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From the President



The Torch tradition is strong and deep. I take the helm of our organization with a great deal of trust in the solid foundation built by a long line of extraordinary, dedicated leaders. At the same time, to assure a future as bright as our past, we must make some changes; Torch will benefit from the rapid growth in our world's technology. I am being pulled into the future flanked by forward-thinking leaders like former IATC President Stephen Toy and President-Elect Charles Carlson.

As we say thanks to Jimmy and Gale Strickland for 16 years of fine service, we welcome Liz Garrett and Connie Long who will serve us well into the future. They plan a new website and data management system providing easy access to IATC resources; the ability to search for members, clubs, or

current information; individual club pages for posting local information and photos; a central calendar; and much more. You will be notified when the new site is up; Liz and Connie will schedule training in its use at your convenience.

Some things will not change. The heart of the Torch experience remains the **Torch Paper**. In your local Torch Club you have enjoyed a broad range of papers. *The Torch* broadens our Torch experience beyond the local club. The Editorial Advisory Committee is fortunate to evaluate many high-quality papers for inclusion. I hope you will submit your papers, and enjoy this edition of our *Torch* magazine.

—Edward B. Latimer, IATC President

Gold & Silver Torch Awards

At our annual convention, special Gold and Silver Torch Awards may be given to individual members for truly outstanding service, through nomination by their local clubs, submitted in advance through the Awards Chairman.

Gold Award

The Gold Torch Award honors members who have served Torch at the local, regional, and—most importantly—the International level. To qualify for this award, the nominee must have been a Torch member for at least 10 years. In any one year, the number of Gold Torch Awards may not exceed 0.1% (rounded to the nearest whole number) of the membership of the International Association of Torch Clubs (i.e., three awards for membership of 2,500 to 3,499).

Silver Award

The Silver Torch Award recognizes members who have served in an exemplary manner at the local club level. To qualify for the Silver Torch Award, the nominee must have been a member for at least 5 years. In a given year, the number of Silver Torch Awards nominees by a local club may not exceed one for each 25 members or portion thereof.

Nominations for both Gold and Silver awards should be sent by March 31, 2011 to Charles E. Carlson at IATC, 11712C Jefferson Ave #246, Newport News, VA 23606 with copies to your regional director.

The United States Vice Presidency: Its History and Hard Times

The 2010 Paxton Paper

This often-neglected executive position is assuming more importance today.

By Barton C. Shaw



About the Author

Barton C. Shaw, Professor of History at Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA, received his AB degree from Elon College, his MA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and his PhD from Emory University. His book, *The Wool-Hat Boys: Georgia's Populist Party*, won the 1985 Frederick Jackson Turner Award of the Organization of American Historians. More recently, with Paul A. Cimballa, he edited *Making a New South: Race, Leadership, and Community after the Civil War* (2007). The recipient of a Ford Foundation Fellowship, Shaw has served as Fulbright Senior Lecturer in American Studies at the University of Sheffield (UK). He has also been a winner of the Cedar Crest College Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Presented to the Lehigh Valley Torch Club on April 7, 2009 and delivered as the Paxton Award Paper on June 26, 2010 at the IATC Convention in Youngstown, Ohio.



“Once upon a time, there were two brothers. One ran away to sea, and the other became vice president of the United States. Neither was ever heard from again.” Thus Thomas Marshall, vice president under Woodrow Wilson,

described the vice presidency. Other VPs have expressed similar scorn. In 1793 John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail: “My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the Invention of Man contrived or his Imagination conceived...” Theodore Roosevelt said of the vice presidency: “It is not a stepping stone to anything except oblivion.” John Nance Garner remarked: “The Vice Presidency is not worth a pitcher of warm spit.” Richard Nixon said: “The vice presidency is a... [job for] losers.” As for Dan Quayle, he noted: “The job is just awkward, an awkward job.” Back in 1839 when it was suggested that he run for vice president, Senator Daniel Webster refused, saying: “I do not propose to be buried until I am dead.” Nevertheless, many powerful men and a few women have sought the position. Perhaps they remembered something else that John Adams wrote: “I am vice president. In this I am nothing, but I may be everything.”¹

In seeking to explain why Dan Quayle called the job awkward, one should go back to the Constitutional Convention, whose records gave the vice presidency low priority. While some of the framers called for a vice president, no one could figure out what the vice president was to do, and another faction opposed such an empty office. If the president were to die, some other officer—perhaps the head of the Senate—could take over the

president’s duties until a new president was elected. Out of this debate came an odd compromise. One person would hold two offices: the position of Vice President of the United States, which possessed no constitutional powers, and the position of President of the Senate, which possessed a few powers such as breaking tie votes. Like the president, the vice president would be elected by the Electoral College. But unlike the president, the vice president would have a foot in two branches of government: the executive branch and the legislative branch.²

The Constitution noted that the vice president could suddenly acquire great power. If the president were to be removed from office, or die, or resign, the vice president was to take over the powers of the president. The Constitution was fuzzy about whether the vice president was also to gain the office of president, or merely serve as an acting president of the United States. A larger question—like a ticking bomb—was how the vice president would assume presidential duties if the president were to become incapacitated. On this question, the Constitution was silent.

Early Problems

When John Adams was elected as the first vice president he, like Washington, had to invent his office, but unlike Washington, he made quite a mess of it. Early in his vice presidency, Adams became obsessed with

Washington's title. He recoiled at the suggestion that the executive be called "Mr. President," noting sarcastically that the heads of fire companies were usually called presidents. Adams demanded a grand title such as "His Highness" or, better yet, "His Most Benign Highness." Members of the Senate, not to mention President Washington, soon grew weary of the debate, but Adams would not give it up. In the end, the Senate ignored Adams's advice and designated the executive as "the President of the United States"—or "Mr. President." This debate did little to lend stature to the vice presidency. As Adams became the butt of jokes, one senator suggested that the plump little vice president be referred to as "His Rotundity." The unhappy result of this unhappy episode was that Washington seldom asked for Adams's opinion about matters of state and rarely invited him to Cabinet meetings.³

Eight years of Adams' overbearing personality did considerable damage to the vice presidency. After he left office, the Senate began to draw up limiting rules. Rule XIX, still in force today, made clear that only senators and, under unusual circumstances, former presidents of the United States might speak on the floor of the Senate. The vice president, even in his capacity as president of the Senate, could not normally discuss motions under consideration or do anything that might influence legislation. He was only to preside. Unless he obtained the permission of the Senate, he could comment on nothing except parliamentary procedure.⁴ Thanks to Rule XIX, modern vice presidents seldom bother to preside over the Senate, appearing only if there is a chance of a tie vote. Most presidents *pro tem*, usually powerful senators, don't want to waste their time as the designated leader of the Senate when

*The death of President
William Henry
Harrison in 1841
brought the first
constitutional crisis
involving the vice
presidency.*

the vice president is absent. So, who presides? Usually the job falls to junior members of the majority party, giving them experience in the rules of the Senate.

Though the vice presidency had not enjoyed a good beginning under Adams, the situation became even worse in 1804 when Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson's vice president, killed former Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton in a duel in response to a perceived insult. Although Burr's career was ruined, he was never prosecuted for his act. Subsequent vice presidents seldom gained the kind of attention directed at Burr but lived in a kind of limbo, uninvited to Cabinet meetings and forced to sit in virtual silence as the Senate conducted business. Officiating over the Senate could even be dangerous. One observer likened the sometimes riotous Congress to a "beer garden," and Vice President Martin Van Buren presided with several pistols near at hand.

Crisis Brings Change

The death of President William Henry Harrison in 1841 brought the first constitutional crisis involving the vice presidency. Although it was clear that his vice president, John Tyler, would take up the late president's duties, it wasn't so clear in the 1840s that Tyler would be the President of the United

States. The Constitution says that "in case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and duties of the said Office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President..." But what devolves on the vice president: "the Powers and duties of the said Office," or the "said Office"? Untroubled by this ambiguity, Tyler simply announced that he was President of the United States and not a kind of acting president. To make sure that people understood his position, he returned unopened any mail addressed to him as Acting President of the United States. Tyler's critics gave him a new title: "His Accidency." Nevertheless, all later vice presidents, when confronted with the death of a president, have regarded themselves as president.⁵ Tyler's administration is also notable for an incident in 1843 that raised a serious question of succession. Tyler, along with dozens of other dignitaries, boarded the warship *U. S. S. Princeton* for a cruise on the Potomac River to witness the firing of a new naval gun called the Peace Maker. After the great weapon was discharged twice, the guests went below deck for refreshments. A little later, when the Secretary of the Navy apparently asked that the gun be fired again, many guests returned to the deck while Tyler remained below to hear his son-in-law sing—a decision that may have saved his life. The Peace Maker exploded, killing six people, including the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy. Twenty other people were injured.⁶ What would have happened had Tyler been killed? In Article II, section 1, the Constitution gave Congress the power to say who is to act as president if the president and vice president were to die. Then in 1792, Congress passed a presidential succession act, giving the responsibility to the President *pro tempore* of the

Senate, followed by the Speaker of the House. The act did not address the possibility that the president, the vice president, and both legislative leaders might all die—a possibility had they been aboard the *Princeton*.

Succession Reform

It was not until 1886 that Congress rethought the order of presidential succession. It enacted legislation that removed the President *pro tem* of the Senate and the Speaker of the House from the order of succession. Instead it mandated that presidential succession would now move through the Cabinet, starting with the Secretary of State and then on to others in the order their department was established. In 1947, Congress passed a new succession bill returning the President *pro tem* of the Senate and the Speaker of the House to the order of succession, following the vice president and preceding the Cabinet. Congress decided, however, that the Speaker of the House should precede the President *pro tem* of the Senate.

Woodrow Wilson's deadly stroke in 1919 precipitated another constitutional crisis involving the vice presidency. When told that the president might die at any moment, Wilson's vice president, Thomas Marshall, became catatonic. But from a constitutional point of view, Marshall's problems were just beginning. Wilson did not die. Instead he remained alive, paralyzed on one side of his body, sometimes irrational, and initially suffering from a very limited attention span. If there was ever an occasion when a president could not carry out the "powers and duties" of his office, it had arrived. Yet Marshall chose to do nothing, perhaps out of lack of confidence. In addition, the Constitution simply did not say how, in such a situation, a vice president was to take over the presidency.

Remarkably, Wilson managed to live to the end of his term.⁷

Growing Power of the Office

It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the vice presidency began to gain stature and at least some influence. Presidents Warren G. Harding and Franklin Roosevelt ended the long practice of not inviting vice presidents to Cabinet meetings. Still, FDR retained an old-fashioned habit of keeping the vice president in the dark about some matters. Harry Truman knew nothing of the atomic bomb project until Roosevelt's death in 1945, when the Secretary of War told him about it in a private meeting following his swearing-in as president.⁸ It was Dwight D. Eisenhower who, more than anyone, began the process of empowering the vice presidency. Although he often betrayed little respect for his own vice president, Richard Nixon, even telling a friend that the problem with Nixon was that he never demonstrated any growth, he nevertheless allowed Nixon to represent the United States overseas on trips that were marked by celebrated moments.⁹ Nixon visited the Soviet Union in 1959, where he took part in the famous "kitchen debate" with Premier Nikita Khrushchev. A year earlier, when Nixon was on a state visit to Venezuela, his motorcade was attacked by a mob. Subsequent presidents have often sent vice presidents on similar overseas missions. Apparently Eisenhower empowered Nixon primarily in view of the president's medical problems, including a heart attack and a minor stroke, exacerbated by a heavy smoking habit. Also, as a military man, he was probably uncomfortable with ambiguity in any chain of command. So, after consulting with the attorney general, he did something that was not provided for in the Constitution. He wrote a letter to

Many believe that Cheney, especially in his first term, was the most influential vice president in American history. Much is yet to be told about the Cheney years, but ...we now know that Bush gave Cheney carte blanche to attend the meetings of any committee in the executive branch.

Richard Nixon declaring that if Eisenhower were to become incapacitated, he would decide if the powers of the presidency should be transferred to Nixon. If Ike were unconscious, Nixon would decide. Finally, if Eisenhower recovered, he would determine when he was well enough to take back his duties.¹⁰

John Kennedy's assassination in 1963 awakened many people to the problems of presidential succession. The result was the Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in February 1967, which begins by explaining that if the president dies, resigns, or is removed from office, "The Vice President shall become President." Thus the precedent set by John Tyler in 1841 was clearly written into the Constitution. The amendment then states that if a vacancy occurs in the office of the vice president: the president will nominate a vice president who will begin to serve after confirmation by a majority of the members of the Senate and the House. This has happened

twice. After Spiro Agnew resigned in 1973, Nixon appointed Gerald Ford vice president; and when Nixon resigned in 1974, Ford appointed Nelson Rockefeller vice president. The Twenty-fifth Amendment also makes clear that if the president believes he is unable to carry out his duties, all he must do is send a letter to that effect to the President *pro tem* of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, and the powers of the presidency will be taken over by the vice president. Under these circumstances, the vice president's title is "Acting President." The president regains his powers by simply writing a letter to those two legislative leaders declaring he is able to carry out his duties. This provision has been used three times. Ronald Reagan transferred power to Vice President George H. W. Bush while he was having minor surgery, and twice George W. Bush transferred power to his vice president, Richard Cheney, again while undergoing minor surgery.

The amendment also deals with such exigencies as a president who was unconscious and unable to send the letter giving up his powers, or worse still, had his judgment impaired by mental illness. In such a situation the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet, or the vice president and some other body appointed by Congress (for example, a panel of physicians), could write to the President *pro tem* of the Senate and the Speaker of the House declaring the president unable to carry out his duties. At this point, the vice president would "immediately" assume the duties of the president. His title would be "Acting President." Afterward, whenever the president believes he is again able to carry out his duties, he need only write to the two leaders of Congress that he is well and he would resume his duties. If the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet

(or some other body created by Congress) declares the president still unfit to carry out his duties, Congress will settle the matter. Within twenty-one days, it must, by a two-thirds vote in both houses, decide that the president is unable to carry out his duties. Otherwise, the president will "resume the powers and duties of his office." The closest we have come to any of this occurred in 1981 when Ronald Reagan, seriously wounded by John Hinckley, clearly could not carry out his duties. His aides and some of his cabinet members, in consultation with Vice President George H. W. Bush, briefly discussed the advisability of invoking the Twenty-fifth Amendment. In the end, they decided against declaring Bush acting president, fearing that such a decision would unnecessarily alarm the public.¹¹

Current Expansion of Duties

Over the years, the modern vice president has gained additional powers. In 1949, Congress made the VP a member of the National Security Council. In addition, the vice president is now a member of the Domestic Council and chairs the board of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. We are at a point at which it would be unthinkable that the vice president would not be invited to Cabinet meetings. In 1974, the vice president gained an official residence: a mansion at the United States Naval Observatory in Washington.¹² Recent presidents have shown a tendency to offer their vice presidents powers beyond those granted by the Constitution or by statute. This was especially true in the case of George W. Bush and his vice president, Richard Cheney.¹³ Many believe that Cheney, especially in his first term, was the most influential vice president in American history. Much is yet to be told about

the Cheney years, but Dan Quayle reports that when he tried to share with Cheney the frustrations of the office, Cheney seemed unconcerned and cryptically said that he and Bush had worked out an understanding about his role. We now know that Bush gave Cheney *carte blanche* to attend the meetings of any committee in the executive branch. Cheney husbanded his resources. Little concerned with education, he was very concerned with national security, energy, and the economy. On such issues it appears that he was Bush's principal adviser, though they sometimes disagreed. If the Washington rumors are true, Cheney will say in his forthcoming memoir that he steadily lost influence during Bush's second term. In the last days of the Bush administration, Cheney was apparently livid when Bush refused to pardon I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, one of Cheney's closest aides, who was convicted of obstruction of justice and perjury in the Valerie Plame case.¹⁴ Scholars will be working for decades on the Bush-Cheney relationship.

