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THE TORCH

A MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TORCH CLUBS

FEATURE

ART QUILTS: A Genre of Its Own

by John Walsh

Toward a Humane Drug Policy
by Stephen A. Sterrett

Historical Novels: Finding My Characters
by Charlie Lovett

A Forgotten Race Massacre
by Nancy A. Carter

Darwin: The Man and His Science
by Harry Wistrand

Join an exclusive club 100 years in the making!

Help us celebrate the 100th year anniversary of Torch by becoming a member of the Centennial Club. With your donation of as little as a hundred dollars to the Torch Foundation, you will receive exclusive benefits and recognition during our centennial year and beyond. To ensure the future of Torch, all donations will be dedicated to increasing membership in existing clubs and to developing new Torch clubs.

Join the Centennial Club today at torch.org/centennial-club.html

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THE TORCH

2023 Board of Directors

FEATURES

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sue Breen-Held, President

"If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."

— George Orwell

Our goal this year is to recruit new members by spreading the word that Torch is one of the best kept secrets among professional organizations. In fact, we have changed the way we are talking about ourselves!

I am proud to share what's new, what we are working on and what we are celebrating during the 2023-2024 season.

100 Year Centennial Celebration & 2024 Convention

Throughout the upcoming year and highlighted at our keynote 2024 Convention in Richmond, Virginia, we will be celebrating the existence of our organization for 100 years. Only 0.5% of all companies last 100 years and half of all non-profits fail within a few years. It is truly extraordinary that we are the privileged members to commemorate this incredible event. Save the date for what is going to be a fantastic convention in Richmond from June 20–23, 2024!

Centennial Club

This special donor opportunity has been established for the sole purpose of increasing members and developing new clubs. The goal is $100,000 in five years and we are asking every one of our Torch members to participate. Again, we have the privilege of being the membership active at this 100 year mark, to help to carry the mission forward.

Strategic Plan

Spearheaded by my predecessor, Dorothy Driskell and carried through by the IATC Vice President, Art Bloom, the plan spans a three year time period. Five objectives will be fully addressed: Grow Brand Awareness – Increase Membership and Retention – Grow Revenues and Cut Expenses – Expand the "Torch Paper" Concept – Build Trust in IATC Leadership.

Membership Growth & Expansion – Resource Guide & Tool Kit

Funded by the Torch Foundation, this interactive guide was created specifically for our Torch clubs to attract new members. An array of communication options are ready for clubs to send to prospective members.

Club Expansion

We are thrilled to welcome our first new Torch club in many years. Welcome to the 29 founding members of the Williamsburg club! There are continued efforts and a viable list of new club cities and contacts that will soon be supported with new resources.

I hope you are seeing the striking updates being delivered by our amazing IATC board (both past and present) and the outstanding committee leaders and members through our organization. As we begin another Torch season, I hope you will help us make this year a landmark year. I challenge all us at this amazing 100-year mark to do something to make our era one of the greatest generations of Torch!

We are secret no more!

In Torch,

Sue

In April, IATC board members gathered in Columbus, Ohio, for an annual strategic meeting along with spirited and spicy team building including a quacamole cook off!

EDITOR'S CORNER:

Angela P. Dodson, Editor
thetorcheditor@torch.org

Innovation and Creation

If this issue has a theme, it is innovation, creativity, and the evolution of ideas.

First, John Walsh of the Elmira Torch club (New York), a premier collector of art quilts himself, traces the emergence of this genre over the last few decades.

Steve Sterrett of the Columbus Torch club (Ohio) calls for new and more humane ways to address the public-health crisis of drug addiction.

Harry Wistrand of Richmond Torch club (Virginia) traces Charles Darwin's discoveries and the development of his theories on evolution, as well as his struggles as a human being.

Nancy Carter, president of the Adirondack Torch club (New York), takes us back to the Colfax massacre during Reconstruction in Louisiana, an all but forgotten episode in a dark era, and tells how it is being remembered now.

Bestselling-author Charlie Lovett of the Winston-Salem Torch club (North Carolina) tells us how he painstakingly builds the characters for his historical novels through research.

