesses in arguments defending the Act. None was as widely read as the pamphlet written by Maryland lawyer and member of the Governor’s Council, Daniel Dulany. Although not printed until October, his famous piece *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies* became the most popular form of literature in the colonies criticizing Parliament’s defense of the Stamp Act. Dulany attempted to prove Grenville wrong, who ironically shared the belief that no one should bear taxation without their consent or the consent of their representatives. Dulany and Grenville disagreed on the notion of virtual representation—the idea on which Grenville rested the legitimacy of the Stamp Act. Throughout his pamphlet, Dulany intentionally avoided challenging Parliament’s authority as far as the more radical writers, but the idea of virtual representation prompted a strong response.

Not bound to any one constituent, virtual representation assumed that a legislator represented the entire nation. In other words, no individual actually bound legislators, but “virtually” everyone bound them.³² Furthermore, Dulany

compared taxation without consent to thievery, writing, "[T]o give property, not belonging to the owner, is such evident and flagrant injustice, in ordinary cases, that few are hardly enough to avow it."³³ Dulany's writings resonated with many colonists who rarely, if ever, felt a direct connection to Parliament.

By August 1765, after various resolves circulated through newspapers across the country, riots against stamp distributors in almost every colony proved the most effective way to evade the Act's implementation, which was set for November. Governor Bernard of Massachusetts credited the circulation of resolves as the primary instigator for resistance, writing that "[T]he publishing [of] the Virginia resolves, proved an alarm bell to the disaffected."³⁴ In other words, the circulation of the various resolves stirred up profound resentment toward the Act for locals affected by the duties imposed on items used in their daily lives. The violence began in Boston on the morning of August 14 when at five o'clock "the effigy of a gentleman sustaining a very unpopular office, viz. that of Stamp Master"³⁵ was found hanging in a tree outside of his home. The effigy represented Andrew Oliver, the newly appointed stamp distributor for the colony. The Sheriff, along with a group of men, attempted to take down the effigy, "but could not do it without imminent danger of their lives."³⁶ Shortly after the sun came up, a crowd of South Enders pulled the image down and paraded it to Oliver's dock, where a new brick building, suspected as the new Stamp Office, was demolished and "thoroughly effected in about half an hour."³⁷ After the mob returned to inflict damage onto his house and garden, Oliver responded to the mob by saying the next day that he "absolutely declined having any concern in that office."³⁸

As the events contributed too much discussion around the city in the following days, it became apparent that the Oliver riots were unique and well-organized compared to former uprisings. The effigy burnings and the looting of the Oliver home captured public attention, and for the most part people supported and participated in the mob action.³⁹

The possibility of evading the Stamp Act came with the notion that without stamp distributors to implement the tax, no one would enforce the Act. Other colonies soon followed Massachusetts's example. On August 27, the Rhode Island distributor resigned, and two days later the Maryland distributor, Zachariah Hood, fled to New York out of fear from seeing the hanging of his effigy.⁴⁰ On September 19, a crowd met Jared Ingersoll in Wethersfield, Connecticut to demand his resignation. He first "refused to comply, but it was insisted upon, that he should resign his office of Stamp-Master, so disagreeable to his countrymen."⁴¹ He eventually capitulated, and after reading his resignation aloud Ingersoll "went into a tavern, and dined with several of the company."⁴² Ingersoll, targeted for his associations with the Act and its administration and not for his connections to the British government in general, feared little after his resignation.

The New York riots of October 31 and November 1, 1765 saw a great number of seamen participating in them, making up one-fourth to one-fifth of the rioters.⁴³ Following the war, thousands of discharged sailors relied heavily on the shipping industries of New England for employment. The postwar Acts that threatened these industries also threatened their livelihood. Boycotting efforts, intended to hurt British businessmen, affected these sailors as well. Instead of acting out against New England merchants, they opposed England's new attitude on colonial trade.⁴⁴ Most of the riots throughout the colonies consisted of burning distributors in effigy, staging mock funerals, tearing down buildings (future offices and colonial agents' homes), and posing threats towards the Act's sympathizers.

If physical resistance failed to assert the colonists' opposition effectively, a collective effort of boycotting British goods did not. Boycotting efforts began as early as 1764 with the passage of the Sugar Act. Merchants hit heaviest by the Act urged colonists to replace British manufacturers with Americans. They attempted to dissuade women from wearing expensive dresses imported from Europe. Widows should stop wearing luxurious black gloves to mark the mourning process, and American brew should be preferred to British ale, for example.⁴⁵ After the Sugar Act passed, a post-war depression settled in the colonies. The effects of it rippled to England as well, and the boycotts resulting from the Act only made things worse.⁴⁶ With the implementation of the Stamp Act, merchants again saw an opportunity to display economic resistance. The greatest account of merchants uniting together to combat the Act occurred when a group of two hundred New York merchants met in October of 1765 to discuss a solution on their behalf. After deliberation, they published their own resolves intended for their business correspondents in England. Regarding orders sent to Great Britain, they resolved to "direct their correspondents not to ship them, unless the Stamp Act be repealed" and that "orders already sent home, shall be countermanded by the very first conveyance."⁴⁷ It is difficult to determine the success of those boycotts, but proof of their effects exist in two different writings from London merchants.

The first one, a petition written to Parliament in January of 1766, tells of the hardships that creditors and merchants experienced due to the decline of trade after the passage of the Stamp Act. The petition informed Parliament "that this commerce, so beneficial to the state, and so necessary for the support of multitudes, now lies under such difficulties and discouragement, that nothing less than its utter ruin is apprehended, without the immediate interposition of Parliament."⁴⁸ Colonists, who collectively owed "several million sterling" declared to business correspondents that "it is not in their power, at present, to make good their engagements, alleging, that the taxes and restrictions laid upon them" were too burdensome to pay off their debts.⁴⁹ The second proof of the boycotts' effects is a letter from the Committee of London Merchants addressed

to the Lord Mayors in England, dated March 6, 1766. The merchants called a general meeting to address “the present state of the British Trade to North America, and the Prospect of increasing embarrassments, which threaten the loss of our depending Property there and even to annihilate the Trade itself.”⁵⁰ Ironically, colonists capitalized on the delicate state of Britain’s financial crisis, the catalyst for passing such Acts in the first place.

The formation of the Stamp Act Congress in 1765 proved the most significant step toward colonial unification in the years leading up to the American Revolution. The concept of the Congress, devised in June 1765, followed a lively debate in the Massachusetts Assembly that focused on the Stamp Act and other “objectionable legislation enacted by Parliament.”⁵¹ Following the debate, Assembly members decided that “letters be forthwith prepared and transmitted to the respective speakers of the several Houses of Representatives and Burgesses in the colonies” in order to conduct a meeting “to consult together on the present circumstances of the colonies, and the difficulties to which they are and must be reduced. ...”⁵² Sent on June 8, the Speakers of each of the colonial assemblies received drafts of the circulating letters advising them to select a committee of representatives to participate in a convention. The convention’s organizers sought an October 7 beginning date, for a meeting that was set to take place in New York. It is important to note that the concept of this Congress began after Henry passed his resolves in Virginia in May. However, virtually no one outside of the colony knew of their existence as their publication came in late June, approximately three weeks after the Massachusetts Assemblymen began to circulate the letters. This shows a growing opposition movement within the colonies, yet absent a collective unity that the convention hoped to build.

The delegates first sought to take “into Consideration the Rights & Privileges of ye British American Colonists with the several inconveniences and hardships to which they are and must be subjected by the Operation of several late Acts of Parliament.”⁵³ They advocated three main issues: trials by juries, the right to tax themselves, and the reduction of the authority bestowed upon admiralty courts. They debated for the first ten sessions before agreeing on a list of declarations that reflected their “Humble Opinion respecting the most essential Rights, and Liberties of the Colonists.”⁵⁴ The declarations reflected their belief that they held the rights of Englishmen who lived within Great Britain, including the absence of taxation without their consent given their lack of representation in Parliament. The right to a trial by jury, self-taxation, and a claim of loyalty to the British crown were also included in the resolves.⁵⁵ Delegates sought to strengthen and uphold what they regarded as values of the British Constitution; they saw themselves not as revolutionaries, but as English subjects fighting to preserve their endangered rights. This reinforced the Whig ideology that stressed purifying government, not dismantling it altogether.

The Stamp Act Congress fostered a sense of colonial unity that transcended regional boundaries. Although they did not know each other and relatively unaware of the problems the Stamp Act caused in other colonies, members traded information, thus promoting an awareness of similarities concerning their situations. They identified a common target for their protests—the wrongful acts of Parliament. They allowed colonists to come together to express dissatisfaction in a singular voice, one more powerful than individual expression. According to C.A. Weslager, it seemed obvious “that the colonies would accomplish more by acting in concert instead individually, that it would appear to have been the natural course to follow. But in the context of the period it was an innovative approach ... and the originator of the idea of an intercolonial congress made a significant contribution to American political history.”⁵⁶

As momentum continued to grow in opposition to the Act, colonists recognized a need to communicate and to coordinate a movement of opposition. In Boston, during the onset of the August 14 riot, a group called the “Loyal Nine” created and hanged the effigies of Andrew Oliver and made him resign from the office of Stamp Master.⁵⁷ Social clubs like the Loyal Nine organized outside of New England, as well. The “Charleston Fire Company,” comprised of local volunteer firemen, resisted the Stamp Act in South Carolina, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church made up a resistance group based in Albany. They viewed themselves as “sons of liberty,” opposing what they regarded as unconstitutional acts of Parliament.⁵⁸ The need for unity among the groups emerged independently. According to some scholars, New York held the role as the chief instigator for such a movement. Towards the end of 1765, organized meetings took place in country fields in order to accommodate the large crowds wanting to join the opposition. By early 1766, associations of the Sons of Liberty emerged in both Maryland and New Jersey. They sought not only to establish correspondences with other colonies, but also to organize associations at the town, county, and colonial levels. Southern colonies, such as Virginia and North Carolina, saw a more gradual emergence of similar associations. They shared correspondences with those in the North as well.⁵⁹

The movement to unite people who identified with the Sons of Liberty transcended both economic class and gender. Those who led the group were typically of the mercantile and professional classes, but laborers, making up the majority of their ranks, worked extremely closely with the merchants and lawyers that lead them. The Sons of Liberty generally consisted of artisan workers, shopkeepers, day laborers, carpenters, seamen, smiths, and other members of the working class.⁶⁰ The British Parliament’s infringement of their rights united this diverse group of workers. This, of course, allowed the Sons of Liberty to win a mass base as they strove to convert an entire population into a body that sympathized with the group’s motives. New York groups founded by independent tradesmen who worked for their status contrasted with the groups

in Rhode Island that prominent men had formed.⁶¹ The Sons also did not exclude women from their ranks. They founded their own auxiliary in the Daughters of Liberty—women permitted to sit in the same meetings and celebrate the same victories as their male counterparts. Including women proved absolutely crucial in the efforts of nonimportation. Women wove homespun cloth for clothing, drafted the standards of the nonimportation agreements themselves, and refused to let their families consume any of the boycotted items. The Sons of Liberty welcomed them with open arms in their movement. Samuel Adams often stated, “With the ladies on our side, we can make every Tory tremble.”⁶²

After the repeal of the Stamp Act in March of 1766, and despite a growing sense of unification, these associations had every intention to disband. Their very purpose lay in opposition to what they regarded as Parliament’s extra-legal assault on their rights. Once Parliament repealed the Act, most abandoned their associations, but leaders in New York warned, “[I]f hereafter any attempts should be made to deprive us of our invaluable Freedom, or Religious Rights,” they would “not be backward in joining ... with Hearts and Hands to oppose such Measures.”⁶³ The events of the following years proved that this level of unity and resistance lasted longer than they had anticipated, as colonial opposition awakened again over the Townshend duties in 1767. A continuing and growing opposition only further strengthened the associations’ causes, preparing the colonies for revolution.

Notes

¹ Ray Raphael, *People’s History of the American Revolution* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 18.

² “Bernard to John Pownall,” November 1, 1765, *The Papers of Francis Bernard, II*, The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Boston, 395.

³ Raphael, *A People’s History*, 18.

⁴ Fred Anderson, *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 228-229.

⁵ Anderson, *The War that Made America*, 233.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁷ *New Commission of the Governor of Quebec; and Other Instruments of Authority, Derived From the Crown Relative to America*, London, 1779, 17.

⁸ *New Commission of the Governor of Quebec*, 19-20.

⁹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, XXIX, March 7, 1763, 530.

¹⁰ *Journals of the House of Commons*, XXIX, 506 (February 23, 1763).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 432 (February 3, 1763).

¹² Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 23-24.