What of Joe Biden? When Barack Obama asked Biden to run for vice president, he said: "I want you to view this as the capstone of your career." Biden, knowing the history of the vice presidency, replied: "And not the tombstone." Like Cheney, he has been given power to attend all White House meetings. In the mornings, he is always at the president's briefings on the economy and national security. Obama values his candor and his substantial knowledge of foreign affairs, though he is probably less charmed by Biden's occasional verbal gaffes. Lacking the power that Cheney once wielded, Biden is just one of many men and women to whom Obama turns for advice.¹⁵

This paper began with a list of quotes—some snide, some anguished

—about the vice presidency. It seems clear, however, that if early vice presidents were to return from the grave, they would be astonished at the power and prestige of the contemporary office. Nevertheless, much of that power and prestige still derives from the good favor of the president. Indeed, most vice presidents, albeit significantly empowered, still feel as if they live in a sort of limbo. Dan Quayle said it best: “The job is just awkward, an awkward job.”

Notes

1. Famous and not-so-famous quotes about the vice presidency can be found in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “Is the Vice Presidency Necessary?,” *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1974, 37-44; Donald Young, *American Roulette: The History & Dilemma of the Vice Presidency* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), 5-10; Jules Witcover, *Very Strange Bedfellows: The Short and Unhappy Marriage of Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 237; “The Vice presidency,” <http://spot.colorado.edu/~mcguire/VPQUOTE.html> [accessed July 27, 2009].

2. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist*, ed. Jacob E. Cooke (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961) 461-462; James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. Adrienne Koch (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966) 596-597.

3. David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 404-408; Page Smith, *John Adams* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), 2: 750-758.

4. For the text of Rule XIX, see United States Senate, Committee on

Rules & Administration—Rules of the Senate, <http://rules.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=RuleXIX> [accessed July 27, 2009].

5. Norma Lois Peterson, *The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison and John Tyler* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 45-50.

6. R. Robert Seager II, *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John and Julia Gardiner Tyler* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), 204-206.

7. Gene Smith, *When the Cheering Stopped: The Last Years of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: William Morrow, 1964).

8. Harry Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955), 1: 9-10.

9. Fawn M. Brodie, *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 112, 247, 352.

10. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 2:440.

11. Larry Speakes, *Speaking Out: The Reagan Presidency from Inside the White House* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 9-11.

12. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/vp-residence> [accessed July 17, 2009.]

13. Barton Gellman, *Angler: The Cheney Vice Presidency* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008).

14. Barton Gellman, “Cheney Uncloaks His Frustrations with Bush,” *Washington Post*, August 13, 2009; Massimo Calabresi and Michael Weisskopf, “Inside Bush and Cheney’s Final Days,” *Time*, July 24, 2009.

15. Mark Leibovich, “Speaking Freely, Sometimes, Biden Finds Influential Role,” *New York Times*, March 29, 1009.

Further Reading

For an excellent introduction to the vice presidency, see “Vice President of the United States (Presidents of the Senate).” United States Senate. [http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Vice President.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Vice%20President.htm). For a popular treatment of the history of the vice presidency, see Steve Tally, *Bland Ambition: From Adams to Quayle—The Cranks, Criminals, Tax Cheats, and Golfers Who Made It to Vice President* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992). For more scholarly examinations, see Allan P. Sindler, *Unchosen Presidents: The Vice President and Other Frustrations of Presidential Succession* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Joel K. Goldstein, *The Modern American Vice Presidency: The Transformation of a Political Institution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Jody C. Baumgartner, *The American Vice Presidency Reconsidered* (Westport: Praeger, 2006); Philip Abbott, *Accidental Presidents: Death, Assassination, Resignation, and Democratic Succession* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Monographs on Vice President Cheney include Bruce P. Montgomery, *Richard B. Cheney and the Rise of the Imperial Vice Presidency* (Westport: Praeger, 2009), and Shirley Anne Warshaw, *The Co-Presidency of Bush and Cheney* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). The White House website includes a biographical sketch of Joe Biden at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/vice-president-biden> [accessed June 29, 2010]. For a recent proposal that the vice presidency be abolished, see Matthew Yglesias, “End the Vice Presidency,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2009, 64.

Greece a number of years ago. Surrounding me are the low hills of Argos, and far below me is the orchestra, the circular acting area about fifty feet in diameter. Rows and rows of tiered stone seats (I count sixty-five rows as I climb to the topmost one) are arranged in a perfect half circle. The guide lights a match as she stands in the center of the orchestra; I can hear the match strike in the top row. She chatters on while I imagine Oedipus or Orestes striding across the acting area. For I am sitting in the theatre at Epidauros, built in the fourth century B.C. On this hollowed-out hillside, some twelve thousand people view each performance of the Greek plays produced here during the summer months. The power of the ancient ritual of Dionysus is still present.

All of what takes place in the performance is completely open. The audience in the theatre is thus confronted with the principal symbols, the ultimate foundations of its world—the social and the heavenly order, the city, the palace, the temple, the abode of the mysterious gods. The Greek dramatist saw the heroes and heroines as directly related, connected with the community, but also with the world of Nature and the arena of the gods. The Greek audience attended the theatre, as all participants do, to be instructed and delighted, but at the same time to experience communion with the gods. The space of the theatre was filled with spirits who the Greeks believed influenced human action. All of the actions within the plays were an attempt to participate in the beings of the gods. And the deity central to this drama was the god in whose honor the theatres of Greece were named, the god Dionysus. In the center of the dramatic space was an altar on which incense burned to this lord of the theatre.

Dionysus was the incarnate life force itself, generating awe and vitality. He was lord of fertility and growth as well as particularly the god of the dance. Dionysus personified the entire cycle of birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth

or resurrection. Dionysus also signified the entire spectrum of being — from divine (his most common manifestation) to human (as he appears in *The Bacchae* of Euripides) to nature (the vine) to bestial (the bull). The first record of a performance of drama is in 534 B.C. when the Athenian tyrant, Pisistratus, re-organized the festival of the Great Dionysia and established a contest for tragic plays. Thus instituted and supported by civil edict, the attendance at the plays was mandatory for the male citizens of Athens. In the sixth century, the poet Thespis, in taking his role as leader of the chorus, chose to impersonate Dionysus. This action is pivotal. Prior to that time, men told stories and called them epics. Now someone is impersonating a character and we have entered the dramatic. Since he is the first known actor, performers to this day are often called thespians. Once Thespis was set apart from the chorus, essentially creating a form of monologue, the next step was to add another actor. We now have dialogue, and with Sophocles contributing three actors, we have full-blown drama.

We now have moved from ritual to art, from religion to drama. But the religious is still deeply infused in the action of the drama. Not only does ritual continue to form the major structure of Greek plays, but also the participants, both actors and spectators, are exploring the forces that surround them and their awe toward and struggle with the great events of life: love, war, peace, freedom, justice, fate, and death. Thus the theatre is a space where the individuals within a community participate in moral dilemmas which sometimes lead to a purged catharsis and sometimes are irreconcilable. Much of our theatre today, as was true for the Greeks, is a crucible for experiencing ethical dilemmas and struggles.

Emergence of Drama in the Medieval Church

It was the Church, and specifically

its liturgy, the Mass, which provided both the seed and womb for medieval drama and its beginnings of Western drama. But with the major exceptions of the celebration of the Eucharist and that of baptism, worship in the Christian tradition was almost exclusively verbal from its beginnings through the Middle Ages.

The movement toward drama first took place in the introduction of stained glass windows to portray Biblical scenes. The purpose of the windows was not only based on aesthetic rationale to enhance worship, but still more so, pedagogical. The next step—what could be better teaching devices than the actual representation of events of Biblical history?

The earliest record of a written text in dialogue form is that of the tenth century *Quem quaeritis* trope from the Benedictine Abby of St. Gall in Switzerland. The trope (a turning), words added as embellishment and interpolation to the regular sung parts of the Mass, follows the Gospel record of the meeting of the Angel and the three women on Easter morning. The dialogue in Latin in the earliest manuscripts consists of a question and a reply:

Whom seek you in the tomb, O followers of Christ?

Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O Heaven-Dwellers.

He is not here, he has arisen as he said: go announce that he has arisen.⁵

From their beginnings in the tenth century through the twelfth century, such liturgical music dramas occurred in churches with the clergy in the acting roles reciting and chanting in Latin. But gradually, several changes took place. The most important was the location of the dramatic presentations which moved from choir to nave, from nave to churchyard, from churchyard to market place and street.

In the well-ordered life of the Middle Ages, the Biblical plays came under the sponsorship of the trade guilds, for these groups had both the finances and

personnel to undertake such a task. The guild plays, at their height from about 1300 to 1450, presented in chronological order the Biblical drama from Creation to Doomsday. Such plays, usually called mystery plays, could perhaps be more accurately called “Bible-histories.”

In a major town such as York, each guild presented a particular segment of the Biblical drama. Frequently, the particular guild would be responsible for an appropriate scene; for example, the shipwrights for the Building of the Ark, the goldsmiths for the Coming of the Magi, the bakers for the Last Supper, and the butchers for the Mortification of Christ. The drama was thus a lively vehicle to convey that the Christian commitment of the participants was integrally tied to their occupation.

The plays were frequently performed on pageants, crude wagons which were drawn through the street from one place to another. The effect, therefore, was that participants could—during the course of one day—experience the whole history of the world and, by standing in one location, see before them the places of Paradise, ancient Israel, and Jerusalem. Earth, heaven, hell—all of the cosmos was vividly before the audience. And all of this was conveyed through the ordinary bodies of fellow townspeople. Divine history was made incarnate through human form.

Mature Drama Embraces the Whole World

I am sitting in the new Globe Theatre along the Thames in London last summer. If the world is a stage, then this theatre and its original will be named the Globe simply because that is what they are. Shakespeare’s theatre attempted to be a microcosm of the world itself. Its flat open arena, with its large balcony and second smaller double balcony, was a mirror of the universe as perceived by the Renaissance audience and playwright—the divine presence, the court, and the people—three levels, separate yet often

intermingling. The canopy of the stage was brilliantly painted to represent the order of the heavenly bodies, and a trap in the floor led to an area known as the cellars or hell itself out of which “low” characters such as Falstaff or Malvolio would come forth. Shakespeare’s theatre demonstrated not only that all the world’s a stage but also that, in its symbolic form, his stage is all the world.

Modern Theater Celebrates the Mysterious within the Here and Now

Down our streets is a building. I sit down in Row G, Seats 3 and 4, I am put in the dark, the curtain rises, and before me is the stage: an illumined box with objects in it, floating in the darkness. The proscenium arch, the curtain, the fourth wall removed, and most of all the experience as an audience being boxed inside in the same space as the action—these specific characteristics of the modern theatre reflect the drama which is presented on the modern stage.

To look at a picture within a frame such as the proscenium stage is to encourage detachment, to observe the action with objectivity. The action is set apart in a magic box, separated from the audience by a world of darkness. Dramatists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as Ibsen and Chekhov, perceived the relationship of the stage to the world as a complete reversal of what the Greeks, the medieval audiences, and Shakespeare drew from this image. The emphasis is on the here and the now, the immediate and the direct. The narrowed focus is on the finite space and on immediate time. What you see is what is real. The stage is all the world there is.

But a number of contemporary playwrights, one of whom we will briefly explore, invite us to see within the here and now the presence of the mysterious and the unfathomable. Through their imagination, their breaking out of realism, the audience is granted glimpses of the transcendent.

I am sitting in a Broadway theatre. Total darkness. Silence. Within a circular spot of bright light in the center of the stage appears a young man completely dressed in chestnut brown. Ritualistically, majestically, he lifts a mask, a mask of great beauty and strength, and places it on his head. Human becomes horse and almost a god before our very eyes. A performance of Peter Shaffer’s play, *Equus*,⁶ written in 1973, is about to begin.

Central to the play are the horses played by actors who stand upright on four-inch-high coiled springs set on metal horse shoes and whose whole body of the horse extends invisibly behind them. The airy stylized masks of intertwined leather and silver wire convey hieratic awe and beauty. Shaffer in his note with the play advised that “great care must also be taken that the masks are put on before the audience with very precise timing—the actors watching each other, so that the masking has an exact and ceremonial effect” (p.17). When the actors mask, they are transformed into wondrous creatures, the stage now charged with mystery and awe. The slightest turn of the neck evokes ballet-like softness; the sound of all the metal hooves on the wooden stage conveys terror indescribable. In the horses are found strength, ecstasy, power, and obedience, or, as Shaffer himself described them, the horses are “an ambiguous presence—both conquering and submissive, both judging and accusing on the one hand and accepting and gentle on the other.”⁷

Religion and sensuality merge. Alan, the young boy who killed six horses by stabbing them in their eyes and yet worships the horse, confesses: “They sort of pulled me. I couldn’t take my eyes off them. Just to watch their skins. The way their necks twist, and sweat shines in the folds...” (p.56). Immediately following, he describes the white horse of *Revelation* 19: “His eyes were as flames of fire, and he had a name written that no one knew but

himself...” (p.56). Instead of the traditional *Agnus Dei*, Shaffer boldly proposes *Equus Dei*. One writer puts the matter directly: “Equus is not really a horse, however—neither the boy’s favorite mount named Nugget nor the horsiness of horsehood. Equus is the image of God.”⁸

At the end of Act I, Alan’s psychologist asks him to perform the ritual of riding Equus naked in the wind and the mist. He mimes a symbolic ride on his god, echoes of Christ’s ride on the white horse in *Revelation*. In passionate joy and agony, Alan experiences not only sexual climax but also union with Equus:

I want to be *in* you.

I want to BE in you forever and ever!

Now! Equus, I love you!

Now!

Bear me away!

Make us One Person! (p.85)

This frantic ride is a soul possessed. Combined with intense body language, Alan portrays grace out of desperation. The play is suffused with the meaning of religious passion which the psychologist hungers for and the boy possesses in full measure. Alan has been invaded by the Holy, and in one of the most powerful moments in the play, the psychologist confesses his jealousy: “Don’t you see? That’s the Accusation! That’s what his stare has been saying to me all this time. ‘*At least I galloped! When did you?*’” (p.94).

That direct question penetrates each member of the audience.

Religious Dimensions of Living our Lives as Drama

Our deepest commitments determine the way we live our lives as drama. Am I playing a role in a tragedy, a comedy, a farce, a melodrama? The answer to the fundamental question “Of what kind of drama am I a part?” reveals our deepest convictions. A series of questions from the world of drama are essentially religious, for they are root inquiries and

each response we give will be answers to fundamental questions: What is my role in life? Most of all, how shall I act? Such a series might include:

Is there an author? A director?

What is the scope of the stage?

Is there a plot?

Is there a script? Or, is it mainly improvisation?

Do I (and others) wear masks?

Do costumes reveal and/or hide the inner person?

What is the role of other characters?—lead characters, supporting roles, bit parts, walk-ons?

Who is the audience? Are they spectators or participants?

From where do I enter? And what is the significance of the exit?

Is there anything off-stage?

Are there reviews? If so, who writes them?

Thus, from the amphitheatres of Greece in the fifth century B.C. and on through the centuries, we have made our journey. The *theatron* has been the place of seeing one’s self, others, the world, and often the haunting presence of the gods and the ambiguous working of the ways of God. In its finite space, the particular actions of human beings and the infinite moments of the eternal are seen in action. Religion and drama continue to be in tension, to intersect, and to engage in interaction and interplay with one another. And the roots of these relationships are the connections between drama and life itself. Life may be a cabaret, my friends, but it certainly is a drama.

Notes

1. Tertullian, quoted in Phillip Coggin, *The Uses of Drama* (New York: George Braziller, 1956), 34.

2. Sir John Harington, quoted in J. Dover Wilson, “The Puritan Attack Upon the Stage,” in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Volume VI, eds. A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller (New York:

G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1910), 424.