As we begin a new publication year, I want to recognize the work of our Editorial Advisory Committee. Its members review articles submitted for *The Torch* Magazine. When articles are uploaded through the Torch.org website, the managing editor, Joel Stegall, selects three reviewers from the EAC who are not from the writer's club and who have expertise/interest in the topic. To ensure anonymity, the name of the writer is deleted from the draft to be reviewed. Reviewers read each paper, rate it, on a scale of 1 to 5, and offer comments. Reviewers also make recommendations for the annual Paxton award. Joel compiles the reviews and sends them to me along with the paper.

These ratings and reviews not only give me a solid basis for deciding what should be published, but also help me understand how others respond to the papers. Often, they point out possible errors or give me clues to questions that I need to ask the writers, and I look to the reviewers for guidance on editing each piece. So, my hat is off to all members of the advisory committee. Your contributions are invaluable.

If you would like to be a reviewer, please contact Joel. Let him know your areas of expertise or interest. See the EAC roster on this page.

Editorial Advisory Committee

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Featured Authors

John Walsh

jmwiii9@hotmail.com

John "Jack" M. Walsh III is a licensed professional engineer whose life's work is making water safe to use. He grew up on the shore of Lake Michigan and now lives with his wife, beside a glen in Upstate New York. They are members of the Elmira Torch club (New York). Jack received a chemical engineering degree from Cornell University.

During his career, Jack ran the water chemistry program on board the nuclear ship N/S Savannah and designed the ultraviolet water purifiers on which the U.S. Public Health Service based its acceptance of UV water purification. He directed the development of the first analyzer for oil pollution in water and worked with seawater desalination plants. A company he founded produced chemical treatments that markedly reduced lead concentrations in the drinking water of 20 million people across the United States. Another company he founded manufactured analysers that maintained the purity of ultrapure water in electric utility power plants around the world.

Jack has collected art quilts for thirty years. Solo exhibitions of his collection have appeared in major museums across the United States and in Europe. The collection has been featured in *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Art & Antiques magazine, Forbes' Collector, American Craft* magazine, and several books. Jack has served on the boards of Studio Art Quilt Associates, Inc., the International Quilt Museum, Friends of Fiber Art International and numerous other organizations. On four occasions he has been listed in the annual 100 Top Collectors Issue of *Art & Antiques* magazine.

Stephen A. Sterrett

sterrett.1@osu.edu

For more than four decades, Steve Sterrett has worked in journalism, public relations, and community development.

Sterrett was raised in Toledo and earned his undergraduate degree in political science from Heidelberg University in 1970. He worked as a newspaper reporter and communications professional before joining The Ohio State University in 1978.

He worked for Ohio State for 31 years, the last fifteen as community relations director of Campus Partners, the university's non-profit community redevelopment corporation. In this position, he helped to manage community-planning processes, implementation of major urban redevelopment projects, and collaboration with the City of Columbus to improve municipal services in the neighborhoods adjacent to the university campus.

After retiring from the university in 2010, Sterrett worked for nine years as a consultant under a grant from The Columbus Foundation to coordinate the activities of the Weinland Park Collaborative (WPC), a partnership of nearly two dozen agencies and institutions. The WPC worked with residents of Weinland Park to improve the quality of their lives and the community. Weinland Park is a neighborhood close to the university campus that in recent decades experienced high levels of poverty and disinvestment.

Sterrett has been a member of the Columbus Torch club (Ohio), since 2002 and has been the club's monthly newsletter editor since 2013. He received the Paxton Award in 2017 for his paper, "Race Matters." He and his wife, Karen, have three grown children and five grandchildren.

Harry Wistrand

harrywistrand@gmail.com

Harry Wistrand received his Ph.D. from Arizona State University and did postdoctoral work at Yale University.

From 1974-2012 he served as professor of biology at Agnes Scott College, where he was department chair, associate dean of the college, and founding co-director of the Program (now Department) of Public Health and the Program in Environmental and Sustainability Studies.

After retiring, he moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he gives talks on genetics and evolution. He joined the Richmond Torch club (Virginia) in 2012 and has presented several papers to the club as well as at least four other organizations in Richmond. He is treasurer of the Richmond Torch club and for the 2024 International Association of Torch Clubs convention to be held in Richmond. Two earlier papers on Charles Darwin appeared in the Spring 2018 and the Winter 2020 edition of *The Torch*.