- ¹³ *Journals of the House of Commons*, XXIX, 934 (March 10, 1764).
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 940 (March 12, 1764).
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 935 (March 10, 1764).
- ¹⁷ The Stamp Act, March 22, 1765, in Edmund S. Morgan, *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 39-40.
- ¹⁸ Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, 55.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64-65.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ²² Jasper Mauduit to the Massachusetts Assembly, May 26, 1764, in Morgan, *Prologue to Revolution*, 27.
- ²³ Charles Garth to the Committee of Correspondence of the South Carolina Assembly, June 5, 1764. *Prologue to Revolution*, 28.
- ²⁴ Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1992), 5.
- ²⁵ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 19.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ²⁸ Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, 93.
- ²⁹ The Resolutions as printed in the Journals of the House of Burgesses, in *Prologue to Revolution*, 47-48.
- ³⁰ Newport Mercury, June 24, 1765.
- ³¹ A complete list of colonial resolves is printed in Morgan, *Prologue to Revolution*, 50-62.
- ³² Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, 83.
- ³³ Daniel Dulany, "Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, for the Purpose of Raising a Revenue, by Act of Parliament," 1765, in *The American Revolution: The Pamphlet Debate, 1764-1772*. Wood, Gordon S., ed. (The Library of America), 247.
- ³⁴ Bernard to the Board of Trade, August 15, 1765. *The Papers of Francis Bernard II*, 301.
- ³⁵ *Supplement to the Boston Gazette*, August 19, 1765.
- ³⁶ Bernard to the Board of Trade, August 15, 1765.
- ³⁷ *Supplement to the Boston Gazette*, August 19, 1765.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Donna J. Spindel, *The Stamp Act Riots* (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1975), 53.

- ⁴⁰ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 55.
- ⁴¹ *Maryland Gazette*, October 10, 1765.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 25, no. 3, (1968): 396.
- ⁴⁴ Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets," 397-398.
- ⁴⁵ Morgan and Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, 33.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 32-33, 65.
- ⁴⁷ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 7, 1765.
- ⁴⁸ *Journals of the House of Commons*, XXX, 462 (January 17, 1766).
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ "The Committee of London Merchants to the Lord Mayors in England," March 6, 1766, in *Prologue to Revolution*, 129.
- ⁵¹ C.A. Weslager, *The Stamp Act Congress* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1976), 60.
- ⁵² "Journal of the first Congress of the American Colonies, in opposition to the tyrannical acts of the British Parliament," in *The Stamp Act Congress*, 182.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 198.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 201-202.
- ⁵⁶ Weslager, *The Stamp Act Congress*, 59.
- ⁵⁷ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 85.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ⁶⁰ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, I (New York: International Publishers, 1998), 34.
- ⁶¹ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 87.
- ⁶² Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, 36.
- ⁶³ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 111.

Jesse Hinds

Freedom Summer: Going South for Social Justice

Most of American history has been a segregated history, but the tattered cords of racial oppression began to unravel during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The Supreme Court decision in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case broke the cords of legal segregation and unleashed the Civil Rights Movement.¹ Chief Justice Earl Warren's majority opinion in the Supreme Court's decision declared that separate was not equal. The court ruling provided the legal framework necessary to begin dismantling the injustice of segregation in America.² Government-authorized racial injustices could no longer bind the lives of American minorities. The tension produced from being a nation that both affirmed and denied the equality of all its citizens finally reached a breaking point. Officially, separate was no longer equal; however, discrimination was still rampant. As a result, Americans took to the streets to ensure that they were "One Nation under God." Freedom Summer and the Civil Rights movement succeeded because average Americans united to fight for social justice.

African-American people wanted to have their voices heard, and brave men and women of all races risked their reputations, health, and lives to force America to live up to the noble ideas of liberty and equality for all. Sadly, a fourteen-year-old African-American boy became the first national martyr in the Civil Rights Movement. The young Emmett Till visited Money, Mississippi from Chicago, in August 1955. He allegedly whistled at a white woman in a store, which led to his kidnapping, beating, and murder.³ Pictures of his disfigured body made national headlines, leading to protests around the country.⁴ Regarding the violent death of Emmett Till, future Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chairperson and U.S. congressman John Lewis said, "I was shaken to the core by the killing. ... I was fifteen, black [and] at the edge of my own manhood just like him. ... That could have been me, beaten, tortured, dead, at the bottom of a river."⁵ The death of Emmett Till inspired John Lewis and many other people to stand up for themselves and against institutionalized racism.

Police arrested Rosa Parks before the national sensation over Till's death could subside. On December 1, 1955, Parks refused to give up the important seat of human dignity on an otherwise unimportant bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her act of civil disobedience helped unite not only the African-American

community of Montgomery, but the entire Southern United States. Activists quickly organized protests, rallies, and boycotts to battle segregation and racial injustice. A key development of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King as the movement's spokesperson and leader.⁶ His charisma, vision, and words inspired people and gave them hope. King's insistence on non-violent protests gave the Civil Rights movement the vehicle necessary to initiate change.⁷

African-American college students continued to drive American progress by deciding to sit at segregated lunch counters. In 1960 college students began to organize sit-ins to protest "Whites Only" lunch counters.⁸ The sit-ins took the battle for desegregation out of African-American neighborhoods, beyond the Southern U.S., and to lunch counters and department stores across America.⁹ The simple act of sitting at a lunch counter and demanding equality unleashed the collective of American resolve and a pent-up desire for freedom.

Freedom Riders soon made their way to the South to battle "discrimination in interstate travel terminals."¹⁰ They fought against the segregation of interstate buses. The national coverage of their southward drive for justice was extensive. The press reported on the arrests of bloodied protestors, and newspapers printed images of destroyed buses. The Civil Rights Movement grew because of the press coverage. During the freedom rides, white clergy, college students, and college professors joined the Civil Rights Movement. From 1961 onward, civil rights activists struggled to fight the segregation of our nation's transportation systems, schools, housing sectors, and stores. As a result, they became increasingly biracial. The sit-ins and freedom rides opened the eyes of the American public to the struggle to integrate.¹¹

In May of 1963, America fixed its eyes on Alabama. "Birmingham exploded into racial conflict, and the nation watched the police break up Negro protest marchers with police dogs, fire hoses, and electric cattle prods."¹² Journalists and photographers from *Life* magazine captured the violence in Birmingham, and soon pictures and articles from the protests and subsequent police brutality circulated across the nation and the world.¹³ Birmingham's leaders could not stop the stories and pictures of police brutality from escaping their city, but they did arrest the leader of the opposition, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Police arrested Dr. King for parading without a permit. This was just one of many times authorities took him to jail. The fact that he was arrested is not nearly as important as the letter he wrote during his imprisonment. It was a response to an earlier statement made by white Alabama ministers, who referred to King as an outsider disturbing the peace.¹⁴ In his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, Dr. King wrote, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."¹⁵ He went on to say that he did not oppose the tension that the leaders deplored, and that nonviolent tension can open the doors for communication, progress, and change. He argued that the biggest stumbling block to progress was moderates who were

more devoted to order than justice, and who preferred a “negative peace” with the absence of tension instead of a “positive peace” with the presence of justice.¹⁶

In August of 1963 Americans hungered for justice, and over 200,000 people joined Dr. King in a March on Washington. They assembled to show their disapproval of discrimination and segregation. It was here Dr. King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.¹⁷ His greatest hope for America was still just a dream in 1963. The following year, however, the winds of change began to blow more forcefully than ever. The sounds of freedom began blowing in the wind. A great rush of spirit and people ascended on the southern states of America. These changes led to violent resistance in the State of Mississippi in 1964. Despite that resistance, the people that united for change undermined the foundation of segregation in Mississippi, during the days of “Freedom Summer.”

Nowhere in America was segregation so clearly maintained and encouraged than in Mississippi. The ideas of segregation formed the social structure of Mississippi in 1964.¹⁸ Most white Mississippians committed themselves to maintaining segregation. “With the largest proportional African American population among the states, white Mississippians maintained the deepest commitment to state-sanctioned segregation and white supremacy.”¹⁹ To challenge and change the systemic discrimination of Mississippi, many civil rights leaders decided to register as many African-American voters as possible in the state. They undertook the largest “voter registration project in the history or the United States.”²⁰ The program registered many voters, but the greatest success was making Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, realize that nothing would stop social justice and the end of segregation.

The need for a voter registration drive in Mississippi in 1964 cannot be understated. Mississippi had an African-American population of 435,000, but only 22,000 African-Americans registered to vote, in 1964. To remedy this injustice, civil rights leaders sent approximately one thousand college students to “challenge the white power structure there” by registering voters.²¹ Registering thousands of voters required a large force of volunteers. One moving oration, or a prominent leader’s approval, did not accomplish massive voter registration. Young Americans going door to door to recruit, assist, or even accompany people, on the other hand, did enable the massive voter registration of 1964.²² The ability to vote and elect leaders gave American citizens a voice, and until the summer of 1964, the political voice of Mississippi’s African-American population was nearly silent. Hundreds of mostly unknown volunteers made sure the political voices of thousands were silenced no longer.

We are very familiar with the life and legacy of key leaders within the Civil Rights Movement such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks. However, they were only the figureheads of a larger social movement. The “Freedom Summer” campaign would have failed if ordinary people had not shown extraordinary resolve, courage, and passion. College students

from Northern cities traveled to the South to educate and register black voters. Courageous African-Americans began to stand up in large numbers, band together, and fight systemic oppression. The individuals that many consider to be ordinary—not just those people that society deemed great—made the Civil Rights Movement and “Freedom Summer” a success.

American college students lent their voice, and sometimes their lives, to fight racial injustice. Charles Scattergood, a student at the University of Washington in Seattle, dropped out of school to join the Civil Rights Movement. In a letter to his parents, he informed them that he was dropping out of college to join the Civil Rights Movement full time. He accepted a job with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He became a journalist that reported Civil Rights news to colleges in the Northwest, or in his words, “I am a journalist or more appropriately, a war correspondent.”²³ The fact that he referred to the movement as a “war” highlighted the passion young Americans had to fight and die for liberty in 1964. Those who went south knew the risks that awaited them. That spring, Mississippi Governor Paul Johnson signed a law that gave him oversight of the state police. According to the *Student Voice*, the law also expanded the police force at his disposal by 200 men. SNCC Chairman John Lewis said, “Mississippi is now a bona fide police state and the governor has a private army to suppress civil rights efforts.”²⁴ Not only were the police and governor ready to stop civil rights progress, but many of the state’s white citizens banding together with them. The opposition to change was large, organized, and increasingly violent.²⁵

Civil rights workers knew what threats awaited them in Mississippi. Charles Scattergood said in a letter to his parents that “I couldn’t guess what the odds are but there is a good possibility that within the next year I may die.”²⁶ To prepare himself for the rigors of “Freedom Summer,” he and hundreds of other volunteers attended training at the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio.²⁷ The realities of the danger that awaited those courageous men and women like Charles Scattergood in Mississippi were soon imparted on the idealistic youth. In the *New York Times*, James Foreman said, “I may be killed, and you may be killed. ... If you recognize that, the question of whether we’re put in jail will become very, very minute.”²⁸ The training at Oxford, Ohio provided a crash course to prepare the students for the hazards that awaited them in the South.²⁹ The training clarified the volunteer’s responsibilities, helped them build relationships with the other volunteers they would be working alongside, and taught them the goals of the summer campaign. Instructors guided students in the ideas of nonviolence while in Ohio, and even how to handle getting arrested. Instructors also taught them how to protect themselves when assaulted—without fighting back.

Volunteers signed over their power of attorney to the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) before going south.³⁰ They expected to encounter violence

in Mississippi. Reverend James Lawson, a civil rights veteran, told them, "Just you walking into Canton, Miss., or Ruleville or Shaw, just your being there could be the catalytic agent that evokes violence."³¹ It is very likely that Charles Scattergood was in the crowd to hear that speech. In a letter dated June 17, 1964, he told his parents that he would be going to Ruleville, Mississippi. In another letter dated June 19, 1964, he wrote, "Sunflower County, where I am going, is, unfortunately, one of the worst areas of the South. No white freedom worker had ever been there."³² His letters home show that he was aware of the dangers but was not deterred by them. His resolve reflects the movement and the courage of its young men and women. The activists needed courage, as the threats of violence materialized into acts of violence and murder, even before most of the civil rights volunteers left for Mississippi.

According to the *New York Times*, just days before hundreds of college students left for Mississippi, three civil rights workers disappeared while investigating a church fire, in Philadelphia, Mississippi.³³ On June 22, 1964, the assembled students found out about the disappearance of Andrew Goodman, Mickey Schwerner, and James Chaney. The bodies of the three missing men were found months later. Each of them had been shot and buried in an earthen dam.³⁴ They gave up their lives for the Civil Rights Movement, or to echo Charles Scattergood, "the war."³⁵

Days before the murders, the men had been among the students and leaders in Oxford, Ohio. They traveled to Mississippi to investigate a fire that destroyed a church. The church would have been a meeting place for civil rights workers and a site for a "Freedom School." Their mission was to investigate the damage and find a new location to meet and hold the freedom school. Their interest in the fire and involvement in the Civil Rights Movement led to their murders.³⁶ Many in the South viewed the young men and women as invaders and not as liberators. Going south put their lives at risk. Allen Dulles, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, went to Mississippi to speak with the governor. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, after meeting the governor and getting a feel for the atmosphere of Mississippi, he encouraged Civil Rights leaders to express the "the very, very, grave dangers" awaiting them in Mississippi.³⁷ However, his words only strengthened the resolve of those heading south in the summer of 1964, or "Freedom Summer."