3. Psalm 145:4.

4. Brooks Atkinson, *Broadway* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 418.

5. O .B. Hardison, *Christian Rites and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 178-179.

6. All quotations are taken from Peter Shaffer, *Equus* (New York: Avon Books, 1974).

7. Shaffer, “*Equus* : Peter Shaffer Interprets Its Ritual,” *Vogue*, 175 (February 1975) :136.

8. Samuel Terrien, “*Equus*: Human Conflicts and the Trinity,” *Christian Century*, 94 (May 18, 1977) :472.

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Live Theater: Changing Lives

Theater's benefits are abundant and unique when the performance is live.

By Barbara M. Allen



About the Author

Barbara Allen has had careers in both television and public relations. Her television work includes ten years as a daily interviewer at the NBC-TV affiliate in Lancaster, PA, and two years with the public television station in Harrisburg as the writer/producer/host of a weekly series. She also served as a hospital public relations director and then as a free-lance health care writer/consultant, was associate professor of communication arts at Elizabethtown College, and is currently the creator, writer and content manager of a website for a physicians' group in south central Pennsylvania. In her spare time, she has played a variety of leading roles at the Fulton Theatre, Lancaster. Ms. Allen received her AB degree from Mount Holyoke College in speech and drama and her MS degree from Syracuse University in television. But her passion is, and always has been, live theater—on the stage and in the audience.

Presented to the Lancaster Torch Club on April 6, 2009.

.....

Live theater changes lives—of the actors, the audience, and the community.

A woman writes,
I am the mother of J, a Youtheatre troupe member. At the very beginning, the Youtheatre appealed to me because of the emphasis on the participation of at-risk and disabled youth. They weren't

looking for the golden children...., [but] for kids with challenges. Kids that struggled. Kids that didn't fit in. They were looking for my daughter, J. Life has been hard for J. In addition to...learning disabilit[ies,] [t]emperature or atmosphere changes make her cough... [with] spasms which can easily cause her to throw up.... Until sixth grade, J was developmentally about two years behind her friends.... [When] they started to grow up and she didn't [she was] diagnosed with Turner's Syndrome[, a lack of the estrogen] girls need... to grow up. No wonder she's stuck at 13. And then came Youtheatre.¹

Youtheatre vibrates at the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. At a White House ceremony in November 2008 Director Barry Kornhauser was honored with the "Coming Up Taller" award of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, recognizing the program as one of the top arts education initiatives in the country. A five-week summer theater experience for teens, Youtheatre combines theater with the lives of its participants, who learn how the arts can help them to grow personally and socially as humans. These young people, often labeled disadvantaged, disabled, or at-risk, might be autistic, hard of hearing or deaf; some have other physical disabilities, abusive parents, or severe emotional problems; and some are homeless or have been in trouble with the law. Students in Youtheatre take a story idea

and flesh it out with their own experiences. For example, they compared the story of the two lost children in *Hansel and Gretel* to life in foster care. One of the young actors wrote music for the production.²

But it's not just at-risk children who benefit from theatre. Every child who has an opportunity in school to be in a play, write a song, do a dance or play an instrument in a musical gains huge benefits from creating a theatre production together. As a supporter of school drama programs wrote in a letter to the Lancaster *Intelligencer Journal*, "The value behind drama lies in the movement, words and gestures that are required of an individual to engage in becoming someone else and to experience another world, time and place. This gives the curriculum a richness and dimension that only drama can bring. It is the building of community, of working together to create something from lines on a page. It translates to confidence in public speaking, in communicating with peers and adults and in learning social skills. It translates to graduates who are eager, unafraid and confident."³

Live theater changes lives.

The College Entrance Examination Board reported that students involved in drama in the first half of the past decade scored 65.5 points higher on the verbal component and 35.5 points higher in the math component of the SAT than their peers with no arts coursework or involvement. Students who took courses in drama study or appreciation scored 55 points higher on verbal and 26 points higher on math than their non-arts classmates. In 2005, students

involved in drama performance outscored the national average SAT score by 35 points on the verbal portion and 24 points on the math section.⁴ Beth Cornell, fine arts and humanities adviser to the Pennsylvania Department of Education adds, “When you look at these SAT scores, the data tell us that children who study theater score higher on everything. That’s because you have to think, move, speak, write, and read. You have to do *all* of those things in theater.”⁵

Acting in live theater can be a more powerful learning experience than semesters of psychology. Acting is so much more than memorizing and reciting lines. It’s researching the character’s background, motives, and personality. It’s figuring out what the character is thinking, doing and believing even before the story in the script begins. It’s getting into a character’s skin. And then, it’s discovering how your character relates to the other actors’ characters. It’s listening, observing, and reacting. Acting also requires the actor to be ready to improvise when something goes awry on the stage—a piece of scenery that falls noisily to the floor, a fellow actor who enters late or forgets lines. The actor must learn to cover the fear inside by the poise outside. An actor’s improvising sharpens the mind.⁶

Live theater changes lives.

But it’s not just children and young adults who are benefiting. Senior theater groups are booming, with more than 200 in operation across the United States, and others starting up. As people live longer, they’re often looking for ways to add quality to their lives. Many are eager to feel needed. Bonnie Vorenberg, founder of Portland’s Northwest Senior Theatre, says that although no studies have formally evaluated the benefits of senior theater, her informal surveys find that

*“Do human beings ever
realize life while they
live it, every, every
minute?”*

participants gain mentally, physically, and socially. She describes theater involvement as better than a trip to the doctor. “You may not feel well before a performance,” she writes, “but you’ll be high afterwards... [S]eniors [may] have some kind of health condition that requires several medications or doctor visits. Being in a show forces them to look beyond their own problems. Suddenly, learning lines becomes more important, and a more frequent focus of the conversation than arthritis or other complaints. And hearing an audience applaud, of course, is a great thrill and morale booster.”⁷

And what about the audience? A live audience changes the energy of the actors. The lines don’t change. The lights and sets don’t change. The props don’t change. But every afternoon or evening, the audience changes, the energy that the actors *feed* on changes, and the audience is as much a part of the experience as the actor. As prominent Australian actor/director Sue Rider observes,

Picture a group of people thrown together at random—all ages and experiences—as dissimilar a group as you could find. Nothing in common. Nothing to say to each other. Then something happens. The lights fade and come up again in changing, unexpected combinations. Music pulses like a heartbeat and, while the minds track events and their implications, images burn on the retina—a mother wrestling with her religious faith in the face of

a seemingly indifferent friend, a young girl dancing to her death, a young man having the courage to break down in tears.”⁸

In a fine performance, the actors reach out and grab you. When this happens it feels as if the performance is just *to* you, *for* you, and *with* you that night in that theater. A truly fine performance allows you to release emotions that have been pent up. It lets you laugh out loud, sometimes a big belly laugh that is healthy for you. Or it lets you shed a few tears, also healthy for you. For the length of the performance, the audience has been as one body, hearing, seeing, wondering, whispering, and sometimes recognizing themselves or someone they know. And then they leave, all of them affected in some way. Maybe they’ve learned something they didn’t know before, or just relieved the depression or frustration they may have brought in with them. Or maybe the performance just elevated their pleasure in being part of the world of imagination and creativity.

Live theater changes lives.

Nothing can beat live theater for entertainment. A film can play to an empty house and still be the same film, a hollow display of technology and special effects, but the human touch of actors performing live in front of you, the passion of all those involved with the performance, the grandeur of the stage and the theater itself can make a visit to the theater something we should do more often. A theater changes the community outside its walls. By patronizing nearby merchants, theatergoers boost the local economy. Restaurants and local shops enjoy increased business, while the popularity of the theater district attracts corporations to the area and encourages suburbanites—including affluent performing arts devotees—to

move to the city. Conventions are happy to have live entertainment to recommend to their guests, while babysitters, parking services, wig and costume shops, and even lumber yards enjoy the extra income generated by downtown theaters. Live theatre also benefits a community socially and culturally, bringing together people of various racial and economic backgrounds as they experience an afternoon or evening of theater, including diverse cultural productions like *West Side Story*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Great White Hope*, or *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Our cultural life is enhanced, notes Canadian Lesley English, by the timeless expressions of the human spirit presented “by live actors for live audiences,” an experience not found in other media, where the audience is merely a passive consumer. “In spite of economic difficulties,” she concludes, “far smaller technical resources, and much less money than films and television [which can be edited and prefabricated without audience input], live theater must survive.”⁹

Live theater changes lives.

Live theater can bond the audience and actors together for a couple of hours of drama, nostalgia, or humor. It can also bond them together during a terrible, frightening experience. It was thirty years ago, and I was preparing to portray Mrs. Webb, mother of young Emily who dies in childbirth, in the final dress rehearsal at Lancaster’s Fulton Theatre for Thornton Wilder’s familiar American classic, *Our Town*. This beautifully written play should have been a wonderful time for all of us, except for something frightening and dangerous happening very close to us. It was the accident, the bubble we all feared might burst, the hydrogen bubble at nearby Three Mile Island, and the once unthinkable partial meltdown of

the reactor core. What was it like in Lancaster? People left town by the hundreds, maybe the thousands; families left with their photograph albums, their special keepsakes, and their children, including two of the three young boys in our play. The one who remained tried to play all three parts, sometimes emerging with part of one costume and part of another, sometimes with no shoes, often out of breath. But he gave it a valiant try, and the audience loved him. Downstairs, in the Green Room of the Fulton Theatre, frightened cast members listened on portable radios to the progress of the bubble. The *Lancaster New Era* had shown charts indicating the direction the radiation might spread, and guesses about the air currents that could carry it even farther.¹⁰ But the show *did* go on for ten performances—every matinee and every night. The audiences soaked up the life of the small town of Grover’s Corners, New Hampshire. And for a couple of hours it stilled their fears.

Near the end of *Our Town*, when Emily is allowed to come down from Heaven for a day, she observes the often troubled lives of the people in her town, and she asks the Stage Manager, “Do human beings ever realize life while they live it, *every, every* minute?” And the Stage Manager says, “No—the saints and poets maybe—they do some.”¹¹ I’d like to add three more groups to that list—the audiences, cast, and crew of *Our Town* at the Fulton Theatre. We realized life while we lived it, every, every minute. And we all survived together.

Live theater changes lives.

Regrettably, subsidies for the arts have been cut repeatedly since the 1980s as expenses for theater production companies rise. Light boards, sets, housing for visiting artists, royalties, orchestras, insurance,

advertising, programs all continue to cost more. The present economy is forcing theaters to reduce staff and cut productions all across our country. The recent \$50 million stimulus money to the National Endowment for the Arts has been challenged by critics who believe that these funds will not help create jobs.¹² Fortunately, however, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act requires that these funds be used to support the preservation of jobs in the nonprofit arts sector.¹³

According to *Artists in the Workforce*, there are two million trained, entrepreneurial working artists across the country who are assets to their communities. Artists constitute a sizeable class of workers, only slightly smaller than the total number of the 2.2 million active-duty and reserve personnel in the U.S. military.¹⁴ In addition to artists, many talented workers support arts institutions as accountants and booking agents, production staff such as stage managers, and artistic staff such as ballet masters and artist managers.

Americans for the Arts reports that nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences have been generating over \$166 billion in economic activity every year, supporting 5.7 million jobs, and returning nearly \$30 billion in government revenue every year. Every \$1 billion in spending by non-profit arts and culture organizations and their audiences results in almost 70,000 full-time jobs.¹⁵ In response to those who would criticize support of the arts, those numbers speak eloquently for themselves.

Moving from large numbers to just one, I return to J, the young girl with measurable memory deficits, whose cough-variant asthma caused her to throw up in school, the one who had no estrogen in her body due to Turner’s Syndrome, the one who was so different at 13, until she found Youtheatre.

According to her mother, the girl walked more than a mile to “work” at the theater for over a month, preparing for a final production that “was excellent. I was in awe of her performance but I was more in awe of the self-confidence being part of the theater group gave her. She walks with more self-assurance, speaks with more confidence and has a sense of pride she has never before experienced. When she went back to school several teachers asked what she did that had such an impact. Going outside of her comfort zone in the safe environment of the theater gave her strategies to go outside of her comfort zone in school... What she has learned [in Youtheatre] has given her confidence, allowed her to experience success, and provided a place to belong.¹⁶

If you love the richness of history, you can find it in the theater. If you love soul-stirring music and lyrics or toe-tapping music and dance that make you want to join in if you only knew how; or if stories of extreme adversity and great courage leave you feeling fuller, bigger, and better than when you came in, that’s what live theater is for. As our great American playwright Thornton Wilder said, “We live in what is, but we find a thousand ways not to face it. Great theater strengthens our faculty to face it.”¹⁷ For the sake of your community, for the sake of children like J, for your children, and their children, and for *your* sake, go. Go to the theater, because live theater changes lives. It can change yours.

Notes

1. Barry Kornhauser, Playwright in Residence and Director, Youtheatre, Fulton Theatre, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, interview by the author at the Fulton Theatre, November 2008. The mother and daughter’s identities are withheld to protect their privacy.

2. Jane Holahan, “Rave Review,”

Lancaster New Era, November 14, 2008.

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Murder by the Book

The Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot is but one example of the dangers of totalitarian ideology.

By J. Roger Brook



About the Author

John Roger Brook, born and educated in England, graduated in Medicine from the University of London in 1953 following service primarily in the Pacific Theater with the Cadet British Merchant Navy in WWII. After further training in obstetrics, he opened his practice in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1957, serving as Chief of Staff at Hotel Dieu Hospital from 1978 to 1982, and remaining on staff there on the Ethics Committee to the present time. Married twice, Roger has three children and three step-children, as well as eight grandchildren, living in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. He enjoys travel and political discussion.

Presented to the Torch Club of St. Catharines on January 9, 2008.



When most people encounter a problem, they research the issue and sometimes with the help of others come up with a solution. They apply this solution to the problem and make modifications as needed in response to changing circumstances or new revelations. Others, however, construct a political theory, often revolutionary, sometimes adopting a socio-religious doctrine which they attempt to apply to the problem. Too often, this approach appeals to fanatics who are unwilling or unable to adjust their doctrines in response to changing situations or new understanding of them. They ruthlessly enforce their erroneous philosophies at all costs, with no regard for human or economic ramifications. The events in

There is a dangerously thin line between belief and a fanatic conviction that tolerates no contradiction.

Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge's regime of the 1970s illustrate the consequences of fruitless enforcement of a predetermined doctrine on a nation, leading to its destruction through genocide, in a process I call "Murder by the Book." Constructive reform, by contrast, is a process requiring input from various stakeholders with differing points of view and expertise. If war is the failure of diplomacy, then revolution is the failure of reform. The tragedy of Cambodia illustrates the danger of accepting unproven doctrines, as the Khmer Rouge used the unquestioning nature of the Cambodian peasantry to indoctrinate them into their disastrous ideologies.

Cambodia's Rise and Fall

Cambodia is part of Southeast Asia, also home to Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. With a tropical and sub-tropical climate, the area boasts fertile fields interspersed by mountains which have kept people somewhat ethnically and linguistically distinct but still similar. Throughout the millennia, various groups have conquered and have been conquered. Boundaries have expanded and receded. But long periods of political and military stability combined with benign climate and fertility enabled the creation of prosperous societies. One such period was from 900 to 700 years

ago when the Khmer empire ruled over most of the region, becoming exceedingly wealthy under the rule of a succession of King Emperors, deemed demigods. Over about two centuries the people of this empire constructed the world's largest religious site, dedicated to a form of Hinduism, which consisted of huge stone temples scattered over many square miles. The largest, Angkor Wat, was about four times the area of the Vatican. Their enormous size demonstrates the huge amount of surplus wealth generated in the region over centuries of peace. Sadly, this empire was attacked and eventually destroyed by its neighbors. A period of climate change and a very prolonged drought may also have contributed to its demise. It was destroyed so completely as to be forgotten and lost for centuries.

In recent centuries Western nations, realizing the enormous real and potential wealth of the area, used their trading abilities and military power to subjugate and colonize — the British in India and Burma, the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, and the French in the rest of Southeast Asia, with the exception of Thailand. These colonizing cultures tended to supplement and exploit rather than complement and appreciate indigenous cultures. French colonists installed and enforced a French-language governmental infrastructure and educational system. Unfortunately, the widespread treatment of the indigenous people by the European colonists as racially and intellectually inferior caused deeply felt resentments among the colonized subjects, who were naturally proud of their own culture and its achievements. This resentment was probably greatest among the peasants, the majority of whom received little or

no benefit from the economic developments of colonization.

The War of 1914–1918 greatly weakened the colonial powers, giving rise to independence movements during the years before World War II. But in 1941, the French engineered an election, placing nineteen-year-old King Sihanouk on the Cambodian throne and, at the same time, the whole of Southeast Asia—the Philippines, Java, Sumatra, French Indochina, Thailand, and Burma—were invaded and controlled by the Japanese. Welcomed at first as liberators, the Japanese soon lost their popularity in the face of their harsh regime, as it became evident that their so called co-prosperity sphere was really only another form of colonialism.

Signs of Indigenous Rebellion

At the end of the Second World War, the European colonizers moved quickly back into their former colonies; into the political vacuum and chaos left by the defeated Japanese, to the great resentment and disappointment of the indigenous people. Whereas Britain conceded independence to India and to a separately-created Pakistan and the Dutch allowed the creation of Indonesia by relinquishing Java and Sumatra, the French stubbornly hung on in their colonies, relying on subservient local governments which were strongly challenged by indigenous communists and nationalists supported by both China and the Soviet Union. These communist forces decisively defeated the French in North Vietnam and then pushed south through the length of the country. The French were supported, at first, by United States observers starting in 1963 under President Kennedy. Under President Johnson, much larger contingents of American troops joined the battle, and soon the French withdrew and the Americans, with the South Vietnamese, carried on the war until it finally ended in 1973 with the withdrawal

of American troops and the establishment of a communist regime in all of Vietnam.

Over this period, things were different in Cambodia. By 1953, King Sihanouk decided he was strong enough to eject the French who were already weakened by their fighting in Vietnam. His success in this effort made Sihanouk vastly popular within Cambodia, and he abdicated so he could formally enter politics and be elected Prime Minister as Prince Sihanouk. During this period, many well-to-do students from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, resenting the barriers colonialism had imposed on their professional advancement, went to study in Europe, many becoming communists as well as intensely nationalistic. Eminent among these students was Saloth Sar (later known as Pol Pot) who became friendly with Ho Chi Minh.¹ He formed a party to develop a form of rural communism, convinced that Cambodia could only be restored to honor and prosperity by totally eradicating all aspects of French colonialism and culture, and by reverting to a self-sustaining rural economy physically and intellectually isolated from western influences in order to recreate the Khmer Empire's prosperity and power. The movement was also influenced by Mao Tse Tung's dictum that revolution required the destruction of one class by another.

The Rise of Pol Pot

Sar and his supporters created a monolithic party financed by China with all power concentrated at the top. So convinced of their policies and unwilling to brook any opposition, they were prepared to—and did—kill any of their members who deviated from their predetermined plan in any detail. They named their movement Khmer Rouge after their old successful Khmer Empire, moved back into Cambodia, and established camps in the remote

countryside, mostly in the mountainous areas among the rural people. The fledgling group convinced many of the uneducated mountain peasants of the correctness of their theories and ruthlessly eliminated any who disagreed. In a chilling parallel to the Hitler Youth program, they formed camps in which children were recruited and taught that their loyalty was solely to the party and not to their parents or any other organization. The naive minds of the children proved fertile ground for the reception of their dogma, as they were trained as soldiers, given guns, and became easily converted into ruthless killers. Sar, by now taking the name of Pol Pot, used this Nazi tactic with great effectiveness.

The traditional military machine of the new King Sihanouk's government proved ineffectual against the popular Khmer Rouge's guerilla tactics in remote areas of the country, in a situation similar to that in Afghanistan today. As Pol Pot's movement grew in influence, Sihanouk followed a course of neutrality between the United States and North Vietnam in what became known as the Vietnamese war. This was very difficult to do because the American Air Force was heavily bombing the eastern part of Cambodia and Laos to try to disrupt the Viet Cong supply lines which ran through both countries. Although the campaign failed to break the supply lines, it caused enormous damage to both Cambodia and Laos, with significant casualties among the Cambodian civilians and the Cambodian Royal Army. Discredited by these failures, Sihanouk was deposed in 1970 by General Lon Nol, who proved to be singularly corrupt and incompetent, and was rumored to make decisions guided by occult influences. Under his leadership the Cambodian Army suffered repeated defeats by the Khmer Rouge, reducing the morale of the Cambodian Army and civilians to a low ebb. If the enemy of my enemy was my

friend, then the time was ripe for Pol Pot.

Ruthless Imposition of Communism

Pol Pot's plan to convert Cambodia into an isolated, rural, communist state and totally remove all foreign influences was almost secondary to the fact that he represented change. In 1976, increasingly demoralized by Lon Nol's corrupt regime and unaware that they were the intended victims of the concentration and execution camps the Khmer Rouge would use to bring about this change, the urban population in Phnom Penh followed the Deputy Prime Minister's orders to capitulate to a Khmer Rouge attack without a fight. Within weeks of surrender, the entire population of a million people was forced out of Phnom Penh to labor in the countryside, in support of Pol Pot's reasoning that a fertile country only needed the hard labor of all its people to be prosperous and free of foreign culture and influence. The young, old, babies, sick, infirm, were marched out of the city with no medicines, no food, and no infrastructure to receive them. The Khmer Rouge arrested all professionals—engineers, doctors, school teachers, civil servants, and politicians, as well as officers of the Cambodian Army and their families. They also targeted Buddhist monks. Later, the arrested were to include anyone who could speak French and even, it was said, people with spectacles or false teeth.

Schools in Phnom Penh were converted into jails enclosed by barbed wire, into which tens of thousands of prisoners were herded, to be tortured until they confessed to undefined crimes. One such high school, Tuol Sleng in the middle of the city, was jail and execution chamber for over 22,000 prisoners during a three-year period. Everyone was carefully documented and photographed, their torture-induced "confessions" were

recorded, and then they were executed. The commandant of this school was a former teacher named Duch, who at long last was brought to trial in 2007.² This horrible process was too slow for the Khmer Rouge, however, and soon every town within the country had a designated killing field, where prisoners of the professional classes were killed by gunfire, or in many cases were bludgeoned to death. In terms of percentages, this was the worst genocide in modern history. Over two million people were murdered or caused to die by deprivation and disease. Out of a population of only eleven million, this represents almost twenty percent. Many of the executioners were young boys of 10-15 years of age still impressionable enough to develop the unquestioning zeal for a task that was so grisly and self-evidently wrong.

While these killings were proceeding, the Khmer Rouge set about dismantling the infrastructure of the state. One of their first acts was to close down the postal service and the telephone and telegraph services, and to replace the police force with the Khmer Rouge party itself. The courts and justice system were disbanded, replaced by arbitrary party decisions or by unpublished decrees with no appeal available. No travel between villages or towns was permitted by anyone without a pass issued by the party. Radio and TV stations were closed down, as well as all newspapers except those controlled by the Khmer Rouge, and the borders of the country were laced with landmines. Such restrictions obviously increased the power of the Khmer Rouge and severely limited all opposition. The regime informed all foreign governments that they did not acknowledge the right of sanctuary within foreign embassies, and ordered such foreign embassies closed and all foreigners expelled. The party also demanded that any Cambodian who was

taking refuge in a foreign embassy should be handed over to the Khmer Rouge, even though the citizen might be legally married to a foreign person. Within weeks all foreigners were expelled under considerable hardship, mostly by busing to Thailand. Not surprisingly, the surviving population was less than enthusiastic about Pol Pot's ideas of creating a prosperous Cambodia in the countryside by hard work. No progress was made towards his agrarian utopia. Pol Pot's movement was stagnating, but he pursued his agenda relentlessly and refused to consider a change in direction.

Beginning of the End for the Khmer Rouge

For a period of three years between 1976 and 1979, while these murders were taking place, the rest of the world took no action. France, the former colonial power, was somewhat sympathetic to the Khmer Rouge, but the British ignored the whole situation and the Chinese positively encouraged the Khmer Rouge policies, which mirrored its own cultural revolution that was sending many senior government officials and university people to the countryside to work on pig farms in order to be re-educated. These extreme means were intended to consolidate the power of Mao Tse Tung and to prevent the bureaucratization of his reforms. Carried out by children and students, this cultural revolution deprived an entire generation of a university education and caused suffering to an entire class, wiping out the pool of future professionals and leaders.

By 1979, Chinese-Vietnamese relationship had deteriorated and the Vietnamese, worried that the Khmer Rouge idea encouraged by China could spread to Vietnam, invaded Cambodia in December 1978. The Vietnamese army, well organized after the defeat of the American forces in 1975, quickly pushed the Khmer Rouge back into the

remote countryside. Although overthrown in the urban areas, Pol Pot and other principals of his party remained an active force in the mountains and the isolated valleys with continued Chinese support until 1984, when Chinese policies changed radically, relieving the pressure on Vietnam. Pol Pot continued to be the leader of his movement until about 1985 when he was overthrown by an internal coup and arrested and died under house arrest. Although the Khmer Rouge photographed and documented its victims, little written evidence of the regime was recorded.

A Nation in Shambles

Prince Sihanouk, in exile in both China and North Korea, in 1982 formed a government in exile which he hoped would eventually evict the Vietnamese. When they finally left Cambodia voluntarily in 1989, Sihanouk quickly returned to form a new government. Faced with recreating a functioning state with twenty percent of the population dead—mostly those with any form of education—he lacked the professionals needed to reestablish a functioning state. To compound his problems, pockets of Khmer Rouge remained in the countryside, creating anarchistic communities which are only now gradually being overcome. For example, the bus service from Phnom Pen to Siem Reap was just reestablished in 2004, although Siem Reap could be reached by riverboat since 1985. A great deal of foreign aid, especially Japanese, has been put into Cambodia since the overthrow of Khmer Rouge and the withdrawal of the Vietnamese in 1989, enabling the partial restoration of the state.

The politics of the country have remained turbulent. Prince Sihanouk was elected King again in 1993 and then gradually withdrew from politics, abdicating in 2004 in favor of his son. Many of the lesser and senior members of the Khmer Rouge managed to quietly

slip back into society and become influential in the new governments. In fact the present Prime Minister, Hun Sen, was quite senior in the Khmer Rouge. Still, it is now quite difficult to find anyone who will admit to having supported the Khmer Rouge.

The genocide of Pol Pot is an extreme example of politics by the book whereby misguided maniacs blindly follow predetermined theories and policies at any cost to justice and mercy. Recent examples of such theories are found in Marx's *Das Kapital* and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Marx's theory was Joseph Stalin's justification for the murder by starvation of eight million Kulaks in order to implement the collectivization of agriculture. Such regimes maintain their power by the ruthless killing of all opposition within and without their own ranks, as shown by the Nazis' killing of S.S. organizer Ernst Roehm in 1934, and the assassination of Leon Trotsky in 1940 on Stalin's orders. Among their methods of control was the indoctrination of young children to become the regime's enforcers. A constant fear of arrest and death hung over the general population. The Khmer Rouge was an extreme example of a thought process which fit the situation to the solution rather than finding a solution to the situation. There is a dangerously thin line between belief and a fanatic conviction that tolerates no contradiction. Certainly people who have become kamikaze pilots, suicide bombers, assassins of abortion-performing doctors, and prison guards who torture, have reached this point by indoctrination and are totally convinced of the correctness of their beliefs. These people are not necessarily natural monsters, but created monsters. This is fate which could have befallen any of us. Such regimes gain the acceptance of decent people by disguising their ruthlessness until in power and by finding sub-groups for the ordinary people to hate—Hitler, the Jews; Stalin, the more wealthy peasants; and the Khmer

Rouge, Cambodians who had been in any way influenced by foreigners. They also on occasion offer goodies, by improving efficiency, by cutting through obsolete and stifling bureaucracies, or in some cases by resurrecting previous cultural greatness. No cultural fame grew out of the Khmer Rouge regime, however; it was so ruthless in the destruction of all educated Cambodians that it was unable to establish an effective governing system, let alone build up a culture.

Evil, unfortunately, is not necessarily incompetent. The apparent incompetence of governmental indecisiveness may be the price society pays for freedom, and the protection of minorities and their opinions. When counterarguments and differing opinions are banned, dogmatism is allowed to run rampant, eventually consuming itself. It is chillingly clear that the political attitudes which caused the Cambodian tragedy are still active in the twenty-first century, and that a repeat of similar events remains a possibility.

Notes

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Pol Pot."
2. Duch was found guilty of murder and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 36 years in prison, 19 of which had been served as of July 2010.

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When Even “Positive” Is Negative

Even stereotypes that seem benign can turn out to be irrational and often hurtful.

By Linda Porter



About the Author

Linda Porter holds both an AB and an MA from Youngstown State University, where she wrote for and eventually served as editor of the university’s award-winning foreign language journal, *The Polyglot*. She enriched her education with additional studies at the Sorbonne in Paris and *l’Université de Caen*. Linda has volunteered as an on-air reader for the blind and has recorded education-related public service announcements. A proud and supportive member of several Ohio museums, including the Butler Museum of American Art in Youngstown, she also is an active epistolarian with correspondents in the United States and Europe. Linda Porter currently serves on the Board of the International Association of Torch Clubs as Director of Region 5.

Presented to the Youngstown Torch Club on January 21, 2008.

Four years ago, psychologist Yueh-Ting Lee received an email that included this sentence: “Heaven is a place with an American house, Chinese food, British police, a German car, and French art.” Someone else replied, “Hell is a place with a Japanese house, Chinese police, British food, German art, and a French car.”¹ Though these national stereotypes fall short of absolute truths, they are accurate enough to give the aphorism its humorous punch. Lee notes that stereotypes, rather than representing unjustified prejudices, typically function as thought-efficient

starting points for understanding other cultures and social groups, as well as the individuals who belong to them. That generations of people all over the world grow up with fixed ideas about groups of people with whom they have little or no interaction is a testimony to the power and pervasiveness of stereotypes. But whether a stereotype is positive or negative in nature, it is my contention that it falsely and perniciously informs the thinking and behavior of the holder of that belief towards that group on which it is aimed, to the detriment of all parties involved. Moreover, the effects of such attitudes feed these beliefs and perpetuate the stereotype. This paper will explore what a stereotype is, why it exists, and how it is transmitted. The paper will conclude with some recommendations on how to combat stereotyping behaviors in our daily life.

It was journalist Walter Lippmann in his 1922 book *Public Opinion* who introduced the term stereotype to refer to beliefs about social groups. Lippmann appropriated the term from printing terminology, where it denoted fixed casts of metal used to repeatedly produce the same sets of letters. He used the term to refer to the way in which people form “pictures in their heads” of other groups of people, repeatedly applying the same attributes to people belonging to the same group. In current terminology, the article reporting Lippmann’s use of the term noted that he attributed the stereotyping process to cognitive-perceptual and motivational factors in processing one’s experience and expectancies about a social group. Whether stereotypes are

The old adage that “seeing is believing” should be reconfigured to read, “I wouldn’t have seen it if I hadn’t believed it.”