The disappearance of the three civil rights workers on the eve of the campaign confirmed the fears of many. Volunteer Barbara Mitnick said, "I expected things like that to happen, but this makes it real, knowing those young people were here last week."³⁸ Mitnick and many other white middle-class college students left the comforts of homes, campus life, friends, and family for a cause greater than themselves. Many of them traveled south with the same questions Charles Scattergood had when he left: "Do we live in a world that lacks compassion and love? Time will tell."³⁹ As a result of the grassroots

efforts of people like Scattergood, the nation began to realize that the times were changing in America.

The Civil Rights movement gained and kept national attention in 1964.⁴⁰ The fact that white college students left their comfort and security in the North to suffer alongside African-Americans in the segregated South created sensational news. The *New York Times* interviewed many middle to upper-class parents in New York who had children serving in Mississippi during "Freedom Summer." Their responses provide excellent commentary on struggles of civil rights activist and their families. The anguish felt by African-American families resonated with white families. Many of the volunteers and their families suffered for doing what they felt was right.

Neil Sheehan interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Woog of New York for a *New York Times* article. They tried to persuade their daughter to come home from Mississippi.⁴¹ They were worried for her safety. Sylvie, their daughter, was a teacher at a "Freedom School." Mrs. Woog said of her daughter's sacrifice, "We did not flee Hitler for my daughter to become a martyr." The Woogs were French immigrants who relocated to New York during World War II. They migrated to America so that they could live in freedom, but now they feared that their daughter would give up her life for the freedom of others. She went on to explain her daughter's motivations for going to Mississippi: "She says she has to do this to live in this country. I think she's wonderful but she's crazy. All the martyrs are wonderful and crazy."⁴² The juxtaposition of thoughts, "wonderful and crazy;" provides an excellent summation of civil rights volunteers in Mississippi. Fortunately for America, many college students were wonderfully crazy in 1964.

Dr. Robert E. Fullilove, from Newark, New Jersey had a son in Mississippi for the "Freedom Summer" campaign. He was much more affirming of his son's decision to join the civil rights struggle. He said "I think it's worth the risk. A lot of mothers and fathers have given up sons to war. My wife and I thought if there is a danger of death we would just as soon face that danger making Mississippi safe for democracy as France or Vietnam."⁴³ His comments are almost prophetic in the retrospection that history provides us. In 1966, the U.S. would have half a million soldiers fighting for freedom in Vietnam.⁴⁴ There is an inherent tension between being a country that fought for freedom in other countries but denied freedom in this country. Importantly, young men like Dr. Fullilove's son Robert were willing to fight for freedom in the United States.

Robert Fullilove and Charles Scattergood joined many other activists to create change. Scattergood was willing to sacrifice his life to end segregation in America. He wrote that he "would give [his] life for [freedom] because, without this, America is not worth calling my country."⁴⁵ Scattergood survived "Freedom Summer," but not without incident. Police arrested him,⁴⁶ and arsonists destroyed the church that he worked at in Mississippi.⁴⁷ Charles Scattergood contemplated his violent welcome to Mississippi when he wrote, "The only thing

we have done is try to register voters."⁴⁸ Scattergood, however, did much more than just register voters. In helping register voters, he gave African-Americans a political voice. He understood that, as did those that tried to stop him.

"Freedom Summer" proved that when people band together and sacrifice, they can overcome racial injustice. The success of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was due to average people taking control.⁴⁹ The summer rights campaign in 1964 united blacks and whites and all social and economic classes of Americans in the fight for equality. That summer, people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds united to make "the Constitution of the United States real for all of the nation's people."⁵⁰

The "Freedom Summer" project ended on August 19, 1964, in Mississippi. The college activists that invaded Mississippi that summer returned home and to their colleges. However, the influence of their volunteer efforts continued to create change. "[M]any Mississippians feel that the state has passed through a crisis and will never again be the same." Most of all, Mississippians knew that their state was "no longer insulated from the Negro revolutions."⁵¹ Despite the best efforts of those who wanted to maintain segregation in Mississippi, freedom won. Our nation still suffers from the effects of slavery, segregation, Jim Crow Laws, and racism. Yet, "Freedom Summer" lived up to its name. The eyes and heart of our nation opened up to the struggles of our black brothers and sisters. As Bosse Mae Harring said, "Someone has opened our eyes to freedom, and we will walk in the light of freedom until we achieve victory."⁵² Once enough people pushed for desegregation and against discrimination, the United States government contributed to the movement by enacting policy.

At the height of "Freedom Summer" in July of 1964, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law.⁵³ It officially ended legal discrimination in the United States. Yet, unofficial discrimination and infringements on voting rights continued in America. In 1965 protesters assembled in Selma, Alabama to advocate for voting rights for African-Americans.⁵⁴ Alabama state troopers attacked nonviolent protesters in Selma. Pictures taken by *Life* magazine caused national outrage over the police brutality.⁵⁵ From Selma, civil rights advocates marched on Chicago to demand fair housing.⁵⁶ Their efforts brought victory, and Congress passed the Fair Housing Act of 1968.⁵⁷

Despite that victory, the battle for civil rights suffered a huge loss on April 3, 1968, when an assassin murdered Dr. King. Martin Luther King had traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to take part in sanitation strikes, which demanded equal pay and benefits for workers.⁵⁸ Before his death, he delivered his last speech. In his "I've Been to the Mountain Top" speech Dr. King said:

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like

anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!⁵⁹

Almost fifty years later, Americans have not reached the "Promised Land." Americans need to continue to climb the mountains of injustice. However, to overcome the social ills of racism, classism, and hate, the common man and woman need to stand up for the good of all people. "Freedom Summer" proved that those considered great did not make history, but that average people with above-average heart changed the country. "Freedom Summer" succeeded through the blood, sweat, and hard work of thousands of individuals who choose to unify to fight for social justice.

Notes

- ¹ Michael Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement: People and Perspectives* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 5-7.
- ² *Ibid.*, 159.
- ³ Devery S. Anderson, "A Wallet, a White Woman, and a Whistle: Fact and Fiction in Emmett Till's Encounter in Money, Mississippi," *Southern Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (Summer, 2008): 10-21.
- ⁴ Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement*, xxii.
- ⁵ John Hale, *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
- ⁶ Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement*, 12.
- ⁷ Clifford M. Lytle, "The History of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964," *The Journal of Negro History* (1966): 275.
- ⁸ Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement: People and Perspective*, 20.
- ⁹ Lytle, "The History of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964," 282.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 283.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 284.
- ¹² Ezra, *Civil Rights: Movement: People and Perspective*, 20. Lytle, "The History of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964."
- ¹³ David Johnson, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* vol. 10, no. 1 (2007): 1-25.
- ¹⁴ Alton Hornsby, "Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," *The Journal of Negro History* no. 71 (1986): 38.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

- ¹⁶ Ibid., 41.
- ¹⁷ Lytle, "The History of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964," 284.
- ¹⁸ Hayden Noel McDaniel, "Growing Up Civil Rights: Youth Voices from Mississippi's Freedom Summer," *Southern Quarterly* vol. 53, no. 2 (Winter, 2016): 94-107.
- ¹⁹ Louis M. Kyriakoudes and Hayden Noel McDaniel, "Listening to Freedom's Voices: Forty-Four Years of Documenting the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement," *Southern Quarterly* vol. 52, no. 1 (Fall, 2014): 64-78.
- ²⁰ Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 69.
- ²¹ M.S. Handler, "Mississippi Faces Drive for Rights," *New York Times*, May 17, 1964.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Charles Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," July 6, 1963 – July 28, 1964, VFM 24, Folder 1, SCRC, Southern Illinois University, January 20, 1964.
- ²⁴ "Governor Controls Powerful Force," *The Student Voice*, May 26, 1964.
- ²⁵ "The New Invasion of Mississippi," *Chicago Tribune*, Jun 25, 1964.
- ²⁶ Charles Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," January 20, 1964.
- ²⁷ Homer Bigart, "Vote Drive Stirs Mississippi Anxiety," *New York Times*, Jun 15, 1964.
- ²⁸ Claude Sitton, "Students Briefed on Peril in South," *New York Times*, Jun 17, 1964.
- ²⁹ Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 101-103.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 103.
- ³¹ Claude Sitton, "Rights Campaigners Off for Mississippi," *New York Times*, Jun 21, 1964.
- ³² George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," January 20, 1964.
- ³³ "Rights Volunteers Determined to Stay in Mississippi Unit," *New York Times*, June 25, 1964.
- ³⁴ Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 105.
- ³⁵ George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," January 20, 1964.
- ³⁶ Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 105.
- ³⁷ "The New Invasion of Mississippi," *Chicago Tribune*, Jun 25, 1964.
- ³⁸ "Rights Volunteers Determined to Stay in Mississippi Unit," *New York Times*, June, 1964.
- ³⁹ George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," June 17, 1964.
- ⁴⁰ Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement: People and Perspectives*, 28.
- ⁴¹ Neil Sheehan, "Volunteers' Parents Fearful but Proud," *New York Times*, Jul 11, 1964.
- ⁴² Ibid.

- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Lynn Hunt, et al, *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures* (New York: Bedford St. Martin's: 2012).
- ⁴⁵ George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," March 15, 1964.
- ⁴⁶ George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," July 18, 1964.
- ⁴⁷ George Scattergood, "Scattergood Letters," June 25, 1964.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Louis M. Kyriakoudes and Hayden Noel McDaniel, "Listening to Freedom's Voices," 65.
- ⁵⁰ David J. Dennis, Sr., "Unsung Heroes of 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer," *Southern Quarterly* vol. 52, no. 1 (Fall, 2014): 44-50.
- ⁵¹ John Herbers, "Civil Rights Drive Alters Mississippi," *New York Times*, Aug 20, 1964.
- ⁵² Hale, *The Freedom Schools*, 109
- ⁵³ Ezra, *Civil Rights Movement: People and Perspectives*, xxix.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Eliza Berman, "How Life Magazine Covered the Selma Marches in 1965," *Time* (2015).
- ⁵⁶ Joshua Muravchik, "Fifty Years after the March," *Commentary* 136, no. 2 (2013): 31.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Michael Honey, "King's Last Crusade," *American History* vol. 41, no. 6: 38-45.
- ⁵⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "I've Been to the Mountaintop," *American Rhetoric*, April 3, 1968.

Margaret McKinney

The Ghetto Brothers: Reconciliation, Music, and the Brokerage of Peace among Bronx Street Gangs in the 1970s

On December 7, 1971, a coalition of African American and Puerto Rican gang members met in New York City, intent on identifying those responsible for the death of Cornell “Black Benjie” Benjamin. Far away from their turf in the South Bronx, these gang members turned a possible violent encounter into an uplifting meeting for hope of peace. During the meeting, a young black man by the name of Marvin “Hollywood” Harper, a member of the Savage Skulls gang, addressed the sea of gang members, now known as the “Hoe Avenue Peace Meeting.”¹ Harper pointed out that, among some gangs, the violation of the traditional rule of taking one’s colors when entering a territory controlled by a different gang and not returning them after leaving resulted in a sense of great disrespect even for those outlaws. Harper also noted that when they entered the turf of the Spades gang, they refused to return their colors.² To that he stated, “All we did [was] ask you people for the colors and you people didn’t give us our colors back. You don’t see us stripping you people, man. You don’t see us stripping the Turbans [gang], you don’t see us stripping the Ghetto Brothers. You don’t see us stripping no other crowd. When we have static, we settle it among ourselves, man, because we have to live in this district.”³ A crucial element to the success of peace came in the form of respect among gang members.

What was important and surprising in Hollywood’s speech was that, in their majority, gang members acknowledged the fact that they needed to treat each other with respect because they all lived in the South Bronx. They equally confronted the economic and social conditions of their borough. The Hoe Avenue Peace meeting transformed the vengeance of African American and Puerto Rican youths into the beginning of cooperation among gang leaders and their members. Their economic and social conditions became their common enemy. These gang members sought to take their social situation into their own hands and changed their living conditions for the benefit of their communities.

The Black Power Movement played an important role in American political culture, both at the community and national levels, giving way to African-American political emancipation. During the great era of civil rights, communities of color often embraced exclusion from their white counterparts and created bonds of unified struggles. Blacks and “blatinos” (African American

and Latino people) embraced their African heritage and strayed from social standards developed for and by white people, including notions of beauty, success, and respectability. The emergence of scholarship on the political culture of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements started soon after the decline of the Black Panther Party and the push for African American Studies programs on college campuses. Early studies focused on the experiences of black activists. They then evolved into more sophisticated studies centered on the political and cultural forces of that historical era. During the 1960s, the Black Power Movement led the way for Puerto Rican nationalist organizations to find their voice in the political culture of the time.