An even more ominous use of stereotyping occurs in the hands of the politically powerful, who sometimes use it to stigmatize and exploit selected groups.

individual or shared, and whether they are accurate or inaccurate, common experience does demonstrate differences among groups. The diversity within any large group, as well as the private agenda of the perceiver, may obscure the “kernel of truth” of a stereotype.² A half-century ago, Alfred J. Marrow noted that we use a stereotype to exaggerate a belief in order to rationalize our conduct toward a group. He found that such distortion inhibits our capacity for “differentiated thinking.” Whether the stereotype promotes acceptance or rejection of group members, it can only be distinguished from a valid generalization by solid evidence of true differences.³ A more recent study of prejudice and discrimination by George Simpson and J. Milton Yinger defined stereotypes as “guidelines that tell [members of a culture] not only whom to like and to dislike, whom to feel close to and distant from, but also why these attitudes are appropriate.” Stereotypes thus provide

a growing person with mental pictures of those of certain racial, ethnic, and religious groups, pictures that are sometimes widely shared and sometimes held only by the individual.⁴ It is thus clear that stereotyping helps people to simplify how they think about others. Psychologist Lee regards stereotypes as “probabilistic beliefs we use to categorize people, objects, and events” in order to deal with information overload in a world that is often uncertain and unfamiliar. Bruce Bower, whose article reports on Lee’s findings, notes the less benign view of many psychologists who consider stereotyping as a breeding ground for errant generalizations about others that easily congeal into racism, sexism, and other forms of intolerance.⁵

Stereotyping thus allows people to enhance views of themselves as well as the groups to which they belong. By creating the appearance of order without the hard work of understanding the full order of things, stereotypes can conveniently rationalize and legitimize injustice and abuse both current and historical. Creating a special language for its users, a stereotype reinforces their beliefs and disbeliefs, providing and maintaining solidarity among the prejudiced.

Stereotypes are settled upon with mutually reinforcing supports from socio-cultural, psychodynamic and cognitive influences, affecting interaction in ways that restrict disconfirming information and may actually produce confirming experience. Early interaction between members of mutually stereotyping groups often results in selective memories and in behavioral confirmation, because interaction is guided by what members of each group believe the others are like, helping to set into motion a self-fulfilling prophecy. This phenomenon is commonly seen in contacts between minorities and police.

In such cases the old adage that “seeing is believing” should be reconfigured to read, “I wouldn’t have seen it if I hadn’t believed it.” An even more ominous use of stereotyping occurs in the hands of the politically powerful, who sometimes use it to stigmatize and exploit selected groups. On the other hand, as Professor Gerald Kreyche of De Paul University has pointed out, some stereotypes are justified by science, such as gender differences and criminal stereotyping used by law enforcement. He reasons that stereotypes are socially acceptable if they are positive, but are considered offensive if they are negative. He acknowledges that they are misused, even though they are founded on ordinary experience. The danger lies in the application to whole groups of people. Stereotyping becomes problematic when directed at the individual who, although a member of the target group, nonetheless manifests his or her own distinctive characteristics.⁶

To put all this theory in focus, let’s examine how stereotyping has affected one group in particular. In her book, *American Indians: Stereotypes & Realities*, Devon A. Mihesuah notes that the Puritans in Massachusetts referred to Indians as the “Devil’s disciples” to justify killing scores of these “bloodthirsty savages” and taking their lands. The Spanish conquistadors and colonists desired the Indians’ gold, but they wanted someone else to mine it for them. They solved both problems by proclaiming Indians to be subhuman and destined by God to be their slaves. Over the years, a new stereotype for Native Americans has emerged: that of the “noble savage”—a generous, nature-loving, pure in heart, with a profound spirituality that borders on the mystical. But positive and negative stereotypes are difficult for the same reason: neither kind is based on reality. According to

Mihesuah, what children learn about Native Americans in school is faulty, incomplete, and inaccurate. This is primarily due to who writes the history. She points out that there are not many histories written by Native American historians to at least provide an alternative account of events. So misconceptions and the now evolved stereotypes persist. As writer Anthony Layng notes, “The current sympathetic image of Indians is, perhaps, no more accurate than outmoded and now embarrassing stereotypes.”⁷ Mihesuah points out that non-Indian historians make lucrative careers out of writing about Indians, often without ever consulting Indians about their version of events, because many writers believe oral history is an ineffective method of transmitting knowledge. Whether the stereotype is positive or negative, their history and traditions are being used for profit: the selling of Indian art, rugs, jewelry; books about Indian history, culture and religion; Indian tourist attractions; the merchandising of sports paraphernalia and memorabilia, etc. Even as our ever more politically correct society becomes increasingly aware of the disingenuous if not spurious nature of stereotypes, they are, in general, difficult to banish. In her classes at the University of Kansas, Professor Mihesuah seeks to challenge the historical myths as well as the negative and positive stereotypes:

But despite these good intentions, my attempts to dispel false images of Indians among students invariably meet with resistance. Each semester, a few students who do not want to hear about the atrocities committed against Indians in this country accuse me and other minority professors of being too “politically correct.” Of course, these are the same pupils who become indignant when told that two of the four men on Mount Rushmore owned

slaves, and that all four referred to non-Europeans as inferior to Europeans.⁸

Stereotypes develop not only for financial, political or social reasons, but also out of sexual motivations. The Australian historian, Michael Sturma, argues that the idea of the 'noble savage' (the close association of indigenous people with the nobility of nature) closely parallels another stereotype: that of the 'nubile savage,' portraying indigenous women as sexually attractive.

The nubile savage stereotype is arguably strongest in relation to the South Seas. Romanticised and sexually charged encounters with Island women were a staple of travel literature from early contact...

The attractions of life in the South Pacific might be linked with many developments, from the writings of the philosophers to the increasing pressures of urbanization in Europe... The place island women occupied in the realm of sexual imagination... links the frequent association made between licentious sex and the Orient with a growing repression and embourgeoisement in Europe. [There] ...one could seek a less guilt-ridden and prescribed sexuality. The same case might be applied to the South Pacific, where European male sexual activities were perceived as less threatening to morality and social order... Also...at the same time as cultural contact expanded in the South Pacific, Western perceptions of women were changing. Whereas women were formerly viewed as highly sexed, by the late eighteenth century Western women were increasingly

depicted as passionless. By the end of the century, women's, sensuality was largely subsumed to the roles of wife and mother.⁹

Sturma goes on to say that the idealization of South Seas women may be likened to what some see as an idealization of Asian women in response to Western feminism. The stereotypical Asian woman is often depicted as more 'feminine,' docile and sexually yielding. Bangkok has become synonymous with rampant sex in a way analogous to Tahiti in an earlier era. Sturma concludes:

The 'nubile savage' stereotype represented...a projection of male desire...a construct of sexual politics... From the eighteenth century [on] there is a good deal of continuity in representations of the South Pacific women...as a symbol of the feminine and desirable... The island woman mystique is used for marketing everything from holidays to perfume to chocolate bars. The nubile savage beckons as a refuge from the complexities of modern life, and more particularly the complications of modern gender relations.¹⁰

Stereotypes imbue our society from the cradle to the grave; from children's games, school texts, cartoons, and toys. They are the basis for many jokes and even our speech is peppered with them: "He welshed on that deal." "They took them away in the paddy wagon" are two examples. They spread via our entertainments such as the stage, radio, motion pictures, and television. Critics, especially female, have decried the image of Italians in general and Italian women in particular as they are depicted in the television show *The Sopranos*. Polish Americans have also been very vocal about their portrayal in

popular American culture. But this is not a uniquely American phenomenon: the Roma (formerly known as Gypsies) are fighting to overcome the stereotyping that has rendered them one of Europe's most disadvantaged ethnic groups. And of course, all people of Middle Eastern birth, origin or appearance became stereotyped following the 9/11 attack in 2001.

While the wide-ranging fallout from negative stereotypes has been reviewed, it remains to comment on the apparently oxymoronic quality of "positive" stereotypes, for even these are unfortunate when entrenched and forever linked to a group. At best, they lead to unrealistic expectations by the public at large, and, at worst, to disappointment and loss of self-esteem by those within the group who do not enjoy the specific stereotypical characteristic in question. Americans (like many elsewhere in the world) have embraced the stereotype that Frenchmen are great lovers. But what happens when one meets a man from France that does not possess the posited romantic savoir-faire of Charles Boyer or the Gallic charm of Maurice Chevalier? That school teacher, postal employee, or accountant of French nationality is diminished in the eyes of the outsider. He is merely judged as lacking a primary characteristic of being French. Unless our Frenchman in question quickly demonstrates some other outstanding qualities, the outsider could, on the basis of unsubstantiated and anecdotal standards, be relegated to second class (French) citizenship in the mind of the outsider.

Over the last forty years, Asians have generally been regarded as intelligent, with a natural aptitude for science and math, and industrious and vigorous in their approach to education. However, such estimable cultural characteristics can sometimes prove to

be unsustainable by many young Asians. During the 1980's, reports that Japanese children attended school for more hours each day and for many more days of the year, along with extensive out-of-school tutoring, made the Japanese educational system's positive results the envy of much of the world. What emerged in later reports, however, was evidence that the pressures to meet these unrealistic, across-the-board expectations of continuous and superior achievement were producing serious, pervasive untoward effects. Emotional, mental, and physical breakdowns among students were occurring at alarming rates. Parents of "underachievers" felt disgraced, and the suicide rate of Japanese youth increased by a statistically significant margin. This is certainly an example of a positive stereotype yielding very negative results. The effects of stereotyping are stunning whether veiled in a disingenuous subtlety or stingingly transparent and straightforward in nature. If the effects are not devastating enough, we must not neglect the purely human level of the tragedy—the fear, mistrust, jealousy, and hatred it ultimately engenders on both sides of the transaction. To stereotype people is to dehumanize them. It is easier to abuse and victimize some faceless individual that you will never get to know. Whether the savage is 'noble' or 'nubile,' the fact that he has been categorized renders the savage less of a person. His/her stereotypical profile justifies all the lack of consideration another group of people can muster. Combating stereotypes is a great challenge because they seem always to have existed as a part of our social make-up. This does not lessen their perniciousness or render them more acceptable. They will always be with us, but here are some steps we can

take:

- We must provide our children with more accurate, detailed historical and cultural information in their textbooks. We should explain what triggers stereotypes associated with particular groups of people and separate fact from fiction for ourselves as well as for our children in regard to television and movies.
- We need to be aware of the financial impact on groups of educational, political and governmental decisions, and watch for bias in media reporting.
- Each of must take the time to analyze our own reservations about various groups or nations.
- If we are part of a stereotyped group and an outsider says we are different from the expected stereotype, we should simply affirm that observation and point to another member of our group and say, "He's different too, and so is that woman over there, and all the others like me that you'll never meet."

Notes

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The Pursuit of Happiness

Valued and studied by humankind from Greek philosophers to our Founding Fathers, and of great interest to contemporary psychologists, happiness may well rely on both nature and nurture.

By Ann Foard



About the Author

Ann Foard taught English for thirty years at Broome Community College in Binghamton, NY, receiving the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and serving as faculty advisor for the BCC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the two-year college honor society. Since her retirement in 2002, Ann has been pursuing happiness in Virginia with Douglas Foard, whom she married on her sixtieth birthday. Both Foards are charter members of the Blue Ridge Torch Club of Leesburg, Virginia.

Presented to the Blue Ridge Torch Club on October 9, 2007.

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To Americans, the phrase "Pursuit of Happiness" has iconic status; many believe it's in the Constitution or part of the Bill of Rights. It's not. Rather, it is one of the "inalienable rights," along with life and liberty, which appear in that treasonous document, the Declaration of Independence. The choice of the phrase "pursuit of happiness" was a curious one. Jefferson and a number of other founding fathers were profoundly influenced by John Locke's "Two Treatises on Government," which cited "life, liberty, and property" as rights a government is bound to protect. Scholars have been debating for over two hundred years about why Jefferson chose to change the phrase to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but we can make some good guesses.

"Happiness" in History

Shortly before the drafting of the Declaration, Jefferson had been deeply involved in the efforts of the Virginia legislature to write a state constitution, an effort which he and his fellow Virginians felt was much more significant than activities at the Continental Congress to justify a war that had, in fact, been going on for more than a year. George Mason had written a preamble to the Virginia constitution containing these words:

All men are created equally free and independent and have certain inherent and natural rights—among which are the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

Jefferson scholar Joseph Ellis tells us that Mason's words were published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on June 12, 1776, the same day they were unanimously approved by the Virginia Legislature. Ellis found that it strains credulity to deny the influence of Mason's words on Jefferson, but the ideals expressed were not original with Mason either. Another more practical reason Ellis suggests for substituting "the pursuit of happiness" for "property" as an inalienable right may have been the need to separate property ownership from the franchise, and to minimize uncomfortable discussions about the institution of slavery.¹

Jefferson, Mason, and their colleagues in Virginia and Philadelphia were Enlightenment thinkers, influenced by Greek and Roman ideals about government, personal liberty, and happiness. These ideas were, in fact, intertwined. Briefly, they believed the "greatest good"—to be promoted by

individuals and protected by government—was happiness. For Enlightenment philosophers, "happiness" did not mean "how I feel right now," or "being able to do anything I want," or "having lots of stuff," as one might conclude from observations of contemporary society. Happiness was, rather, the result of living a balanced and virtuous life. Happiness, or what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*, was not a static experience, but a constant effort, the sum total of a life well-lived. To be happy required an individual to cultivate his faculties and talents, be educated, employ reason, accept responsibility, temper passions, govern himself, appreciate beauty, and live in communion with man and God. The best form of government to promote this "greatest good" was thought to be democracy, because the pursuit of happiness requires individual liberty. Such was the intellectual climate in which Jefferson and Mason, as well as John Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers, developed their philosophies of government.

New Insights from Positive Psychology

Whatever the origins of the phrase and the high ideals that engendered it, Americans today seem to feel that they have not only a right to *pursue* happiness, but indeed the right to happiness itself, a notion that Jefferson and the other founding fathers would have thought ridiculous. Our media sources chronicle the many social pathologies that result from some of the individual and self-serving notions of "happiness" in our culture. In the midst of such confusion the promising field of positive psychology sheds new light on what actually contributes to happiness, what doesn't,

and whether it's possible to make yourself more "happy" than you think you are.

"Positive Psychology," according to Martin Seligman, is "a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for what Aristotle called 'the good life.'" Seligman notes in his book *Authentic Happiness* that traditionally psychology has focused on mental illness, those things that make humans unhappy and dysfunctional. For every 100 journal articles on sadness, says Seligman, there is only one on happiness.² Seligman, generally considered to be the "father" of positive psychology, is not one of the pop psychologists whose works line the self-help aisles at Barnes & Noble. He is the Fox Leadership Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, director of the Positive Psychology Network, and former president of the American Psychological Association. Seligman and others in the field are attempting to bring scientific rigor to the study of happiness.

How do they do that? Social science research is notoriously "fuzzy" anyway. How do you study emotions? How do you measure feelings? What lab tests exist to quantify a sense of well-being? Well, by using the standard instruments of psychological and sociological research—questionnaires, surveys, interviews, lab experiments, statistical analysis, and even occasionally electrodes measuring what areas of the brain are firing—and using these measures on large numbers of people and over long periods of time, researchers such as Seligman are beginning to put together a body of research that compels respect and attention.

Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise—But Not Necessarily Happy

Some of that research examines factors that do NOT contribute to happiness. Many Americans, when asked what would improve their quality of life, say "more money." Yet research shows little correlation between wealth and happiness. If people have enough to meet basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, safety—having more money does not

Social science research is notoriously "fuzzy" anyway. How do you study emotions? How do you measure feelings? What lab tests exist to quantify a sense of well-being? Well, by using the standard instruments of psychological and sociological research—questionnaires, surveys, interviews, lab experiments, statistical analysis, and even occasionally electrodes measuring what areas of the brain are firing—and using these measures on large numbers of people and over long periods of time,...

seem to produce more happiness. While there is a slight difference in the happiness of people in rich countries and poor countries, it cannot be shown that wealth is the significant variable, since there are also usually important differences in health, safety, education, democracy, etc. In this country, very wealthy people—those on the Fortune 500 list, for example—are only slightly happier than the regular population. What about sudden wealth? Within a few months, people who receive a significant windfall—winning the lottery for example—show no overall increase in happiness and in some cases show a decrease, reporting that after awhile, buying new things loses its appeal and that the losses in human relationships exceed their monetary gains. Many of us feel that if we had just a little more money we'd be happier, but that belief is not supported by research. So money doesn't buy happiness.