There are three major themes in the historiography of the Black Panther Party: oral histories and biographies; local chapter histories; and histories of the relationships between the Party and the African American communities. The first category contains personal accounts by participants and observers involved in the Party.⁴ Some of the early personal accounts found publication in dailies, such as *The Black Panther Party Newspaper*, and other types of press reports. For example, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton dominated early writings of the organizations. Four unique themes tied Seale's and Newton's writing: the overwhelming focus on leaders; police brutality; the general attitude towards Newton; and the mythology of the Party. Newton focused heavily on his contribution to African American intellectual history. Other leaders who produced autobiographies described rank-and-file members as victims of white oppression, as young ghetto dwellers, or simply naïve people.⁵

The second theme focused on the history and experiences of Black Panther Party chapters across the United States, and the experiences of the rank-and-file members. The 1960s African American activist generation, for example, wrote about their contributions, experiences, and the significance of their struggles within United States society. In the 1990s, many members wrote autobiographies highlighting their experiences in the Black Panther Party and in the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. These autobiographies provide insight into the everyday lives of Black Panther Party members and expose the levels of anger, sadness, and stress that many of them incurred as activists for social justice. Elaine Brown provided a detailed account highlighting the pressures involved in the life of a Party activist. She also explained how different members handled those pressures. For example, she described how Newton turned to drugs and isolation. Personally, the pressures of life as an activist and leader eventually forced Brown to flee the Party.⁶

The third theme focuses on the Black Panthers' contributions to African American communities and culture beyond their political programs and violent public images.⁷ Scholars such as Jeffrey Ogbar place Black Panther Party political activism at the center of the Black Power Movement. Ogbar's article "Puerto Rico En Mi Corazon: The Young Lords, Black Power, and Puerto Rican Nationalism

in the U.S., 1966-1972" focuses on the Party's internal struggles with gender equality. Further, it sheds light on the Party's contribution concerning the development of African American culture, and how it is symbolic of the social and political changes that they confronted and attempted to change. Today, scholars of the African American diaspora undertake intellectual projects to understand the impact of Black Panthers on American political and social culture, their relationship with other radical organizations, and the influence of the Panthers on Latino radicalism.⁸

Since the end of the Spanish American War, Puerto Ricans continue to face the powerful nature of United States colonialism. Due to the many disadvantages experienced by island and mainland communities, and in light of the social and political struggles of the 1960s Civil Rights Era, Puerto Ricans sought to insert themselves into the radical political movement for justice by taking political strategies from the Black Panther Party. One aspect of radicalism was the inclusion of an Afro-Puerto Rican identity, and the study of reasons for their marginalization. Puerto Ricans' involvement in community projects, education of Puerto Rican history, and understanding of political conditions in the U.S. became of great importance. As a result, many Puerto Ricans showed pride in their culture by displaying the Puerto Rican flag, listening to salsa music, and attending Puerto Rican parades. "Real Puerto Ricanness" came in the form of cultural knowledge, meanings, and symbolic markers given in society across the mainland and beyond.⁹

In cities with large Puerto Rican communities, such as Chicago and New York, Puerto Ricans suffered from poor housing conditions, job discrimination, and poverty. In addition, low-income communities, especially African American and Puerto Rican communities, suffered from a gang problem seemingly endemic of their social conditions. Gang membership often divided communities along racial and ethnic lines in poor communities. In addition, they engaged in criminal activities against each other. The Black Power Movement increasingly influenced gang members' behaviors in that they provided gangsters with the necessary tools to abandon gang life and join local nationalist organizations, such as the Young Lords Party and Black Panther Party. For Puerto Ricans, the process of politicizing youth gangs proved central in upholding traditional community and racial identity. The Young Lords gang, organized by Chicago's Puerto Rican youth, aimed simply to defend Puerto Rican youth against rival gangs. Under the influence of Black Panther leaders, the Young Lords transformed themselves into a political organization, which protected and educated their community. The Young Lords Organization became a major proponent in the grassroots movement for Puerto Rican nationalist organizations. For them, revolutionary nationalism embraced freedom, justice, and power for the people. Radical Puerto Rican organizations caused people to challenge traditional notions of race and explicitly addressed their own history of race, calling for a greater notion of

African and Latino history. The Young Lords Organization called into question the whiteness afforded to Puerto Ricans by American society. While many Puerto Ricans found it important for society to recognize them as being white, many white people did not accept them as such.¹⁰

Puerto Rican identity portrayed in Hollywood directly challenged the actual representation of Puerto Ricans in the United States. The 1960s film *“West Side Story”* portrayed Puerto Rican males as gang members, and women as sassy.¹¹ The movie did not accurately interpret Puerto Rican culture or community life. It portrayed the *“Sharks”* as antagonists and criminals. In part, the gentrification of, and *“White flight”* from, Puerto Rican and black communities led to the emergence of gangs. Those unable to afford these demographic changes became stuck with property owners unwilling to maintain building codes. In the South Bronx during the 1970s, property owners intentionally burned apartment buildings to collect insurance money, which forced many tenants to move into Section 8 housing.¹² Section 8 housing is a federal program that allows tenants to apply monthly vouchers to their housing expenses. Abandoned properties attracted a large number of squatters, drug addicts, and drug dealers. Youth gangs existed to defend themselves against Italian and Euromerican gangs in other neighborhoods. Eventually, gangs practically became a living requirement in low-income communities as protection against other community gangs. *“West Side Story”* largely ignores the significance of gang culture in Puerto Rican communities. Gangs soon became the foundation of Puerto Rican nationalism and the fight for equal rights.¹³

Tanisha Ford’s article *“SNCC Women, Denim, and the Politics of Dress”* explores the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the 1960s and women’s modification of clothing and hairstyles as a response to the realities of activism in rural south sharecropping communities. She explores the reasons why young black women activists abandoned *“respectable”* clothing and hairstyles to adopt jeans, denim skirts, and a natural hairstyle. Relating to sharecropping communities, desexualizing their bodies, and the distortion of gender roles became three main objectives that SNCC activists sought. Performance of respectability became a critical aspect of black organizing during the Civil Rights Movement. Organizers taught black women that clothing and hair choices played an importance performative role in the black freedom struggle. Middle-class educated women either went to Spellman or charm schools whose intent on learning domestic skills, posture, beauty care, and gender standards created a separate sphere from the SNCC. Black activists believed dressing better than whites displayed an act of defiance.¹⁴

Black women used their bodies as a strategy against Jim Crow. The body acted as a physical barrier and a marker of social status during nonviolence tactics. After participating in sit-ins, women incurred attacks by white mobs through means of food, water, spit, and other physical abuse. Black women protestors’ hair began to turn back into its kinky state, given the impression of

an unkempt appearance. After those attacks, black women underwent intense hair and beauty regimens to restore their respectable bodies. During the Civil Rights Movement, beauty shops became an intricate part of the movement for black activist women. The beauty shop became a place of refuge and sisterhood for black women.¹⁵

During the Civil Rights Movement, women organized protest and recruited other women to join the movement. Sexualized tactics by police officers created fear within women, making it difficult for women to maintain a respectable body. Black women's respectability became sexually and psychologically degrading. In some instances, white officers stuck women in paddy wagons for hours to "sweat the women out" in order to check for contraband hidden in the women's undergarments. Women in paddy wagons sweated so much, thus enabling police officers to see through their clothing, which gave officers a reason to search women. During this period, the inappropriateness of male officers searching female arrestees proved an advantage for women. SNCC women changed their ideal of a respectable body, embracing and relating to the rural southern communities they were canvassing. The adoption of denim built a community that united activists across class and gender lines. Black women apart of SNCC served as an early model of radical black womanhood, the cultural and political body of fashion.¹⁶

Fashion played a pivotal role in the expression of black pride during the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power Movement. The foundation of these movements consisted of black pride united with a strong expression of solidarity. Fashion statements sent a message to America that African Americans found pride in their heritage. Whether it was the wearing of the dashiki, a colorful garment originating from West Africa, or the militant uniform of the Black Panther Party, onlookers did not miss the message that "black was beautiful."¹⁷ The Black Panther uniform sent a powerful message to white society and became a prominent symbol of black pride. The beret became a revolutionary icon as other nationalist organizations began wearing it with distinct colors. The afro hairstyle symbolized racial pride for the African American and Latino community. The afro became not only a political statement, but also a new beauty standard. Marketing agencies began using black models with afros to promote their products. Black publications, such as *Jet* magazine, began displaying celebrities with afros as models. The use of fashion by movements proved a powerful strategy in the altering of American culture and in the implementation of African elements into American society.

The black campus movement played a significant role in the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. In addition, higher education played a role in the notion of a respectable body. Educated SNCC activists either attended college or charm schools. College experiences created a disconnection with working class members. Educated men and women activists learned to readjust themselves

in order to live among the laboring class in the South. College-educated women were exposed to the class stereotypes that respectable dress brought. The campus movement significantly influenced the Black Panther Party in that the party's early efforts for recruitment occurred at college campuses.¹⁸ The mass of the early Panther membership consisted of college-educated students. The campus movement also influenced Puerto Rican nationalist groups due to its effect on the Black Power movement and the Young Lords. The Young Lords modeled the ideology of the Black Panther Party. However, the level of education of their leaders became one significant difference between the Black Power and Puerto Rican Nationalist Movements.

In 1961, Robert Moses, a powerful urban planner, decided to build the Cross-Bronx Expressway through the Bronx borough.¹⁹ Moses planned to clean out the overpopulated zones of Greenwich Village and SoHo in order to build high-rise apartment buildings. His actions resulted in the displacement of hundreds of residents from their neighborhoods, forcing them to relocate to the South Bronx. As a result of this urban planning strategy, the traditional neighborhoods slowly perished. With the expansion of the expressway, the Bronx saw a large number of residents leaving for "better" neighborhoods. As multifamily apartment buildings sat abandoned and decaying, the value of the properties plummeted. Low-income black and Puerto Ricans families in the South Bronx experienced an economic crisis, which politicians blamed on white property owners. They imposed unreasonably high rents on their tenants, typically black and Puerto Rican families, who often lived paycheck to paycheck. Mayor Abraham Beame's solution to alleviate the economic burden of these families consisted of turning empty apartment buildings into Section 8 housing.²⁰

Under the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) plans, politicians set rental rates low, which left little potential for property owners to make a profit on their properties. These low rent rates posed a problem with the conversion of empty apartment buildings into Section 8 housing. Housing regulations made it virtually impossible to evict tenants for engaging in illegal or destructive behavior within and against their housing facilities. Those regulations resulted in the slow decay of many South Bronx buildings. Large signs in Welfare Centers stated very clearly, in Spanish and English, "the only way to get housing priority is if you are burned out by a fire."²¹ Property owners, hoping to collect on their insurance policy money, refused to maintain or bring buildings up to code. The phrase "the Bronx is burning" came from the resulting occurrences of tenants committing arson. Over time, white residents left their well-maintained South Bronx apartments, and moved away from what they perceived as the Puerto Ricans' and African Americans' destructive natures.²² African Americans and Puerto Ricans, due to their dreadful economic conditions, stayed behind, and lived in poor housing conditions. However, this did not mean that black and Puerto Rican communities accepted their situations passively.

The informal authority of gangs in the Bronx segregated the borough along racial and ethnic lines. Lack of law enforcement and economic prosperity allowed gangs to take over local communities, as they implemented their own laws on residents. For many youths, the decision to become a gang brought the feeling safety in their neighborhood, as local gangs continued to oppose one another. However, during the 1970s, gang life in the South Bronx did not necessarily reflect the traditional pattern of violence and youth corruption. The decade of the 1960s ushered a sense of social consciousness and radicalism among youth that did not discriminate between the university-educated and gangbanging in the streets of the South Bronx.

Benjamin Melendez, also known as “Yellow Benjy,” and his family were one of the hundreds of families who left Greenwich Village and relocated to the Bronx in hopes for better living conditions uptown. Benjy and his brothers joined a gang for protection against other local gangs because of the dangers of their new surroundings. After joining different gang organizations such as the Coffin Cats, the brothers decided to create their own gang, which they dubbed the Ghetto Brothers.²³ The Ghetto Brothers adopted the symbol of four trash cans and placed them on their vests as a representation of the dilapidated and terrible conditions of living in the South Bronx.²⁴ Property owners left buildings abandoned, and in doing so they also left Puerto Rican and black residents in unlivable housing conditions. The South Bronx lacked employment and recreation opportunities for youth. The trashcans, in this sense, symbolized life in the South Bronx for blacks and Puerto Ricans.

In their minds, the Ghetto Brothers insignia represented a problem in the South Bronx in need of a solution. Indeed, they stood as a different type of gang that sought to resolve many of the social problems in their neighborhood. For example, they implemented leadership skills, community outreach for many social programs such as drug rehabilitation, and careful recruitment of new members. In addition, they focused on coalition building and public relations practices to call attention to the social ills affecting their communities.²⁵ On one occasion, Benjy and his brothers met Charlie Suarez, also known as “Karate Charlie.” Suarez returned to the Bronx as a marine defector. Benjy discovered a natural leader in Karate Charlie. Benjy reasoned that given Suarez’s military training, coupled with his own desire to bring discipline and battle readiness to the gang, Karate Charlie should lead the gang as president. This indicated that the Ghetto Brothers sought to abandon their image as simply a violent street gang. They truly committed themselves to improving the conditions of their neighborhood. As drugs began flooding the streets of the Bronx, many became addicted to heroin; crime increased tremendously. Drug addicts needed money to feed their fix. This meant that residents fell victim to robbery and assault. In order to prevent members from succumbing to drug addiction, Benjy ordered all members addicted to drugs to detox. His efforts proved successful for some,

such as Cornell “Black Benjie” Benjamin, who became third in charge of the Ghetto Brothers and was given the title of “peace counselor.”²⁶

During the summer of 1971, Joseph Mpa, a member of the Black Panther Party, approached several South Bronx gangs with the intent to teach tactics in order to reduce violence and transform the gangs into positive forces in the community. The Ghetto Brothers, one of the few gangs to respond to Mpa’s call, transformed the structure of the typical gang organization to a progressive social organization. For example, the rank of “warlord,” a gang member who enforced turf boundaries, changed to “peace ambassadors.”²⁷ The Ghetto Brothers upheld similar principles as the Young Lord Party through addressing concerns about social and economic conditions in their community. The membership of the Ghetto Brothers consisted of primarily non-college educated individuals, mainly men, and few members with a high school education. This contrasted with the Young Lords membership, which consisted largely of college educated students.

While the Young Lords modeled their ideology from the Black Panther Party, the main difference between the Young Lords and the Ghetto Brothers consisted of the distinctive fact that the Ghetto Brothers’ leaders were not college educated. Yet, similarly to the Young Lords, they criticized the quality of healthcare at Lincoln Hospital, the lack of employment for residents, and the lack of recreation opportunities available to Puerto Rican youth. The Brothers organized their members into squads and cleaned buildings that property owners left to rot. In addition, they created their own free breakfast program and free clothing drive.²⁸ The Ghetto Brothers remained determined to clean their streets and become more than just a violent street gang. Their social goals eventually paid off. The Youth Services Agency in New York granted the Brothers funds to secure a storefront clubhouse on 163rd Avenue and Stebbins Street.²⁹ The Ghetto Brothers dealt openly with public officials and journalists. This contrasted with local gangs who met illegally in abandoned buildings.

In addition, the Ghetto Brothers organized a musical band with Benjy, Victor Melendez, Luis Bristo, and Chiqui Concepcion as members.³⁰ The band often played on the rooftop of their apartment building. Residents in the neighborhood recognized the music of the Ghetto Brothers due to their unique style. To support these musicians, New York University gifted the Brothers with instruments encouraging them to continue playing their music.³¹ The Ghetto Brothers mixed salsa, blues, and rock music. Media, newspapers, and television outlets covered the transformation of the Ghetto Brothers from a gang into an organization.³² Benjy, Black Benjie, and Charlie began appearing on network talk shows, in documentaries, and in magazines. Their message remained the same: better lives for African Americans and Puerto Ricans.

For years, social workers actively worked with gangs to secure peace commitments. As a result of this initiative, Benjy and Charlie hosted informal gatherings at their storefront clubhouse. They invited gang leaders, specifically

those who saw each other as enemies, to the meetings. As the Brothers sought to establish peace among other gangs, violence in the South Bronx escalated. In early November 1971, the Savage Skulls and Spades gangs collided into a violent rumble at a movie theater in the South Bronx.³³ Rumors spread through the South Bronx that some gangs received weapons—machine guns, grenades, and handguns—to fight against other gangs. After the violent altercation at the movie theater, the Brothers summoned an emergency summit in late November to pacify gang tensions. The Savage Skulls, Black Spades, Roman Kings, Nomads, and Bachelors met at the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park in an attempt to end violence.³⁴ The meeting did not achieve any concrete commitments from the parties involved, and violence in the streets continued to escalate.

On December 2, 1971, a Ghetto Brother member ran into the clubhouse exclaiming that the Seven Immortals, Mongols, and Black Spades entered Ghetto Brothers' territory attacking people.³⁵ Benjy ordered Black Benjie to mediate the situation between the gangs before the violence escalated further. Unfortunately, while attempting to deescalate the situation and negotiate peace between the gangs, someone had beaten Black Benjie to death. The killing of an unarmed gang member, who was pleading for peace, infuriated many gangs across the South Bronx. In turn, these gangs called for a war against the gang members that killed Benjie. Many gangs came to the Ghetto Brothers clubhouse to bury conflicts and show allegiance to the Brothers. They vowed to take vengeance against the gang members who allegedly murdered Black Benjie. Division and conflict concerning correct measures plagued the Ghetto Brothers after Black Benjie's death. Suarez advocated for revenge, but Benjy wanted peace and did not want to incite a bloody gang war.³⁶ The two decided to first visit Black Benjie's mother before deciding on a course of action. She told the boys not to spill any blood in Benjie's honor—peace was the only choice.³⁷ She did not want any mother to go through the pain she was going through.³⁸ Many people expected a great gang war, including the media and community members, but ultimately the Ghetto Brothers decided to call for peace.

After the murder of Black Benjie, Benjy and Charlie implemented a peace truce. The Hoe Avenue Peace meeting on December 8 at the Bronx Boys and Girls Club attracted over twenty gang organizations. The presidents and vice presidents of the Savage Skulls, Mongols, Turbans, and twenty other gangs attended the meeting.³⁹ The objective of the meeting concerned a peace treaty among local gangs. To ensure the peacefulness of the meeting, police officers stood vigilant at the rooftop of the building across the street with rifles.⁴⁰ Inside, the tension was palpable, as expectations and the future remained unknown. Suarez opened the meeting reminding everyone that Black Benjie died for peace, hence the reason for the meeting.⁴¹ This reassured the attendees a serene setting.

The initial intention of the meeting took place to expose the killers of Black Benjie, without snitching or calling out specific people. Hollywood, a member of

the Savage Skulls, spoke of his loyalty to the Ghetto Brothers. In his speech, he indicated he would take a life for Black Benjie.⁴² He proceeded pointing out the Seven Immortals, Mongols, and the Black Spades accusing them of the murder of Black Benjie. Next, one of the leaders of the Black Spades, Bam Bam, accused the Skulls of invading Black Spades territory with guns.⁴³ At this point, the meeting turned chaotic with gang members becoming agitated. In the commotion, Suarez stood up and silenced the crowd with one word, "Peace."⁴⁴ The mood of the meeting changed and gang leaders stood up expressing their grievances about their social conditions and their desire to change their community for the better. Hollywood rose again and said, "If we don't have peace now, whitey will come in and stomp us."⁴⁵ They determined to end the rumors and persecution of whoever killed Black Benjie. In addition, gang leaders worked towards uniting gangs as a large family in the South Bronx, where peace remained a possibility. Benjie stated, "The thing is, we're not a gang anymore. We're an organization. We want to help blacks and Puerto Ricans to live in a better environment."⁴⁶ The Hoe Avenue Meeting opened up dialogue between gangs to express themselves without fear or violence from opposing gangs if disagreements occurred. Gangs solidified an agreement of positive enforcement in their communities while improving their social conditions.

In the days after the peace meeting and Black Benjie's funeral, the atmosphere in the South Bronx changed. Turf borders slowly collapsed and gang members walked freely through other gangs' turf, even with their colors on. Eduardo Vincenti, "Spanish Eddie," one of the youth services agents, implemented a peace treaty known as "The Family." He received signatures from every major gang in the Bronx.⁴⁷ Some gangs walked away from the meeting considering the treaty a charade and continued their destructive agenda. Those gangsters who considered the meeting a joke sought counsel from the Ghetto Brothers. Members such as Suarez, Vincenti, and Melendez spoke with them explaining the goals of the meeting as well as plausible changes facing the South Bronx. The Ghetto Brothers approached gangs that refused the peace treaty and gave an ultimatum: sign the treaty or disband as a gang—willingly or through force.⁴⁸

The Ghetto Brothers collaborated with the United Bronx Parents, a local community of concerned parents. Together they pushed to create social programs for the community's children.⁴⁹ Both organizations sought bilingual education programs in schools and minority-hiring practices. These added to the already existing clothing and food distribution programs. In time, gangs banished drug dealers and drug addicts unwilling to enter rehab out of their neighborhoods.⁵⁰ Gangs also continued taking abandoned buildings, and they demanded that property owners maintain and update their buildings per code.

The peace treaty's impact among poor communities of color in the South Bronx proved significant. Social parties became the best way to break down

turf and other types of barriers among the different gangs. The Ghetto Brothers often threw house and block parties, with everyone welcome. At their parties, the Brothers' Band performed their own music. People celebrated the weekend every Friday at gatherings. Community outsiders, who courageously crossed gang turfs, ended at Ghetto Brothers playground, and celebrated their peaceful meeting by joining the Ghetto Brothers' band as they played side by side in unity.⁵¹ Former warlords, now DJs, battled on dance floors.⁵² Ismael Maisonave, an owner of a small Latin music label known as Mary Lou Records, approached the Ghetto Brothers offering an opportunity to record a music album.⁵³ The Brothers quickly agreed to the opportunity and recorded their album titled, *Ghetto Brothers Power Fuerza*. Despite their low record sales, their songs empowered those who listened to them through their uplifting message. The band's signature song, "Ghetto Brothers Power," sent an influential message concerning the possibilities the youth have in this world. For them, the block party became a space of possibility and equality.

The Ghetto Brothers became one of the largest gangs in the South Bronx, growing to over two thousand members. The organization eventually established chapters in New Jersey and Connecticut. The success of the Ghetto Brothers emerged with a positive message, which impacted the community. The Ghetto Brothers demonstrated a different kind of street justice: one which administered the codes of the gangs. The Ghetto Brothers symbolized non-college educated individuals taking the lead in the fight for social justice. While other gangs, such as the Young Lords and Black Panther Party, have dominated the historiography of African Americans and Puerto Ricans who fought for social justice, the Ghetto Brothers, too, significantly improved the living conditions of their communities, despite a lack of formal secondary and higher education. These heroes of social justice deserve a place within our historical memory.

Notes

- ¹ *Rubble Kings*, Directed by Shan Nicholson (2010: Saboteur Media, 2010 DVD), 20:30.
- ² In the context of the 1970s' world of New York's gangs, colors really meant the vests worn by gang members to identify their alliance with a specific gang. In the 1980s, gangs in California, such as the Crips and the Bloods, identified with the colors blue and red, gangs in New York operated differently.
- ³ Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 59.
- ⁴ Joe Street, "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party," *Journal of American Studies* vol. 44, no. 02 (2009): 351.
- ⁵ Street, "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party," 351.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 353.

- ⁷ Ibid., 353.
- ⁸ Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, "Puerto Rico En Mi Corazon: The Young Lords, Black Power, and Puerto Rican Nationalism in the U.S., 1966-1972," *Centro Journal* vol.18, no. 1 (2006): 149.
- ⁹ Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, "Implicit Social Knowledge, Cultural Capital, and Authenticity among Puerto Ricans in Chicago," *Latin American Perspectives* vol.31, no. 5 (2004): 36.
- ¹⁰ Ogbar, "Puerto Rico En Mi Corazon," 153-159.
- ¹¹ Frances Negron-Muntaner, "Feeling Pretty: West Side Story and Puerto Rican Identity Discourses," *Social Text* vol. 18, no. 2 (2000): 83-106.
- ¹² Jill Jonnes, *South Bronx Rising: The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of an American City* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 219.
- ¹³ Ogbar, "Puerto Rico En Mi Corazon," 155.
- ¹⁴ Tanisha C. Ford, "SNCC Women, Denim, and the Politics of Dress," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 29, no. 3 (August 2013): 625-630.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 634.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 634-638.
- ¹⁷ Vargas, "Fashion Statement or Political Statement," 96-97.
- ¹⁸ Shirletta J. Kinchen, "Reviewing the Revolt: Moving Toward a Historiography of the Black Campus Movement." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (June 2014): 118-130.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 151.
- ²⁰ Jill Jonnes, *South Bronx Rising: The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of an American City* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 231.
- ²¹ Ibid., 232.
- ²² Ibid., 219-231.
- ²³ Julian Voloj and Claudia Ahlering, *Ghetto Brother: Warrior to Peacemaker* (New York: NBM Comics Lit, 2015), 19.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 32.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 33-34.
- ²⁶ Amir Said, July 6 2015, Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers (The Cipher), 49:48.
- ²⁷ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 58.
- ²⁸ Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers, (The Cipher), 51:00.
- ²⁹ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 59.
- ³⁰ Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers, (The Cipher), 1:03:25.
- ³¹ Ibid., 59.
- ³² Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers, (The Cipher). 52:00

- ³³ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 54.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.
- ³⁵ Voloj and Ahlering, *Ghetto Brother*, 50.
- ³⁶ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 58.
- ³⁷ *Rubble Kings*, Directed by Shan Nicholson, (2010; Saboteur Media, 2010 DVD), 34:44.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 35:12.
- ³⁹ *Rubble Kings*, 36:00.
- ⁴⁰ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 58.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 59.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Voloj and Ahlering, *Ghetto Brother*, 67.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.
- ⁴⁶ *Rubble Kings*, Directed by Shan Nicholson, (USA, October 2010), 38:50.
- ⁴⁷ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 60.
- ⁴⁸ In the film *Rubble Kings*, Charlie depicts the enforcement of the peace treaty differently from other accounts stating, "Those that did not sign the peace treaty were not forced to disband."
- ⁴⁹ Amir Said, July 6 2015, *Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers (The Cipher)*, 51:08
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 51:25
- ⁵¹ *Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers (The Cipher)*, 1:09:17; see also, *Rubble Kings*.
- ⁵² Voloj and Ahlering, *Ghetto Brother*, 83.
- ⁵³ Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 64.