What about health? We all want good health and a long life, yet despite some correlation between ill health and unhappiness or depression, apparently being healthy doesn't guarantee happiness either. You can be physically fit but miserable. Nor does ill health or disability

necessarily mean you will be unhappy. After an initial period of adjustment, most people who have suddenly become ill or disabled tend to return to the normal level of happiness that they experienced before.

A 2007 article titled "Is Great Happiness Too Much of a Good Thing?" in the *Washington Post* illustrates the point with the story of Harry Lewenstein, a 70-year-old retired electronics executive who, ten years earlier, was riding a bicycle too fast down a hill in Portugal. He hit a bump and was propelled over the handlebars, landing flat on his back in the road. The injury permanently deprived Lewenstein of all use of his legs and limited the use of his hands. Now 80, Lewenstein was not only still alive, but reported that he had spent no time in the previous decade feeling sorry for himself. He acknowledged that he had been riding the bike faster than he should have been but didn't regret the accident. Instead, each day he discovered new ways to be resourceful and to use the capacities he did have, identifying new reasons to be grateful. The *Post* article quotes him as saying,

Some people feel sorry for themselves or mad at the world; I did not. After I was injured, I was so totally incapacitated and so much out of everything that every day turned out to be a positive day. Each day I recovered a little more of my memory, of my ability to comprehend things.

We might dismiss such a story if we read it in one of the saccharine self-help books that claim to transform people's lives by teaching them to will themselves to success and happiness, but when it appears on the Science page of the *Post* and is buttressed by a major study reported in the *Journal of Personality and Social Disorder* and cited in the *Post*, we need to take it more seriously.³ Lewenstein's testimony shows that physical condition is not necessarily a predictor of happiness.

In fact, knowing something about a person's objective life circumstances,

including income, state of health, gender, ethnicity, nationality, education level, or even age, tells us little or nothing about that person's state of happiness. Some of these findings were unexpected by researchers and probably are to us too. We might have guessed that the happiest people in our society are the rich, healthy, highly-educated, white males — the ones with most of the power and toys. Apparently that's not the case.

Factors that Contribute to Happiness

So if the obvious external factors don't bring happiness, what does? Aggregations of hundreds of studies on happiness summarized in John Stossel's 1996 ABC special *The Mystery of Happiness* have found some commonalities that extend across demographic categories in defining the characteristics of happy people.⁴

- **Control:** Happy people have some sense of control over their lives, feeling they have choices and can influence what happens to them. This factor has been found even in studies of very young infants, and may explain why people living under repressive regimes report less happiness than those living in freer societies.
- **Optimism:** Happy people tend to feel optimistic about themselves and their worlds, expecting that things will work out. Confident that they will be successful, they are less likely to blame themselves when things go wrong. Harry Lewenstein certainly displayed optimism in his response to an accident that might have devastated a less positive person.
- **Self-Esteem:** Happy people like themselves. Tending to focus on their positive qualities and attribute their successes to their own efforts, they report general satisfaction with their lives and circumstances.
- **Spirituality:** Happy people also tend to have a strong sense of purpose in life, often recognizing ideas and institutions larger than themselves, whose goals they actively pursue. Members of religious groups on average score higher on happiness surveys than non-religious people.

- **Relationships:** Not surprisingly, people who have close ties with other people — families, friendships, communities, and organizations—report significantly higher levels of happiness than those who lack those strong bonds. While some among us seem self-sufficient and enjoy being alone, most humans need close contact with others to feel happy and satisfied.

- **Flow:** Another quality that distinguishes happy people is engagement in meaningful work, something Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls “flow”—the ability to lose oneself in what one is doing. What the work is doesn't matter as much as the ability to completely engage in it to the point that time and even self cease to matter. Whether the activity is saving the world or weeding the flowerbed, if you become totally caught up in it, you are experiencing flow.⁵

Given these characteristics of happy people, noted time after time in hundreds of studies, it is not surprising that Stossel and other observers find that Americans who consistently report the highest levels of happiness are the Old Order Amish. How can that be? True, the Amish eschew much of what many of us “pursue” in our “pursuit of happiness,” but that “eschewal” is a conscious and deliberate decision based on the conviction that a happy life and an easy life are not the same thing, and that too much ease and too much stuff distract us from what is truly important in life—God, family, and community. One observer spent weeks with an Amish family in Ohio to discover and write about what it is about the Amish culture that has enabled them to survive in today's America. She noted the difficulties of trying to manage with wood stoves, kerosene lamps, washboards and horse-drawn plows, and without buttons, automobiles or telephones, and she wondered WHY the Amish choose to do that. After about four weeks of working alongside the Amish women in that community she experienced an epiphany—one of those road-to-Damascus blinding insights—while she was folding dish-towels. Suddenly, she said, she realized that to

the Amish, every activity, regardless of how mundane, is an act of worship. Even folding a dish-towel, and folding it well, is a way to affirm belief in God and to celebrate the Amish way of life. It is a manifestation of happiness. The young woman's insight is echoed by Donald Kraybill in *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, where he says, “Daily behavior, from dressing to eating, is transformed into religious ritual with eternal significance.”⁶

Inheritance and Cultivation

So—we have seen what doesn't make people happy and what characteristics happy people share. Is it possible for people to make themselves happier? Well—up to a point, according to Martin Seligman and other positive psychologists. Perhaps you have heard of the “happy gene.” While scientists have not yet identified a particular gene associated with happiness, nevertheless researchers agree that about 50% of an individual's ability to experience happiness is probably genetic—that is, like high cholesterol, you inherit your general disposition from your parents. Using studies of identical twins raised separately, positive psychologists say that some people tend to respond more positively to life experiences and others respond more negatively, and that we all have a “range” of emotional response within which we operate.

Within our genetically determined range, however, there are things we can do to make ourselves happier. One lab-tested strategy suggests that acting as if you are happy actually makes you feel happier. Using college students as volunteers, researchers determined that even something as basic as holding a pencil sideways in your mouth to widen your facial muscles into the semblance of a smile can lighten your mood. Other volunteers were asked to view funny movies or look at pleasant pictures and they too demonstrated a more positive mood than those who did nothing or who looked at negative images. Some may find those strategies, while interesting, unsatisfying and certainly transitory. What about the bigger big picture and more

long-term results? Remember that old song “Accentuate the Positive”? How about “On the Sunny Side of the Street”? They contain some wisdom that positive psychologists would confirm. Cultivating a positive outlook on life, focusing on strengths instead of weaknesses, looking for things to praise rather than complain about, even “Counting Your Blessings” can be helpful strategies in increasing your happiness quotient. The self-help gurus may actually be on to something when they recommend keeping a “gratitude journal.”

What about meditation or prayer? Taking some time to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and let the stresses of the day drain away has been shown not only to increase happiness, but also to reduce blood pressure and improve overall health. While good health in and of itself doesn’t guarantee happiness, eating sensibly and getting some exercise can also affect your mood positively by triggering some of those feel-good chemicals we all have in our bodies.

Happiness researchers have concluded that much of the dissatisfaction they have measured in people comes from comparing ourselves with those we perceive to be better off than ourselves. Our house, our car, our kids, our accomplishments, may seem fine until we realize that the guy across the street or the former high school classmate has something bigger, shinier, smarter, or more impressive than we do. In other words, our satisfaction is relative to those around us. One secret of happiness, then, is to want what you have, rather than to have what you want.

Seeking Meaning Within and Beyond the Self

We all know these things, but however true they are, they may seem superficial to those seeking a major transformation rather than a quick attitude adjustment. Where does long-term happiness come from? Not from pursuing it, apparently. Happiness, according to Viktor Frankl in *Man’s Search for Meaning*, cannot be pursued; like success, it comes as an unintended by-product of

one’s dedication to something greater than oneself.⁷ Frankl, interned at Auschwitz and other concentration camps during World War II, writes about what it was that enabled some to survive the Nazi death camps, despite unspeakable miseries. Those who lived did so because they had found meaning in their lives and in their suffering. Frankl identified three possible sources for that meaning: in **work**—that is doing something significant; in **love**—caring for another person; and in **courage** during difficult times—maintaining human dignity despite suffering. Frankl declared that even when forces beyond your control take away everything you possess, you still have the freedom to choose how you will respond to your situation. Many people report that Frankl’s book changed their lives because it addresses the fundamental question we all need to answer: What is the meaning of my life? As Frankl shows, we give our lives meaning by believing in and acting on something larger than ourselves. And that is true regardless of our circumstances in life.

Viktor Frankl provides an extreme example of the fundamental principle that deep, long-lasting happiness comes from within. When we know what our lives mean; what it is that we would both die and live for; when there is harmony between our values and our actions; when we can lose ourselves in our work, even if that work is folding dish-towels—then happiness will come to us, not because we have pursued it, but because, like Harry Lewenstein, we choose to make the most of what we have been given.

Notes

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The American Era: R.I.P.

The key to maintaining America's dominance in world affairs is a charismatic leader who is unafraid to express hope and optimism.

By Stephen A. Brown



About the Author

A graduate of Yale College and the Yale Law School, Stephen A. Brown retired as Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the Uniform Code Council, Inc. (now GS1US), having previously served as Executive Vice President and General Counsel of the Grocery Manufacturers of America and as counsel to the Ad Hoc Committee on a Uniform Grocery Product Identification Code. He is the author of *Revolution at the Checkout Counter: The Explosion of the Bar Code*. Currently serving on the board of the Winchester Frederick County Historical Society, and as Clerk of the Session of Opequon Presbyterian Church, he and his gracious wife Nancy are finding time in retirement to enjoy their three children and six grandchildren. This is his first Torch paper since joining the Winchester Torch Club in 2007.

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For over fifty years one voice has dominated the world stage on virtually every level—political, economic, military, cultural, creative—the voice of the United States of America, only two hundred years old, a young culture compared to the rest of the world. The last half of the twentieth century clearly deserves the title of “The American Era.” Now, however, as we enter the second decade of a new century and millennium, America’s dominance is under siege on virtually every level. The

United States is moving from the role of conductor of the orchestra into that of a mere player—and not necessarily the first chair in the section. This paper will look at how the American Era came to be. It will then consider some of the forces and events that today buffet us on all sides. Finally, I will venture a guess at what may lie ahead.

A Proud Past

The English colonists who declared their independence in 1776 certainly had neither thoughts nor dreams of global power or empire, but profoundly wished only to be left alone. England, on the other hand, justifiably wished that the colonies she had nurtured and supported would return the favor. Colonial life was hard here in 1781 and survival, not dominance, was the primary concern.¹ The success of the United States in achieving its independence from a world power relied on the assistance of France,² along with the advantage of the sheer physical distance from the mother country. The American War for Independence did not play well in England; many there just wanted the war over.³ As the colonists engaged in their first burst of nation building, they began with a template that soon proved unworkable—a confederation of equals, with little power and much distrust in the central government.⁴ Although a nation was established with the adoption of the Constitution, the appropriate role of the individual states has bedeviled the United States ever since.

For the ensuing century and a half, the United States grew and prospered, but was not a major global player. We were protected from foreign interference by two wide oceans. Domestically, an apparently limitless frontier was matched only by our insatiable appetite for expansion. In retrospect, our early

international conflicts and attempts at globalism seem somewhat precious:

- In the War of 1812 a military defeat was turned into a political victory primarily because the English did not have the will to finish the job.⁵
- In the war with Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century, there was a successful land grab by one neighbor from another rather than anything with a global design or strategy.⁶
- In the Spanish American War the United States successfully acted as an imperialist, but—except for the parties involved—it had little contemporary impact on the rest of the world.⁷

As Europe began eating itself with the War to End All Wars, the United States was powerful enough to play a significant role, but we were only one among many. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were years of British dominance, when “the sun never set on the British Empire.”⁸

Even after the First World War, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans continued to serve as virtually impregnable defenses for the United States. An unintended result of the war was that the European participants—both victors and vanquished—were so drained that no country had the energy or the resources to pose a threat to the United States until the rise of Nazi Germany. On the other side of the world Japan, primarily for economic reasons, began to seek to expand its empire. The Great Depression, a worldwide economic phenomenon, leveled the economic playing field globally.⁹ Those who survived this galvanizing experience had a strength and confidence that nothing could shatter, contributing mightily to our emergence as a power to be reckoned with.¹⁰ Our oceans kept us safe in World War II; while

Europe, Russia and Japan were mostly rubble at war's end, the United States was physically unscathed. Our economy, fueled by war production needs, was aching to supply ourselves and the world with the goods that had been unavailable in wartime.¹¹ Also, for the Allies—especially the Americans—World War II was the “good war,” in which our cause was just. The enemy was not only evil, it was morally reprehensible. God was on our side. This belief contributed mightily to a sense of purpose and resolve that carried over into the post-war years, giving rise to the Marshall Plan and foreign aid to help the rest of the world rebuild—friend and foe alike. After the war, the United States saw itself as the world's only “good” superpower with a responsibility to protect the world from the “forces of evil.” In the postwar world, the “evil” communists in Russia and China replaced the “evil” fascists as the nemesis of all that was good. But by the late 1980s, the Cold War was over and no one challenged America's status as the one superpower in the world. What had been building for half a century was in full bloom. Now, however, as we begin the new millennium's second decade, it seems likely that the American Era is coming to an end, if it has not ended already. This is a look at America's fall from grace, to determine some of the causes and consider whether it is possible to reverse the downward spiral.

A Challenging Present

The U.S. remains a power to be reckoned with; it is simply not the **only** power. Economics and the changing nature of society are two of the many factors contributing to this shift in America's status. To paraphrase the sign on the bridge over the Delaware River at Trenton, New Jersey, during our glory days, “The U.S. made, the world took.” Upward mobility has long been a key part of the American dream, and each of us has striven to see that our children can prosper more than we. This has led to an ever rising standard of living which has had a positive impact, but with a negative corollary. The country that made for the

world to take found that its standard of living increased costs so that other countries could make for less. The United States increasingly turned from a manufacturing to a service economy. Our imports became greater than our exports, and we became a debtor nation.¹² This change in economic status had ripples that affected political status—even if they were not always apparent.

Those of us who matured in the post World War II years never had to struggle as our parents did. They were determined we would have a better and more secure life. By and large, our parents succeeded. An unintended consequence of this has been a sense in our generation that we are entitled to a prosperous and secure existence. Survival in either a personal or a national sense was not an issue for us. So we began to push the boundaries. The result was a society in which we believe we can attach blame to someone else for every misfortune, large or small, that befalls us. With survival no longer an issue, we now litigate for huge sums of money over things that in the past would have been regarded as trivial, or simply an accident.¹³ If one party is aggrieved, the other party must be to blame, so the concept of personal responsibility becomes battered. If my coffee spills and I burn myself, I am not clumsy. The maker of the coffee makes it too hot and fails to warn me. Yet, a super power—which is but the sum of its individual parts—should hold **itself** accountable.

As violence increases around us, we are also becoming excessively risk averse. Travelers line up like sheep and undergo incredible invasions of their privacy because we are told that this will keep us safe. “America's aviation system is now the butt of jokes because nine-year-olds have become accustomed to removing their Heelys before boarding a plane.”¹⁴ We are not sure from what we are being kept safe, or how the indignities suffered will protect us from that danger.¹⁵ Once imposed, these so-called security requirements quickly become permanent. In December 2006, the *Washington Post* reported that “temporary” security measures at the Alexandria courthouse put

in place for the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui remained in place seven months after the trial was over, ignoring the promise that these extreme precautions were to be removed at trial's end. Nor, in spite of protests from neighbors of the courthouse, were there any plans to remove them.¹⁶

The current climate of fear is also turning on its head one of the fundamental principles of our democracy—that a person is considered innocent until proven guilty. Law school taught me that the correct plea was not “not guilty,” but “make the state prove my guilt.” If the state cannot sustain its burden, the accused must go free, whether or not he or she committed the offense. We endorsed Blackstone's famous pronouncement that “it is better that ten guilty persons escape than one innocent suffer.”¹⁷ Once, the federal appellate judge for whom I clerked joked he was not sure why we had to listen to all those criminal appeals. The police would not have arrested them if they had not done something. What was a joke forty-five years ago is painfully close to reality today with the press and public convicting folks long before there is a trial. Our fetish for security leads us to adopt a “once a criminal, always a criminal” attitude. Yes, recidivism is rampant, and racial profiling will catch some threats. Thus, we can justify taking bearded olive skinned men off planes because they might be terrorists, and we are better safe than sorry. Some feel the official punishment for a widening range of criminal acts is neither harsh enough nor long enough. We now have sexual offender registries which guarantee that a convicted and punished offender can never escape the ongoing harassment of his neighbors.¹⁸ The debt to society can never be paid. The newfound passion for security flies in the face of the myth of the valiant pioneers bravely facing the unknown that undergirds so much of the American psyche. A superpower must always be ready to face the unknown boldly. If we raise our children never to go beyond their own yard, from where will we get the next generation of explorers? The

combination of paranoid risk aversion and great power is a dangerous one. Convinced at the end of the twentieth century that there was no power on earth that could match us, our attitude toward the rest of the world became, “we will listen to what you have to say, so long as you do things our way.” We believed that only Americans were acting from noble motives, obligated to share with others the values that had made us great, whereas another country’s behavior was simple nationalism.