Marc Mercado

The Rise and Fall of Lighter-Than-Air Aircraft, 1783 – 1937

When one thinks about military aircraft, they rarely think about anything other than jets or helicopters, both of which are heavier-than-air aircraft. From the perspective of the twenty-first century, it is almost humorous to imagine a fragile, slow paced, and highly flammable gas-filled balloon gliding over a battlefield and a hailstorm of bullets. However, hot air balloons and zeppelins, which are both lighter-than-air aircraft, saw a great deal of military use until the end of the First World War. It is perhaps even stranger to think that experts considered lighter-than-air aircraft, which in retrospect seem little more than flying fire hazards, the safest and most effective form of military and commercial air travel. Though lighter-than-air aircraft have existed over twice as long as their currently more widely used heavier-than-air counterparts, due to a perceived lack of usefulness and safety, they saw a sharp decline in both military and commercial use in the early twentieth century.

How did lighter-than-air aircraft rise to such popularity for both military and commercial use, only to fall out of use so quickly in both arenas? Heavier-than-air aircraft eventually surpassed lighter-than-air aircraft. Ultimately, the preference for heavier-than-air aircraft led to their further development, as well as the obsolescence of lighter-than-air aircraft in most applications. Despite their long history of functionality, in terms of flight range, safety, and flight control, their ultimate demise came from a relatively small number of specific catastrophic events that ruined their reputation in the public's eyes. I argue that these specific events had a great deal to do with the ultimate termination of the large-scale use of lighter-than-air aircraft. By analyzing the birth, development, and failures of lighter-than-air aircraft in its various military and commercial applications from the eighteenth to twentieth century, one can see the events that caused their rise and eventual fall.

One way to study this topic is by analyzing France's development of the hot air balloon and Germany's development of the Zeppelin. Hot air balloons and Zeppelins exemplify lighter-than-air aircraft used for military and commercial applications. Germany and France emerged as respected leaders in the development of lighter-than-air aircraft before America and the Wright Brothers revolutionized the use of heavier-than-air aircraft. In addition, both hot air balloons and Zeppelins saw a drastic decline in use for military and commercial purposes after France and Germany adopted heavier than air aircraft. This

analysis of the birth and decline of the lighter-than-air aircraft begins with the earliest example of a lighter-than-air aircraft—the hot air balloon.

Credited with the creation of the first hot air balloons, brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier's success came using a large globe shaped burlap sheet and three thin layers of paper lining the inside of the sack. On June 4, 1783, the brothers demonstrated their first successful public balloon launch, in Annonay, France. The balloon had a volume of 28,000 cubic feet, and traveled a distance of 1.3 miles, reaching an estimated altitude of 5,200 – 6,600 feet.¹ The creation of the balloon came as a way to test what they believed to be the discovery of a new gas. Theorists thought that this gas, known as "Montgolfier Gas," formed above fire and had the ability to give objects lift when enclosed in an envelope shaped apparatus. They observed this principle in several ways, such as watching air pockets form in their cloth laundry as it dried by a fire and by watching paper rise as it burned.² We now know that the "Montgolfier Gas," which they claimed was lighter than air, is merely normal air that becomes more buoyant when it is heated. The brothers' principle for lighter-than-air gas became one of the most important contributions to the development of lighter-than-air aircraft.

Although unmanned, the first successful balloon flight of the Montgolfier brothers drew a great deal of attention. This attention came not only from the public, but also from academics, nobles, and the king and queen of France, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. One of their most notable flights occurred over the Palace of Versailles on September 19, 1783, in the presence of France's royal family.³ A wallpaper manufacturer by the name of Jean-Baptiste Réveillon collaborated with the Montgolfier brothers to create an elaborate version of their balloon. The balloon elegantly adorned with golden zodiac signs and a light blue background attracted crowds of onlookers to their creation.⁴ The new balloon, slightly larger than its predecessor at 37,500 cubic feet and seventy-five feet tall, was able to soar for about two miles reaching heights of 1,500 feet with the capacity to land safely.⁵ Impressed by the subsequent showcases that many members of the French nobility and elite sponsored, the public became hot air balloon enthusiasts. This brought hot air balloons further into the realm of commercial use and led to their further development. For instance, many of the balloons in use by hot air balloon enthusiasts displayed similar characteristics to that of Jean-Baptiste Réveillon's balloon. Réveillon's balloon replaced the burlap and paper sack with an envelope of taffeta coated with alum to prevent fire damage. Balloons grew in size and elegance as hot air balloons increasingly became a public spectacle.⁶

One of the most significant developments concerning hot air balloons occurred on December 1, 1783. The first manned hydrogen balloon, piloted by Professor Jacques Charles and brothers Anne-Jenne and Nicolas-Louis Robert, ensued less than five months after the Montgolfier brothers publicly launched

their first unmanned balloon. Many remember Charles, a renowned physicist and aeronaut in his time, for his principle the "Charles Law," which explains how gas expands when heated. His December flight became a milestone in aviation, particularly because it lasted two hours and five minutes, achieving a flying distance of over 22 miles. However, in terms of elevation, Charles limited the balloon's range to 1,500 feet due to his employment of "chancers," which were men riding horses with the balloons ropes tied to them thus ensuring the balloon did not ascend uncontrollably. By offering the general public a close up view of the balloon's launch, the men financed the spectacle with a fee of one crown per person. The experiment became not only a milestone for aviation, but also set an example of commercial aviation as such.⁷

The launch drew a reported crowd of over 400,000 people, including Benjamin Franklin, who served as the American diplomat in France at the time.⁸ Franklin remained skeptical about the practicality of hot air balloons in their state at that time. In a letter written in 1783 to Sir Joseph Banks (the president of the Royal Society of London), he noted that hot air balloons seemed difficult to control and maneuver. He wrote: "These Machines must always . . . be driven by the Winds. Perhaps Mechanic Art may find easy means to give them progressive Motion."⁹

Charles initially created his balloon to test his theory about gas density. English physicist Robert Boyle determined the absolute pressure and density of gas given a constant temperature, now known as Boyle's Law. That concept formed the basis for Charles's theory.¹⁰ Another English physicist, by the name of Henry Cavendish, also influenced Charles. In 1766, Cavendish found that hydrogen was seven times lighter than air. That fact also helped inspire Charles's theory that a hydrogen filled balloon could produce a greater amount of lift than one filled with heated air.¹¹

Little more than a decade after Jaquis Charles's first flight using a hydrogen filled hot air balloon, armies already used hot air balloons in battle. On April 2, 1794, the First French Republic founded the French Aerostatic Corps as a branch of the Army of the North.¹² Created during the French Revolution, the branch's use of hot air balloons provided France an advantage over the encroaching Austrian, Dutch, and British forces. In 1793 the First French Republic's Committee of Public Safety experimented with the use of military hot air balloons and undertook several unsuccessful attempts to create an air ship. One of the main issues that the Committee of Public Safety faced when attempting to create both hydrogen filled hot air balloons and air ships was a cost effective and steady supply of hydrogen. When Jaquis Charles created his balloon, he required nearly a quarter ton of sulfuric acid and nearly a half ton of scrap iron to create the hydrogen necessary to lift a balloon large enough to carry himself and the Robert brothers.¹³

Alternative means of hydrogen production that did not require sulfuric acid developed in late 1793. As a result, it became feasible for France to create military

hot air balloons in 1794. However, they abandoned the creation of a French airship. Producing large enough quantities of hydrogen to fill the substantially larger air ships, and the utter lack of ability to control a large-scale air ship, proved cost inefficient.

The French Aerostatic Corps first employed hot air balloons during the Battle of Fleurus, on June 22, 1794. Due to the desperation of the French forces, who at the time were conscription based and facing larger professional armies, the French forces attempted to use any equipment that might provide an advantage over the enemy, including their modified hot air balloon. Made up of skilled carpenters and chemists, the French Aerostatic Corps created a hot air balloon with the capacity to stay in the air for over nine hours at a time, enabling extensive reconnaissance missions.¹⁴ It is significant that the modifications made for battle use created hot air balloons that could stay in the air nearly five times longer than the model created by Jaquis Charles, a little more than a decade prior to the battle. During the battle the French forces employed only one balloon, named *L'Entreprenant*, or "the enterprising one."¹⁵ The balloon gave the French forces a distinct advantage over the encroaching armies by allowing them to gain vital information on enemy troop movements in a matter of minutes. These operations would have taken scouts on horseback hours or even days to gather and relay.¹⁶ The French scored an overwhelming victory at the Battle of Fleurus and gave a great deal of credit to the Aerostatic Corps for their use of the hot air balloon. One officer compared fighting without hot air balloons to "dueling while blindfolded."¹⁷

Though the French had one successful military application of a hot air balloon, subsequent failures permanently lowered the prestige of hot air balloons for military use. One of the most damaging factors to the reputation of military hot air balloons occurred at the Battle of Würzburg in 1796. The use of three hot air balloons provided no tactical advantage during the battle. The army of the Reine suffered a distinct loss to Austrian forces despite using three hot air balloons. During the battle, the Austrians captured the Second Aerostatic Company and their balloons. Upon their release, the army transferred the company from Moreau's army of the Reine to the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse, which was under the command of General Lazare Hoche. Hoche refused to use hot air balloons in his army. Writing to France's minister of war, he requested the removal of the balloons from his service, claiming that they were useless. After the loss of the Battle of Würzburg, additional French commanders protested the use of military hot air balloons. For example, this occurred during the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt from 1798-1799. The French sent two hot air balloons to aid their forces, but none ever saw use in battle. Following the Battle of the Nile, the elimination of one came via fire, while officers used the other purely for entertainment. With commanders refusing to use the hot air balloons in combat, the French Aerostatic Corps disbanded in 1799.¹⁸

There is an argument that France's reluctance to use hot air balloons in the military had more to do with the reputation of hot air balloons than with their practical use. However, while the use of hot air balloons for commercial entertainment continued in France, the military did not use hot air balloons in battle again until 1859. At that time they used the balloons to deliver mail during the Franco-Prussian War.¹⁹ Even after the reintroduction of hot air balloons into the French military, they never regained their prestige as perspective battle winning military technology, nor as a viable ways to efficiently transport people or goods. Hot air balloons would forever remain little more than a novelty in the eyes of both the military and commercial industry. Organizations perceived the balloons as slow, hard to control, and ultimately impractical for most tasks outside of entertainment. However, the decline of hot air balloons did not mark the end of interest in lighter-than-air aircraft.

By the end of the nineteenth century, France's dominance over the development of lighter-than-air aircraft ended when a German, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, set out to improve upon the hydrogen based lighter-than-air aircraft. In 1863, Zeppelin served as an observer in the Union Army during the Peninsula Campaign of the American Civil War.²⁰ Zeppelin's connections enabled this position via a German-born general in the Union army, General Carl Schurz. President Abraham Lincoln approved Zeppelin's endorsement, allowing Zeppelin to serve under General Schurz.²¹ Zeppelin's objective consisted of observing the various military advancements of the American military, thus further enabling and influencing the creation of German technology. The Union army's use of hot air balloons as scouting devices sparked his interest.²²

Zeppelin began his fascination by observing the practical uses of the hot air balloons used by the Balloon Corps, which was the Union army's military hot air balloon division. Unfortunately, Zeppelin arrived at their division while the Corps was in the process of shutting down. The Balloon Corps Chief Aeronaut, Thaddeus S.C. Lowe, had recently resigned due to disputes over his wages, and the entire division was without effective leadership. Wanting to learn more about the various uses of hot air balloons Zeppelin left the service of General Schurz and traveled to Saint Paul, Minnesota, where he received knowledge of safer and more in depth use of hot air balloons.²³ Zeppelin observed a former Union Army balloonist, by the name of John Stiner. This connection and observation enabled Zeppelin's first ascent in a 41,000 cubic foot coal gas powered balloon. The balloon ascended roughly 600-700 feet and gave Zeppelin the inspiration for his greatest contribution to lighter-than-air technology.²⁴

Lack of steering and lifting capabilities proved the most significant obstacle Zeppelin encountered with the balloons. In 1874, he sought to solve the problem of lift by having a frame enclose multiple balloon cells, which would allow for both steering and use of several balloons worth of lifting power. The key to his design was the ridged structure that allowed for a stable and fully controllable

flight.²⁵ In 1884, French engineers Charles Renard and Arthur C. Krebs created the first fully controllable free flying Airship, named *La France*.²⁶ The one hundred and seventy-foot-long, battery powered airship beat Zeppelin to the market by several years, yet it inspired him to seek further means to get his airship into production.²⁷

In 1887, Zeppelin wrote a letter to King Charles I of Württemberg requesting a military contract to build airships for the Kingdom of Württemberg's military. Zeppelin argued that Germans should not fall behind the French in technology and that there was a lack of German innovation in the field of aviation. Skeptical, the king of Württemberg indicated that he wanted to see a proof of concept before he approved Zeppelin for a military contract. In 1891 Zeppelin secured investors into his enterprise and informed the king of Württemberg that the construction of his airship began. One of his first revisions to his original plans included the addition of four propellers on the belly of the airship to help add lift and control to the vehicle. He also secured a far more efficient motor to power his airship from Daimler Motors Corporation (*Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft*). The addition of Daimler's motor allowed Zeppelin's airship to fly for several hours. This technology drew a comparison between airships and cars. The latter was another innovation in transportation technology that transpired at about the same time.²⁸

By 1894 Zeppelin submitted his plans to construct a controllable airship-train, with several carrier structures arranged one behind another, to the Prussian Airship Service. The capabilities of the airship included manual steering, the capacity to carry nearly six thousand pounds, and the ability to stay in the air for several hours. The government lacked faith in the airship's ability to sustain flight long enough for any use. Initially, they approved the minimum requested funds but withdrew their offer shortly afterwards, in 1895. The loss of the prospect for a military contract in 1895 drove away many investors and caused public opinion of Zeppelin's airship to decline. However, that same year Zeppelin secured an important investment from industrialist Carl Berg, as well as an updated schematic from famed airship constructor David Schwarz. To fund the endeavor Zeppelin, Berg, and another investor, Philipp Holzmann formed a joint stock company in 1898: the Society for the Promotion of Airship Travel (*Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Luftschiffahrt*). With an eight hundred thousand mark cost to construct, Zeppelin used a large portion of his personal wealth to cover half of the cost to build his airship.²⁹

With a solid plan and funds secured, the construction of the LZ1 (*Luftschiff Zeppelin 1*) began in 1895. In 1900 the company completed the LZ1. It measured four hundred twenty feet in length and had a hydrogen capacity of over four hundred thousand cubic feet. The LZ1 had two fifteen horsepower Daimler engines, each powering a pair of propellers on the front and the back of the airship's belly. The LZ1's completion reignited public interest and began

attracting crowds at its events.³⁰ The events that followed, however, further sowed the seeds of public distaste for what were now known as Zeppelins.

On July 2, 1900, the first Zeppelin flight took place over Lake Constance. Although the ship displayed no notable problems during the launch or flight, landing the ship badly damaged it. Two more flights took place that same year on the 17th and 24th of October. On its final flight, the LZ1 attained a speed of 13.4 miles per hour, which was significantly better than the previous record holder, *La France*. Despite this fact, investors focused on its inability to land without crashing and remained unimpressed.³¹ This caused shareholders to abandon the company, and funding came to a grinding halt. The liquidation of the company's assets accompanied the dismantling of the LZ1. Ferdinand von Zeppelin, not willing to give up on his dream, salvaged most of the parts from the LZ1, which he intended to use in the creation of an improved airship.³²

Zeppelin, in a desperate effort to keep his dreams of a successful airship alive, managed to find the funds to create his second "Zeppelin", the LZ2. He did this by investing one hundred thousand marks of his own money (the remainder of his fortune) and mortgaging his wife's estate. Zeppelin's perseverance attracted a great deal of attention. This drew in several important investments, including a fifty thousand-mark investment from the kingdom of Prussia. The king of Württemberg raised and donated one hundred twenty-four thousand marks to Zeppelin, through the arrangement of a special state lottery.³³

On January 17, 1906, the LZ2 attempted a cross-country flight. The first hours of the flight were smooth and peaceful, setting new records for length spent in the air. However, fortune was not with Zeppelin that day; engine failure in both the engines caused the LZ2 to make an emergency landing. While on the ground, a storm tore the LZ2 to pieces, damaging the grounded ship beyond repair.³⁴ After salvaging what little he could from the LZ2, Zeppelin managed to find enough public support to fund the creation of the LZ3. The LZ3's successes lied in its ability to traverse Switzerland. By that time, the Prussian military had found a new interest in Zeppelin's work, and offered him a military contract. The caveat was that he had to demonstrate the airship's sustainability for at least twenty-four hours before the Prussian military would purchase any of his airships. Zeppelin agreed and created the LZ4 before securing any funds from the government. This decision proved a near career-ending flaw.³⁵

The LZ4's traveling distance of over two hundred forty miles and a cruising altitude of twenty six hundred feet made it one of the greatest airships ever built.³⁶ On August 5, 1908, the LZ4 began its twenty-four hour endurance test. Roughly, eighteen hours into the test a storm caused mechanical problems. Zeppelin decided to anchor the airship and break for a meal. When he returned to the airship, he found it loose from its anchor. It crashed and burned in a tree. Falling short of its twenty-four hour mark, the government refused to buy either of his two remaining ships.³⁷

Zeppelin found himself deeply in debt and in possession of two expensive airships not fit for sale. His seemingly imminent doom to a life of poverty reversed due to the newspapers picking up his story. Zeppelin's harrowing tale of business venture and financial risk in the name of technological innovation resonated with the public. His story attracted investment into his company in the form of large investors, as well as small donations from regular citizens inspired by his bravery and sacrifice. The donations he received totaled over six million marks.³⁸ In response to such large public interest, Zeppelin founded DELAG, or *Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-Aktiengesellschaft* (German Airship Travel Corporation). DELAG became known as the first commercial airline company. DELAG saw a fair amount of success, transporting 34,028 passengers on 1,588 commercial flights without a single death or injury before the start of the first world war and the Zeppelin's military career.³⁹ Despite the commercial success, airship travel, in reality, was little more than a novelty even at its height.⁴⁰

Standard airship tickets for a four-hour flight between Düsseldorf, Germany to Lucerne, Switzerland cost nearly \$1,900 (USD) in today's currency.⁴¹ In comparison, travel via railroads was as fast yet far more economical. In addition, the unpressurized cabin smelled strongly of fuel due to a lack of air filtration. With little to no turbulence control, the ride was also far from smooth.⁴² By 1939, even with the refinement of commercial Zeppelins, the specs of the LZ10 were far from favorable, especially when compared to the first commercial airplanes. The speed of the LZ10 peaked at mere forty-four miles per hour, with a cruise range of nine hundred miles and a maximum passenger capacity of twenty.⁴³ This was especially troubling when it came to its use as a military vehicle during World War I.

On January 15, 1915, German forces began Zeppelin bombing raids over London, which began the airship's military career.⁴⁴ Zeppelins had the prospect of being extremely useful during combat due to their ability to fly at high enough altitudes to avoid enemy anti-aircraft guns. Anti-aircraft guns lacked the ability to fire shells at the altitude in which Zeppelins flew. However, the guns prevented Zeppelins from flying at low altitudes, thus disabling their accuracy. During the early stages of the war, German Zeppelins had a distinct advantage over British airplanes, as weaponized airplanes did not yet exist. Though Royal Airforce pilots had used pistols, rifles, and grenades during aerial combat, since 1914, the British did not acquire effective fighter planes until the creation of the Royal Aircraft Factory, in July 1915, which manufactured a biplane, the F.B. 5, with a front facing Lewis machine gun.⁴⁵ During the first Zeppelin bombing raid of London, the English sent unarmed airplanes into the sky to chase the Zeppelin away in hopes that the Zeppelin would drop low enough that an anti-aircraft gun could hit it. This was England's only defense against the Imperial Zeppelins.

On November 1, 1915, *The New York Times* published a column concerning the ongoing Zeppelin bombing raids. It cited a *London Globe* reporter who

stated, "The public knows now that the Zeppelin, choosing its own time and circumstances for attack, is particularly immune against the ordinary weapons of aerial warfare. The only way to hit the enemy is to strike at him as he strikes at us. ..."⁴⁶ Despite the Zeppelin's seemingly impenetrable nature early in the war, the *New York Times* listed the number of casualties from each Zeppelin bombing raid, which appeared to be surprisingly low. Each raid tended to only kill or injure a few dozen people, causing minimal damage to London.⁴⁷ Considering the extreme expense of each Zeppelin produced, the ability for use only in ideal weather conditions, and their capacity to cause little damage to the enemy other than fostering fear, it is easy to see why Zeppelins began to decline in military use. These factors caused the Zeppelin's unsustainable growth when compared to the development of airplanes, or heavier-than-air aircraft, which proved cheaper to develop and provided better weapons options.

The first incident of a Zeppelin shot down by allied forces occurred on November 28, 1916. First-Lieutenant Egbert Cadbury and his team of Royal Flying Corps pilots shot down the Imperial Zeppelin LZ1 (LZ 61) with incendiary rounds over the North Sea near Lowestoft, England. Cadbury and his squadron attacked the Zeppelin's hydrogen-filled hull causing it to combust. This ambush occurred as the Zeppelin returned to Germany to refuel after a bombing raid. The ultimate downfall of the Zeppelin was not its ability to carry out long distance air raids but its inability to effectively maneuver when it came under attack.⁴⁸ Cadbury himself would in fact go on to shoot down a second Zeppelin (L70 or LZ112) on August 6, 1918 over the North Sea, using the very same strategy.⁴⁹

As the First World War dragged on, airplanes became a far less expensive and more versatile piece of military technology. In turn, the Zeppelin became increasingly more difficult to fund and more susceptible to attacks from airplanes, both when in the air and on the ground. On January 5, 1918, an allied air raid on an Imperial airbase in Ahlhorn, Germany caused a fire, which eventually destroyed four Imperial Zeppelins.⁵⁰ This event not only financially damaged the Imperial military, but also proved that the 1915 view of the Zeppelin as an invincible and unstoppable war machine was false. Its heavier-than-air counterpart, the airplane, had fundamentally outmatched the Zeppelin. The various events where airplanes destroyed Zeppelins in the air and on the ground were a turning point. They diminished the reputation of lighter-than-air aircraft, resulting in a military shift away from their use.

Following the signing of the "Treaties of Versailles" on October 21, 1919, the age of the slow paced, barely effective, and wildly expensive military Zeppelins ended.⁵¹ Though Germany restricted military use of Zeppelins, construction of transportation Zeppelins continued. Despite this, the Zeppelin never—at any point—proved a viable transportation vehicle for the general public. It was seemingly doomed as a novelty item for the elite since its inception into the

commercial market. However, in terms of the Zeppelins' complete failure, it is widely accepted that one event above all others caused the rapid abandonment of commercial Zeppelin travel: the Hindenburg disaster. With the accumulation of disastrous events creating distrust in aeronautics, the failure of the Hindenburg became synonymous with the end of commercial Zeppelin travel.⁵²

In 1913, twenty-four years before the Hindenburg disaster, another catastrophic Zeppelin crash occurred off the coast of Heligoland, Germany, during the First World War. Known as the "The Heligoland Disaster," the L-1 (LZ - 14) flew through a storm over the North Sea causing immediate engine failure. The Zeppelin crashed into the frigid sea killing fourteen of its twenty crew members. The L-1 was the first Zeppelin purchased by the Imperial German army, its failure created an immediate stigma. On September 13, 1913, *The New York Times* reported the Heligoland disaster, claiming the L-1 as the eighth Zeppelin destroyed by the elements in seven years. Harsh criticism from international news sources attested to the significance of its crash. A *New York Times* reporter stated, "All of these wrecks are dismissed by the Germans as *Kinderkrankheiten* (childhood illnesses) – their idiom for experimental difficulties."⁵³

That report framed the dismissal as a German excuse for the failure of their airship. Additionally, the report indicated that the Germans suggested the failure of the airship was akin to the trial and error process of the railroad and that the Germans had already built a direct successor the L-2, in which they claimed would be more durable and weather resistant. The overall response from the article showed the growing skepticism of the Zeppelin being a viable military vehicle. In a follow up article, *The New York Times* clarified that in fact fifteen of the twenty crewmen perished and that amongst the fifteen Captain Friedrich Metzger (the chief of the Admiralty Aviation Department) and Baron von Maltzahn (a nobleman from Mecklenburg) had died.⁵⁴ The report went on to state, "The North Sea Disaster is one in a long series in Germany's attempt to master travel in the air. Probably no inventor has met with more discouragements and setbacks than has the persistent Count Zeppelin." The article listed many of the problems that Von Zeppelin had while attempting to finance his airship company, and the timeline of his airship crashes.⁵⁵ In this second *New York Times* article, the clarity of the Zeppelin's long chain of failures since its creation provided another link in the chain with the L-1 disaster. Consequently, the article indicated a growing skepticism toward the future of the Zeppelin, criticizing claims that the L-2 would be weather resistant and would not suffer from the same problems as the L-1.

The New York Times had good reason for its skepticism concerning the use of Zeppelins. On October 17, 1913, the L-2 suffered an in-flight engine malfunction, igniting the airship's hydrogen and causing the entire airship to combust. All twenty-eight crewmen died either in the fire or as a result of the two thousand-

foot crash. Among the dead was Captain Felix Pietzker, the newly appointed chief of the Admiralty Aviation Department, and one of the main naval architects who designed airships for use as bombers. Within thirty-four days, the total of deaths related to the Admiralty Aviation Department consisted of two chiefs and forty-three crewmen.⁵⁶ Following the death of Pietzker, Peter Strasser took over as the chief of the Admiralty Aviation Department, serving until his death in 1917. He died in a fatal Zeppelin crash during the last bombing raid of London.⁵⁷ Though Zeppelins continued to function for military purposes until the end of the First World War, the disasters of the L-1 and L-2, compounded with the deaths of three Chiefs of the Admiralty Aviation Department within a four-year span, caused a waning faith in the use of Zeppelins for military purposes.