September 11, 2001 was a watershed event in American history. For the first time since the War of 1812, foreigners were able to inflict significant damage on American soil. The physical damage was startling; the psychological damage was incalculable. No longer could our oceans keep us safe. Vulnerable to assault by small groups of dedicated attackers, we could not even be sure who the enemy was. Even though we quickly located the headquarters of the terrorists in Afghanistan and pursued them there, it seemed hardly enough retaliation for the dastardly attack. These new enemies—ordinary people without uniforms, banners, or bugles—seemed to be everywhere and nowhere. The fall of the United States from **the** great power in the world can be marked by a single event, the invasion of Iraq in 2003. For the first time in our history, our President announced that we would seek out those opposed to us and punish them before they could damage us.¹⁹ And Iraq was a ready-made target, ruled by an evil and sadistic dictator who clearly had eyes on enlarging an empire with a vast amount of oil on which we depended. Having led a military coalition a decade before that had rebuffed the dictator’s attempt to expand, it was time for our forces to move in for the kill. At first, the war went well. Two months after the invasion of Iraq, Baghdad had fallen and the President declared “Mission Accomplished.” Then everything went horribly wrong. Virtually every rationale offered as justification for the war proved false: there was no evidence that Iraq had anything to do with the 9/11 attack. Nor did Iraq possess

weapons of mass destruction as we had been told.²⁰ The dictator was gone, but it seemed impossible to create a stable government. Our army found itself in the middle of a war between competing religious sects. Meanwhile the rest of the world, which had never really endorsed our actions, looked on with horror at the fruits of our precipitous action. It became clear that the world’s greatest superpower had become mired in a conflict it could not win. An honorable way out seemed impossible. As in the old fairy tale, the superpower had been discovered to have no clothes.

Moreover, the Iraq conflict has seriously undermined the moral stature of America. As is said in the October 2007 issue of the *Atlantic*, “We have forgotten... that American power is as much about what it stands for as its hard-power characteristics.”²¹ Because of Iraq and the War on Terror, Americans no longer can say that we do not impose cruel and unusual punishment, or that our people have the right to communicate safe in the assurance that the government is not listening. Also gone—or at least in serious jeopardy—is the principle that no one can be thrown in prison unless charged with a crime and speedily brought to trial.²² Unfortunately, if these infringements of our constitutional freedoms are required to fight the War on Terror, they are with us forever, since in a world of seven billion people there will always be terrorists, prepared to die if they can inflict pain on their perceived oppressors. As long as such limits on freedom keep us prosperous and strong, some will see America as the oppressor.

Make no mistake; the U.S. is still a power with which to be reckoned. It is, however, now simply one of the global powers, not the sole superpower. While this condition may persist for a time, history suggests that at some point there will be another colossus towering over the world. Who is it likely to be? For those who believe that economics determines history, China is the most likely candidate. A great power in ancient times, for generations China was content to live in seclusion and ignore the rest of us—but

no longer. China is definitely a global player today, with a growing dynamic economy. The U.S. is but one of the nations greatly in debt to China, receiving both goods and credit from Beijing. As China takes its place at the world table, its political and economic decisions become more important to the rest of the world, demonstrating its determination to wield global power.²³ Another candidate for the next dominant world power might be a group of zealots, probably with a strong religious bent, plunging us into a modern version of the dark ages. The most likely zealots will emerge from poverty, which could lead to massive impulses to destroy what the perceived oppressors have built. Such dominance would be fueled by their anger rather than by a drive to put their own stamp on the world.

A Hopeful Future

For the United States to pick itself up and reclaim its position in the world, offsetting the legendary stubbornness of decline, it must rely on many factors—most notably leadership. Becoming **the** superpower again will require a charismatic leader who speaks both to the American people and to the world at large, bringing a message of hope and optimism. We have heard how much we have to fear for many years now. With today’s twenty-four-hour news cycle and the cult of investigative journalism, politicians of every stripe spend more time and money decrying the real and imagined sins of their opponent than in presenting a positive vision. It will be difficult to break that paradigm, but we must do so. Perhaps the greatest problem is the perception that it is never wrong to be conservative and safe. Careers are built on protecting us from problems instead of forging into uncharted waters. The actions of two different presidents, a generation apart, illustrate contrasting models of leadership.

John F. Kennedy, president during the Cuban missile crisis, had come of age in World War II, and had assured the world that America had a new generation of leaders willing to bear any burden, pay any price, to lead the world. For a week

in October 1962, we stood on the brink of an atomic war. At that moment, as he led the country by word and deed, Kennedy was highly visible in the White House in Washington.²⁴ In this way he said to the country that fear was not the answer and that come what may, America would survive. By contrast, on September 11, 2001, President Bush did not return to Washington and exert leadership, but rather fled to an “undisclosed location” in the middle of the country.²⁵ This contrast, I believe, speaks to a generational difference. The adults of the 1960s had been raised during the depression and burnished by World War II. The adults of the new millennium are a product of the risk-averse, security-conscious world of their time.

The kind of leadership required must display the stubborn reliance on principle shown by Winston Churchill in the dark days of the Blitz. Through strong personal leadership he refused to let his people believe that the foe could prevail. Or as Martin Luther put it when he unknowingly changed the world, “Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me.” Are there such leaders in twenty-first century America? I am sure there are. The challenge is whether such a leader can emerge in a society that is both afraid to risk and reluctant to take on sacrifice.

Notes

1. “Their little country clung to a fringe of settlement along the east coast and contained only 2,500,000 people; 500,000 of whom were slaves. They had not one single bank and only one bridge stood between New York and Boston.” David McCullough, “History and Knowing Who We Are,” *American Heritage*, Winter 2008, 15. See also, Ricks, “Then and Now,” *Washington Post Book World*, Mar. 16, 2008, 4.

2. “American Revolution,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution#Loyalists_and_neutrals (accessed August 26, 2010).

3. <http://www.everything2.com/title/American+Revolution> (accessed August 26, 2010).

4. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

[Articles_of_Confederation](#) (accessed August 26, 2010).

5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_1812 (accessed August 26, 2010).

6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican%20%80%93American_War (accessed August 26, 2010).

7. David Trask, “The Spanish American War,” Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/trask.html> (accessed August 26, 2010).

8. “Britain’s ‘Imperial Century’ (1815-1914),” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire#britain.27s_.22.281815-1914.29 (accessed August 26, 2010).

9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression (accessed August 26, 2010).

10. My parents graduated from college and were married in 1933. As my father had no job upon graduation, the newlyweds had to live with his parents. Nothing they would face in later life came close to the stress of those years.

11. “United States in the 1950s,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_in_the_1950s (accessed August 26, 2010).

12. “Economy of the United States—After the Great Depression,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_the_United_States (accessed August 26, 2010).

13. Overlawyered. <http://www.overlawyered.com> (accessed August 26, 2010).

14. Daniel Gross, “Mismanagement 101,” *Newsweek*, Mar. 24, 2008, 22.

15. Josef Joffe, “Here’s How America Looks to the World,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 2008.

16. *Washington Post*, December 27, 2006.

17. Blackstone, *Commentaries*, Book IV, chap. 27. See also, Voltaire, *Zadig* (1747), chap. 6: “It is better to risk saving a guilty person than to condemn an innocent one.” Satirist Mark Twain presents the contrasting view: “No, they have no railroad accidents to speak of in France. But why? Because when one occurs, somebody has to hang for it!

They go on the principle that it is better that one innocent man should suffer than five hundred.” *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; repr., New York: Signet, 1966), 76.

18. Jim Loney, “Nowhere to Go, Miami Sex Offenders Live Under Bridge,” Reuters.com, Feb. 5, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0515234320080205> (accessed September 2, 2010).

19. “[A]s a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington: September 17, 2002), The White House, <http://www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/> (accessed September 2, 2010).

20. Elliott, “So What Went Wrong,” *Time*, Sept. 28, 2003.

21. *Atlantic*, October 2007, p. 40. According to Hans Blix, “The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a tragedy—for Iraq, for the U.S., for the U.N., for truth and human dignity.” Quoted in *Newsweek*, Mar. 31, 2008, 23.

22. Owen Fiss, “The Fragility of Law,” *Yale Law Report*, Summer 2007, 40.

23. “China is the world’s fastest-growing major economy, with an average growth rate of 10% for the past 30 years.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China (accessed August 26, 2010); Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of a Fierce Yet Fragile Superpower,” *Newsweek*, Jan. 7, 2008, 38; Fareed Zakaria, “The World Bails Us Out,” *Newsweek*, Feb. 4, 2008, 44. China’s success in hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics confirmed its global influence.

24. Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes—Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

25. George W. Bush, Farewell Address, January 15, 2009, September 11 News.com, <http://www.september11news.com/PresidentBush.htm> (accessed August 26, 2010).

Her Stories: The History of Women in the Military

The active military role of women in World War II created a proud heritage for families and the nation.

By Linda B. Jefferson



About the Author

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Linda B. Jefferson earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Education at The Ohio State University. She married the late Eugene B. Jefferson and settled in Lima, Ohio, teaching in area schools while raising two children. In 1984 her husband moved the family to Columbus, where he founded the award-winning New Columbus Boychoir. Upon his death in 1989, Linda joined the Glencoe/McGraw-Hill educational publishing company, and soon became a member of Columbus Torch Club—which she currently serves as president—receiving the Silver Torch Award in 2007. She dedicates this paper to her late mother, Geneva Ferguson Bland, one of the first groups of women to become army officers.

Presented to the Columbus Torch Club on March 6, 2008.

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Introduction

At the 2005 International Torch Convention in Des Moines, I saw photos of U.S. Army women in the hotel and learned that Fort Des Moines was the site of the first Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) training center. Then I remembered my mother had received her training to be an Army officer there. In June 2007, I visited Fort Point in San Francisco at the base of the Golden Gate Bridge, where I found a book about the contributions of women to World War II. Later that month, while attending the Ohio Historical Society's seminar on

Oral History at Kenyon College, I came across a new book about a heroic group of women ambulance drivers in the U.S. Army during World War II. That fall in Houston's Buffalo Soldiers Museum, I saw a display about servicewomen, and in February 2008 I attended the ninety-fifth birthday party of a Tuskegee airman at the Columbus Jewish Center, where I viewed a display about army women. All of these sources have contributed to this paper and to my determination to share the special contributions made by women in several branches of service during the war, as illustrated by the stories of a major, a lieutenant colonel, and administrators in the army's WAACs (later WACs), the navy's WAVEs, the SPARS of the coast guard, and an all-female ambulance corps called the Rochambelles.

The Military's Early Need for Women

The attack on Pearl Harbor that ushered in the Second World War late in 1941 opened up job opportunities for women in the military as well as in civilian life. As men were drafted into the military, leaving more jobs than workers, women were sought to fill positions in the civilian work force and eventually in the military. The first branch of the service to recruit women, indirectly at first, was the army. Although an earlier Congressional effort in the spring of 1941 to set up a women's organization in the army died in committee, America's entry into war prompted efforts by President Roosevelt's chief of staff General George C. Marshall to involve women in the war effort. He convinced Congress to authorize a civilian auxiliary

World War II was an important era for all women workers because they had the opportunity to move into the labor force...

of women to assist the army as non-combatants serving in clerical, food service, light transportation, or mechanical positions, thus releasing men from such jobs for active combat. The critical shortage of men in the military broke the traditional restrictions on female employment in American society, significantly altering the status of the American woman.

Marshall named Oveta Culp Hobby director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), authorized by Congress in May 1942.¹ A thirty-seven-year-old lawyer married to former governor William P. Hobby of Texas, publisher of the *Houston Post*, she was an executive at the Houston paper and president of the Texas League of Women Voters. She had also been serving in the office of General Marshall as chief of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations—Women's Interest Section.² With her rank as director equivalent to a colonel's but the lesser pay of a major, she vigorously set out to have the WAACs perceived as tough but not unfeminine. She wanted the corps to be taken seriously but not seen as threatening. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was to be a corps of women in military uniform and under military discipline, between the ages of 21 and 45 and physically fit (meeting

specified height and weight standards), U.S. citizens with a high school degree or its equivalent, demonstrating excellent character, and matching the intelligence requirements of army officers. The pay was \$50 a month, increasing to \$166.67 for first officers.³ Recruiting began immediately, with 440 women chosen as officer trainees from a pool of 30,000 applicants. In her first speech to these new recruits, Hobby told them that they were living history, and that since they were entering a Corps without an established tradition, they must make their own. "From now on," she said, "you are soldiers, defending a free way of life. Your performance will set the standards of the Corps. You will live in the spotlight. Even though the lamps of experience are dim, few if any mistakes will be permitted you."⁴

Of the 440 women in the first officer training class in 1942, thirty-nine were black because that ratio mirrored the percentage of the U.S. population.⁵ Already separated from men in separate quarters, the women were segregated by race in their living, dining, and classroom areas. This discrimination was a concern of black organizations such as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the National Urban League, and the NAACP. Mary McLeod Bethune became the primary civilian adviser on race and always worked toward eliminating segregationist policies in the military,⁶ a goal finally achieved in 1948 under President Truman.⁷

Women Willing to Serve

The motivation and experience of these early officers is best shown in the stories of three women. Unlike others who were unemployed, all three had jobs but were looking for more challenging and better-paying work with opportunities for advancement. Like most women interested in military service, they hoped that by joining they might bring the men in their lives home sooner. One of these women was Geneva Ferguson of Camp Dennison,

Ohio, who in June 1942 had just completed a year's contract teaching six grades of African American students in one room of a school where the white children were in graded classrooms. She believed this discrimination was harmful to all of the children and had resigned her position at the end of the year. Seeking new employment, she read in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that the army was recruiting women with college degrees for training as officers. She applied and was interviewed by a board of military officers at Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio. She met the qualifications and was accepted.⁸

Charity Adams, a native of South Carolina with a BA in education from Wilberforce University and graduate work at Ohio State, was completing her fourth year teaching mathematics and general science in Columbia, South Carolina when she received an invitation to apply to the WAAC on the recommendation of Wilberforce's Dean of Women. Attracted by the career and leadership opportunities cited in the letter, she applied and was accepted. After completing the health exams and interviews, Charity was sworn into the WAAC in July 1942 and traveled to Des Moines, Iowa for basic training.⁹ Geneva and Charity discovered they were part of the Third Platoon of thirty-nine African-American women, a unit that became as close as a family as they trained, supported, and bickered with each other. The women learned about the organization of the army, first aid, hygiene, property accountability, and map reading. They also had physical training and close order drill.