On May 6, 1937, one of the largest airships ever constructed, the LZ129 *Hindenburg*, burst into flames during a scheduled trans-Atlantic journey from Frankfurt, Germany, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The event occurred while the *Hindenburg* attempted to dock at Naval Air Station Lakehurst, in Manchester Township, New Jersey. Several witnessed the disaster, most notably Chicago news reporter Herb Morrison, who provided a live broadcast exclaiming:

It's fire and it's crashing! ... This is the worst of the worst catastrophes in the world! Oh, it's crashing ... oh, four or five hundred feet into the sky, and it's a terrific crash, ladies and gentlemen. There's smoke, and there's flames, now, and the frame is crashing to the ground, not quite to the mooring mast. Oh, the humanity, and all the passengers screaming around here! ... I can't talk, ladies and gentlemen. Honest, it's just lying there, a mass of smoking wreckage, and everybody can hardly breathe and talk ... Honest, I can hardly breathe. I'm going to step inside where I cannot see it. ...⁵⁸

News outlets worldwide repeated Morrison's recording of the *Hindenburg* disaster associating his coverage with all airship travel. This event gained significant media attention, prompting an immediate decline in Zeppelin travel.⁵⁹ To this day, the cause of the fire is unclear. Theories range from electrical failure to intentional sabotage. No matter the cause, the resulting death of the thirteen passengers and twenty-two crewmen who burned in the inferno intensified the Zeppelin's demise.

The question of why lighter-than-air aircraft rose to such popularity in commercial use, only to fall out of use so quickly, warrants further investigation beyond the scope of this work. Germany and France truly led the world in the field of early aviation with their contributions of lighter-than-air aircraft, including the creation of Zeppelins and hot air balloons respectively. By the twentieth century, use of both the Zeppelin and hot air balloons declined as the

use of heavier-than-air aircraft, such as the airplane, increased. Lighter-than-air aircraft existed in both military and commercial use for nearly two centuries. The rise of the lighter-than-air aircraft for commercial use fueled the amazement of manmade flight. The hot air balloon drew crowds of onlookers from its bright colors and graceful (yet highly uncontrollable) movement.

However, despite its hypnotic appeal while up in the air, the hot air balloon was little more than a novelty, for it served no commercial purpose other than for show. Until the creation of the Zeppelin airline company DELAG, that particular lighter-than-air aircraft would not serve a practical commercial use. In the early twentieth century, the expense of the Zeppelin offset its usefulness. They could only carry a modest amount of weight, and could only hold approximately twenty passengers. As the railway system gained popularity, flight via Zeppelin proved no more than a novelty, similar to its predecessor the hot air balloon.

The downfall of the commercial use of the hot air balloon did not surface due to notable disasters. It was widely known that there was a risk of death from falling or crashing due to the fact that hot air balloons were largely uncontrollable, and deflation was always a risk. However, casualties in balloon crashes were few, and damage remained minimal. If anything, danger became a part of the appeal of ballooning to some adventurous balloonists. Unlike hot air balloons, disaster marked the end of the commercial use of the Zeppelin, specifically, the Hindenburg. Combined with the well-publicized military crashes of the Zeppelin, the Hindenburg disaster marked the end of the commercial use of the Zeppelin. The Zeppelin not only defined the dangers of aeronautics, but also its inferior method of air transit. By 1937, the airplane's use of transporting both people and cargo became more efficient and cost effective than the Zeppelin. After the Hindenburg disaster, the use of Zeppelins for commercial purposes left the public eye. In 1937, both the commercial and military use of lighter-than-air aircraft largely ended.

The Zeppelin truly epitomized the full realization of the dream of a military balloon. France's military use of the hot air balloon, much like Germany's Zeppelin, was short lived. Hot air balloons, even though expensive and ineffective, existed for military use by the French a century before Germany created the Zeppelin. Although expensive and often seen as unfavorable by commanders, lighter-than-air aircraft's potentiality made them better scouts than cavalry. Though credited with winning the Battle of Fleurus, the hot air balloon's reputation, damaged by the loss at the Battle of Würzburg, called their use into question by high-ranking French Military officials. Due to their immense cost, their perceived inferiority in comparison to the traditional scout cavalry, and their lack of weapons, militarized lighter-than-air aircraft saw little use between the time France ended its Aerostatic Corps, in 1799, and the military hot air balloons of the American Civil War, which inspired the creation of the Zeppelin.

By the end of the First World War, heavier-than-air aircraft surpassed lighter-than-air aircraft in speed, maneuverability, cost efficiency, and most importantly versatility. The Zeppelin's practicality to the Imperial German military came due to its capacity to fly at an altitude that anti-air weapons could not reach during the beginning of World War I. By the end of the war, however, airplanes equipped with guns had the capacity to shoot down Zeppelins. Zeppelins, even when they were impervious to enemy fire, did not serve a sufficient purpose in battle to justify their cost. Zeppelin's reputation came in a variety of forms including their inability to hit targets at their specified altitude and speed. Zeppelins lacked what airplanes provided in scouting missions. The crashes of the L-1 and L-2 and the deaths associated with the Imperial Admiralty Aviation Department attested to the ineffectiveness of their military use, resulting in the fact that other countries chose not to invest in them.

Notes

- ¹ Tom D. Crouch, *Lighter Than Air: An Illustrated History of Balloons and Airships* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 53-71.
- ² "Joseph Michel Montgolfier," *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., accessed May 5, 2017, Encyclopedia.com.
- ³ "Expérience aérostatique faite Versailles le 19 Sept. 1783," Library of Congress, accessed November 10, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002736265/>.
- ⁴ "Balloon," *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., accessed May 6, 2017, Encyclopedia.com.
- ⁵ Charles Coulston Gillispie, *The Montgolfier Brothers and the Invention of Aviation 1783-1784* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- ⁶ Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Vintage Ltd, 1990), 503-522.
- ⁷ Charles Coulston Gillispie, *Science and Polity in France: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Years* (London: Brandt Travel Guides, Ltd., 2003), 322-340.
- ⁸ Schama, *Citizens*, 503-522.
- ⁹ "Letter from Benjamin Franklin to Sir Joseph Banks November 21, 1783," Library of Congress, accessed November 29, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/wb0030p1s.jpg>.
- ¹⁰ "Memoire de M. Charles sur L'aerostatique," Tissandier Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, accessed November 30, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/wb0032s.jpg>.
- ¹¹ Henry Cavendish, *Experiments to Determine the Density of the Earth* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), 103-107.
- ¹² Walter J. Boyne, *The Influence of Air Power Upon History* (Los Angeles: Pelican Publishing, 2003), 5-107.
- ¹³ Schama, *Citizens*, 503-522.

- ¹⁴ William F. Althoff, *Sky Ships: A History of the Airship in the United States Navy* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1990).
- ¹⁵ Gillispie, *Science and Policy in France*, 322-340.
- ¹⁶ "Memoire de M. Charles sur L'aerostatique," Tissandier Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, accessed November 30, 2016, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/wb0032s.jpg>.
- ¹⁷ F. Stansbury Haydon, *Military Ballooning During the Early Civil War* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 5-15.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Philip Jarrett, *Aviation: The Pioneer Years* (Seacaucus: Chartwell Books, Inc., 1990), 240-250.
- ²⁰ Dan Grossman, Count Zeppelin: Second from Right during the American Civil War, accessed November 27, 2016, <http://www.airships.net/airship-people/count-ferdinand-von-zeppelin/>.
- ²¹ Richard Hallion, *Taking Flight: Inventing the Aerial Age, from Antiquity Through the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 94.
- ²² Hallion, *Taking Flight*, 94.
- ²³ Henry Vissering, *Zeppelin: The Story of a Great Achievement* (Chicago: Jefferson Publication, 1920), 1-17.
- ²⁴ John Toland, *The Great Dirigibles: Their Triumphs and Disasters* (Boston: Courier Dover Publications, 1972), 75-78.
- ²⁵ Vissering, *Zeppelin*, 1-17.
- ²⁶ Boyne, *The Influence of Air Power*, 5-107.
- ²⁷ Vissering, *Zeppelin*, 1-17.
- ²⁸ Lumen Winter and Glenn Degner, *Minute Epics of Flight* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1933), 49-90.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ "German Airship Lost with 15 Men; Commander, Head of Marine Airship Division, and Baron von Maltzahn Drowned", *The New York Times*, September 10, 1913.
- ³² Winter and Degner, *Minute Epics of Flight*, 49-90.
- ³³ Sean C. Dooley, "The Development of Material-Adapted Structural Form," (PhD diss., Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, 2004).
- ³⁴ "German Airship Lost with 15 Men, *The New York Times*, September 10, 1913.
- ³⁵ "German Airship Lost with 15 Men, *The New York Times*, September 10, 1913.
- ³⁶ Winter and Degner, *Minute Epics of Flight*, 49-90.
- ³⁷ Vissering, *Zepelin*, 1-17.
- ³⁸ "German Airship Lost with 15 Men, *The New York Times*, September 10, 1913.

- ³⁹ Guillaume de Syon, *Zeppelin! Germany and the Airship 1900–1939* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 34-56.
- ⁴⁰ Vissering, *Zeppelin*, 1-17.
- ⁴¹ De Syon, *Zeppelin!*, 34-56.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Dan Grossman, *Deckplan of Graf Zeppelin's Gondola*, accessed November 27, 2016, <http://www.airships.net/lz127-graf-zeppelin/>.
- ⁴⁴ Arthur J. Balfour, *London's Ariel Defense*, (New York: CH Publishing Corporation, 1915), 247.
- ⁴⁵ Raymond H. Fredette, *The Sky on Fire; The First Battle of Britain, 1917-1918 and the Birth of the Royal Air Force*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 200-275.
- ⁴⁶ "Airship Loss Fails to Daunt Germans; Value of Zeppelins as War Instruments Is Unimpaired, Say the Experts," *The New York Times*, September 14, 1913.
- ⁴⁷ Balfour, *London's Ariel Defense*, 247.
- ⁴⁸ Douglas Hill Robinson, *The Zeppelin in Combat: A History of the German Naval Airship Division, 1912-1918* (London: G. T. Foulis, 1962), 153-226.
- ⁴⁹ Robinson, *The Zeppelin in Combat*, 153-226.
- ⁵⁰ Fredette, *The Sky on Fire*, 200-275.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ "Airship Loss Fails to Daunt Germans; Value of Zeppelins as War Instruments Is Unimpaired, Say the Experts," *The New York Times*, September 14, 1913.
- ⁵⁴ "German Airship Lost with 15 Men; Commander, Head of Marine Airship Division, and Baron von Maltzahn Drowned," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1913.
- ⁵⁵ Special Cable to *The New York Times*, "The Value of the Zeppelin Airships as Instruments of War has not been affected by the loss of the L-1 off Heligoland," *The New York Times*, September 13, 1913.
- ⁵⁶ Robinson, *The Zeppelin in Combat*, 153-226.
- ⁵⁷ Erik Lawson and Jane Lawson, *The First Air Campaign, August 1914-November 1918* (Cambridge, Da Capo Press, 1996), 79–80.
- ⁵⁸ Herb Morrison, *Excerpts from Audio Recording of Radio Report on the Hindenburg Disaster*, May 6, 1937, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness/html.php?section=5>.
- ⁵⁹ Dan, Vergano, n.d., "100 Years in the Air." *USA Today*, n.d., MAS Ultra - School Edition, EBSCOhost, accessed November 4, 2016.

Contributors

ALICIA MAYEN is a senior in History Education. She wrote "The Effects of Collegiate Gay Straight Alliances in the 1980s and 1990s" for Dr. Hale Yilmaz's History 392 class in Fall 2016. She was a co-recipient of the history department's Edward J. O'Day Paper Prize for the best undergraduate student paper in 2016-2017.

BRYAN JENKS is a senior in History with a minor in German. He wrote "Students in the Carbondale, Illinois Civil Rights Movement" for Dr. Joseph Sramek's History 392 class in Spring 2016. He was a co-recipient of the history department's Edward J. O'Day Paper Prize for the best undergraduate student paper in 2016-2017.

COLEMAN FITCH is a senior in History and Creative Writing. He wrote "The Crisis of Legitimacy: Resistance, Unity, and the Stamp Act of 1765, 1763-1766" for Dr. Jo Ann Argersinger's HIST 392 class in Spring 2016.

JESSE HINDS is a senior in History. He wrote "Freedom Summer: Going South for Social Justice" for Dr. Hale Yilmaz's History 392 class in Fall 2016.

MARGARET MCKINNEY graduated with a B.A. in History in December 2016. She wrote "The Ghetto Brothers: Reconciliation, Music, and the Brokerage of Peace among Bronx Street Gangs in the 1970s" for a directed reading class with Dr. José Najar in Fall 2016.

MARC MERCADO is a senior in History. He wrote "The Rise and Fall of Lighter-Than-Air Aircraft, 1783-1937" for Dr. Jonathan Bean's History 392 class in Fall 2016.