The press was a constant companion of the officer candidates. They were interviewed and photographed many times for *The Des Moines Tribune* and national magazines such as *Life*. The women adopted the courtesies and customs of the service. After they learned how to salute, they saluted like mad, at the proper time and the improper time, the right people and the wrong people. As Adams recalled,

I remember one day three of us were walking toward our barracks when we spotted two men, dressed in the white uniform of Coca-Cola delivery men, sitting on the rail around our barracks porch. We saw them; we even discussed their presence there. As we came about fifteen feet from them, one of the men started to raise his right hand. Instantly the three of us came to attention and executed our smartest salutes. The man lifted his hand to his head and pushed his cap to the back of his head. The two of them had a good laugh at our expense, and we were terribly embarrassed each time we saw a Coca-Cola truck drive through our area.¹⁰

On August 29, 1942 Charity Edna Adams became the first of her platoon to be commissioned an officer in the WAAC because her last name began with an "A." Geneva received the same commission later that day.¹¹ Charity was assigned to the Third Company, Third Training Regiment and was charged with training the African-American enlisted personnel. In December the first group of WAAC trainees was sent to various army posts. Remaining on duty at Fort Des Moines, Charity Adams received a new assignment as a supervisor of training classes. When the WAAC became an official part of the Army's new Women's Army Corps (WAC) in early 1944, she became a Training Control Officer, seeking ways to improve efficiency and improve job training.

Promoted to the rank of major in the previous fall, she was sent to France in command of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, leading the first contingent of African-American WACs responsible for delivering mail to approximately seven million American troops stationed in Europe. The mail had been piling up for quite some time, with six airplane hangars of Christmas packages. The WACs worked three eight-hour shifts, seven days a week, averaging 65,000 pieces of mail daily,

completing the assignment in a record three months. Promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel—the highest-ranking black female officer in the WACs—she turned down a Pentagon office assignment to return to civilian life early in 1946.¹²

Charity's friend and colleague Geneva Ferguson followed a similar career path in the WAAC, first working from dawn to dusk performing inspections as commanding officer of a group of new recruits, watched on weekends by the hundreds of visitors who came to Fort Des Moines just to see the women. Transferred to Fort Clark, Texas in command of two hundred women, Geneva received her silver bars and became a second officer, equivalent to a first lieutenant in the army.¹³ In 1943 she received a leave to marry her fiancé Henry C. Bland Jr., a Calvary Officer at Fort Riley, Kansas. The couple then traveled to Columbus, Ohio and Cincinnati, Ohio to visit their parents and friends. Geneva's last assignment was at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma where she replaced the Commanding Officer. She then applied for a release from the service and became just an army wife. The couple became parents of a daughter, Linda B. Jefferson and a son, Henry C. Bland III. Geneva Ferguson Bland went on to teach in the Columbus schools, retiring after thirty-one years and dying there in 2009 at age 89. Many in that city have heard her speak on several occasions about her experience in the army.

Charity and Geneva achieved the positions they obtained because of the skills they acquired in the army. They used the organizational skills that they were taught in both their professional and personal lives. Also, they were unwilling to leave a job half-done or undone and instilled this in their students.

Betty Bandel—Assistant Director of the WACs

The third of the women whose stories illustrate the great achievements of women in their early days in the

military is Betty Bandel, who eventually retired to teach English at the University of Vermont. She counted Columbus Torch Member Thomas Holtzinger as one of her students, to whom she later sent a book about her journeys abroad. From the book of her letters that she co-edited and published in 2004, we learn about the WAC's contribution to the war effort and the inner workings of this first large, non-nurse contingent of American military women. When she first joined the WAAC in 1942, the *Des Moines Tribune* noted that this new female recruit was a native of Washington, DC but had been living in Arizona and working as a reporter for the *Arizona Daily Star*.

After basic training, Bandel was assigned to WAAC headquarters in Washington, where her intelligence and leadership abilities came to the attention of WAAC Director Hobby. Hobby asked Bandel to accompany her to England with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to observe British women's military services. After this trip, Bandel helped Hobby establish policies and procedures for our women in the military. In December 1942 she was promoted to the rank of captain—a first for the WAACs—and was further promoted to lieutenant colonel in January 1944.¹³ Betty Bandel was one of the most influential officers during the early years of the WAAC. In addition to her book of letters, *An Officer and a Lady*, Professor Bandel published numerous books on Vermont history, New England music, and Shakespeare before her death on July 2, 2008 at the age of 95.

All three of these women—Charity Adams, Geneva Ferguson, and Betty Bandel—joined other military women in going beyond the stereotypical “women's” jobs featuring mundane repetition to serve in a variety of capacities. In the Ordnance Department they computed the velocity of bullets, measured bomb fragments, mixed gunpowder, and loaded shells. The WAACs assigned to the Transportation Corps processed men for assignment

overseas by handling personnel files and handling weapons. Later, they were trained to replace men as radio operators on U.S. Army hospital ships and in clerical positions. In the Chemical Warfare Service, women worked as glass blowers in laboratories and tested field equipment. WAACs in the Quartermaster Corps kept track of supplies in depots across the country, responsible for inspection, procurement, stock control, storage, fiscal oversight, and contract termination.

Women in Other Branches of the Military

The need to release men in other branches of military service led to the creation of women's divisions in the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy, as well as the spontaneous initiative that sent women abroad to drive ambulances in a group called the Rochambelles. On November 23, 1942, President Roosevelt signed a law that authorized women to assist the coast guard by holding shore positions for the duration of the war and for six months thereafter. Dorothy C. Stratton, selected to head the Coast Guard Women's Reserve, had been Dean of Women at Purdue University and a pioneering woman professor and strict disciplinarian. She transferred from the Navy Women's Reserve where she had been a Lieutenant. More than 10,000 women volunteered for coast guard service between 1942 and 1946.¹⁵

The women's branch of the navy, the WAVEs, created on July 30, 1942, assigned women to release some shore-bound men for sea duty. Miss Mildred McAfee left the presidency of Wellesley College to become the leader of the WAVEs. The ladies learned navy policies and were given a working knowledge of the organization, personnel, and administration, as well as a thorough grounding in naval etiquette, customs, traditions, and usage. Assigned duties beyond simple secretarial and clerical functions, they assumed jobs in the medical professions, communications, intelligence, science,

and technology. Within a year there were 27,000 WAVES.¹⁶

The Rochambelles were an outstanding group of women who served in an all-female ambulance corps in France. The corps was organized in New York by Florence Conrad, a wealthy American widow who was living in France at the beginning of World War II. This group was accepted as part of Free French in July 1943 and was assigned to the French Second Armored Division that was equipped by and attached to the U.S. Army. Conrad led the group until August 1944. Both American and French women, who were living in America, signed up for training in the States. Some parents had no idea how dangerous this assignment might be for their daughters and willingly gave their blessings. About 15 women left Pennsylvania Station in September 1943 and flew to Casablanca. They saved countless soldiers' lives with ambulance service at the Battle of Normandy in August 1944.¹⁷ Ellen Hampton's account of these remarkable women, published in 2006, told of their many adventures and the dangers they experienced as they performed their duties. They also had to deal with resentment and hostility from male soldiers and military leaders who did not want women participating in the war. This little-known aspect of World War II is a well-written chronology of personal involvement and will interest anyone who wants to learn more about this extraordinary group of women.

Conclusion

By the end of 1943, the jobs that were open to WAC personnel had expanded to 239. They could select Technical and Professional jobs such as positions in the Medical profession, in Public Relations, Photography, Administrative and Office positions, Food Service, and Physical Sciences and Mathematics.¹⁸ The WAVE personnel could study aircraft mechanics. These jobs offered good pay, training, and valuable experience. When the women

returned home from the service they were able to qualify and obtain jobs that had not been open to them before the war.¹⁹ World War II was an important era for all women workers because they had the opportunity to move into the labor force and they learned that jobs could be fun and rewarding.

Notes

1. Betty Bandel and Sylvia J. Bugbee, eds., *An Officer and a Lady*, (Washington: Military Women's Press, 2004), xvii.

2. Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War* (New York: Free Press, A Division of Simon and Schuster, 2004), 114.

3. "Women's Army Auxiliary Corps" (Washington: Recruiting Publicity Bureau, United States Army, 1942), 5-6.

4. Yellin, 117.

5. *Ibid.*, 211.

6. Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, eds., *American Women in a World at War; Contemporary Accounts from World War II* (Wilmington DE, SR Books, 1997), 25.

7. Anjus Chiedozie, "The History of African Americans in the U.S. Military," eHow, www.ehow.com/about_5480444_history-african-americans-military.html (accessed 9/14/2010).

8. Geneva Bland, unpublished "Memoirs," 1970, 1.

9. Charity Adams Earley, *One Woman's Army* (College Station: Texas A and M University Press, 1989), 11.

10. *Ibid.*, 40.

11. Gladys S. Carter, ed. *Her Stories*. Chesapeake, VA: Great Bridge Press, 2004, 4.

12. Earley, 150, 180. Charity died on January 13, 2002. According to the program for their biennial convention in 2004, whenever members of the National Association of Black Military Women gather they pay tribute to Charity Edna Adams Earley. See "Standing on Their Shoulders; 14th Biennial Reunion, July 21-25, 2004, Ft. Des Moines, IA" (Morrow, GA: NABMW, 2004). In the new student

Union opened in 2010 at The Ohio State University, Charity's contributions accompany her photo in a display on the third floor.

13. Bland, 1.

14. Bandel and Bugbee, xi.

15. Litoff and Smith, 36.

16. Anne Bosanko Green, *One Woman's War* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989), x; see also www.history.navy.mil/photos/prs-tpic/females/wave-ww2.htm (accessed 9/16/2010).

17. Ellen Hampton. *Women of Valor; The Rochambelles on the WWII Front* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 211-212, 22.

18. Chiedozie, eHow article.

19. Jane Fonda, "Introduction," *A Century of Women* (Nashville: Turner Publishing Company, 1994), 34-35.

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2011 Paxton Lectureship Award

The Paxton Award, created in honor and memory of W. Norris Paxton, past president of the International Association of Torch Clubs and editor emeritus of *Torch*, is given to the author of an outstanding paper presented by a Torch member at a Torch meeting. The winning author for the 2011 Award will receive an appropriate trophy, a \$250 honorarium, and paid registration to the 2011 IATC convention in Hagerstown, MD. The winner will be introduced at the convention banquet where he or she (or a designated representative) will deliver the paper on June 25, 2011.

Eligibility: The author must be a member of a Torch club and the paper must have been delivered to a Torch club meeting or a regional Torch meeting between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010 (inclusive). Current officers and directors of IATC are ineligible for this award during their terms of office.

Procedure: All papers to be published in *Torch* should be sent to the IATC Office, Attn. Editor, 11712C Jefferson Ave., Newport News, VA 23606, along with the current Manuscript Submission Form (available from the club secretary or IATC Office), duly signed by the author and a club officer. Paxton candidates will be selected by the Editorial Advisory Committee from all papers submitted for publication in *Torch*. The Paxton Award Committee will consider the EAC-recommended 2010 papers in the spring of 2011 to determine the winner of the 2011 award

Judging: The reading and judging panel comprises five people: a member of the Board of Directors of the IATC, one of the last five winners of the Paxton Award, a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee, and two members selected by the IATC Board of Directors. Judging is based on the principles set forth in the IATC brochure “The Torch Paper,” available from the IATC Office, and the “Manuscript Submission Suggestions” at the Publications link of the IATC website www.torch.org. The winner of the Paxton Award and other contestants will be notified early in May 2011.

Additional Information:

- A publishable Torch paper should be approximately 3,000 words in length.
- Local clubs are not allowed to submit papers directly for Paxton consideration.
- The Paxton Award paper will be published in the Fall 2011 issue of *Torch*.

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Call to Annual Business Meeting and Torch Convention—Hagerstown, MD—June 23-26, 2011

Thursday, June 23: 3:00pm Officers' Exchange; 4:00pm Business Session I; 5:30pm Dinner & Torch Paper #1

Friday, June 24: 8:45am Business Session II; 10:00am Torch Paper #2; 11:15am Cafeteria Lunch & Tours; 5:00pm Bus to Country Club for Dinner & Silver Awards, then to Museum for Blues Concert

Saturday, June 25: 10:00am Torch Paper #3; 11:15 Lunch & Tours; 6:00pm Banquet, Gold Awards, Paxton Paper

Sunday, June 26: 7:30am Breakfast; 8:00 Interfaith Dialogue; 9:00 Torch Paper#4; 10:30 Business Session III



2011 Torch Convention Highlights

Thursday, June 23—Torch Paper #1
Divided Loyalties – presented by Edwin Itnyre. Ed earned his BS and JD degrees from George Washington University and spent his career in the Federal Executive Service. A member of Torch since 1997, in retirement he has pursued an interest in the Civil War, concentrating on understanding the divided loyalties of a border state.

Friday, June 24—Torch Paper #2
A Community's Response to the Influenza Epidemic of 1918 – presented by Melinda Marsden. Mindy earned her BA from Bucknell University and an MBA from Frostburg University. She has been a member of Torch since 1997, and is the retired Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society. Her paper, culled from newspaper accounts of the time, takes the measure of a community by its response to a crisis.

Saturday, June 25 – Torch Paper #3
The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts – presented by Rebecca Massie Lane. Rebecca earned her BA and MA degrees in Art History from the University of Virginia and previously served as Director of the Sweet Briar College Museums and Galleries. She has been Director of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts since 2008.

Sunday, June 26 – Torch Paper #4
Washington County Fossils – presented by R. Alan Hedges. Alan earned his PhD from Ohio State University. He taught theater arts, directed over 100 plays from the Greek Classics to Avant-garde, and has written numerous One-Act plays. His paper addresses an avocation – fossils (including a discussion of plate tectonics, the geologic time line, and the process of turning a plant or animal into a fossil background), focusing on his fossil-findings in Washington County, MD. Alan has been member of Torch since 2002.

“A Border State Perspective”

2011 Int'l Torch Convention Hagerstown, MD June 23-26

Registration Form

Paid by February 1, 2011 \$320/person

Paid by May 1, 2011 \$330/person

Paid **After** May 1, 2011 \$350/person

Partial Registration upon request:

Contact Jim Marsden

***Make check payable to:
Hagerstown Torch Club***

***Mail check to:
James Marsden
19570 Leitersburg Pike
Hagerstown, MD 21742***

Please use one form per person

Name & Title: _____

Name on Badge: _____

Profession: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Torch Club: _____

Special Needs: _____

Hotel Reservations are not included in registration fee.

Make reservations directly with the
Hagerstown Hotel and Convention Center
1910 Dual Highway
Hagerstown MD 21740
(301) 790-3010

www.hagerstownhotelandconventioncenter.com

Room rate \$77 + tax: king, queen, double
(Convention rate is available for extended stay)

**Further convention information is
available at www.torch.org**

TOUR CHOICES

(Please select **One** for each day)

Friday, June 24

Antietam National Battlefield

Site of the bloodiest day of the Civil War, this bucolic vista is devoid of the commercial intrusions found at other battlefields. The monumental effort by both forces to end the war at Antietam only led to the war's extension.

Or

Downtown Hagerstown

Miller House, home of the county Historic Society, is the starting point for this inside view of Hagerstown's cultural treasures.

Saturday, June 25

Fort Frederick

The largest surviving stone fort in the United States, built in anticipation of the French and Indian War but never used. This jewel of a Colonial Fort was restored by the CCC and government programs and became Maryland's first state park.

Or

Historic Homes of Washington County

Patricia Schooley, Author of *Architectural & Historic Treasures of Washington County Maryland* will lead a tour of three of the homes featured in the book.

In conjunction with the IATC Convention June 23-26, 2011, the Hagerstown Torch Club is sponsoring a BOOK FAIR so that Torch members attending the convention may display books they have authored. The Fair will be an integral part of the convention, giving authors the opportunity to discuss their books with fellow members. In addition, on Sunday afternoon following the convention, the public will be invited in to enjoy the same experience

The International Association of Torch Clubs, Inc.
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Reflections

*The history of mankind is a
personal tragedy; for
the highest ideals which
the individual may project...
he can never realize in
social and collective terms.*
—Reinhold Niebuhr, 1932