"Charles Darwin: The Origin Years" (1836-59) was presented to the Richmond Torch club on February 5, 2019.

Nancy A. Carter

revnacarter@gmail.com

Nancy A. Carter is the president of the Adirondack Torch club (New York). She was born in Flint, Michigan, worked in New York City, and retired to the Adirondacks of New York state, where she gardens, watches birds, does family genealogy, and enjoys her two cats.

Carter has an A.B. from West Virginia Wesleyan, a Ph.D. from the American University in Washington, D.C., and a M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary, where, much to her surprise at the time, she won the Hitchcock Prize in Church History. She wrote the book *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: Who Do You Say That I Am?* (1993) with Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly, who was the first African-American woman elected as a bishop in the United Methodist Church.

Carter presented a longer version of her paper on April 13, 2023, the 150th anniversary of the Colfax Massacre. Afterward, she updated it to include information about the dedication of the new memorial in Colfax, Louisiana.

Charlie Lovett

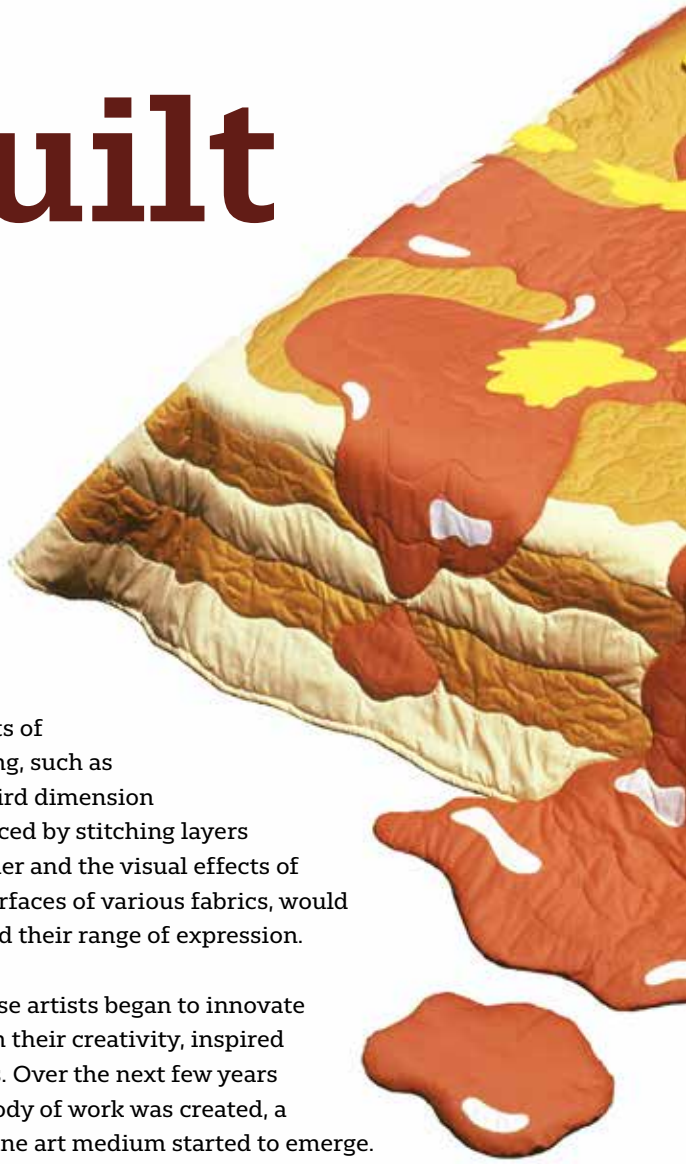
charlielovett42@gmail.com

Charlie Lovett is a *New York Times* bestselling novelist and award-winning playwright. His novels, including *The Bookman's Tale* and *The Lost Book of the Grail,* have been widely translated, and his plays for children have been seen in over five thousand productions worldwide. His most recent novel is the thriller, *The Enigma Affair*, Blackstone Publishing, 2022. He is a member of the Winston-Salem Torch club (North Carolina).

The Art Quilt

Creating a New Fine-Art Medium

by John Walsh



In the late 1960s, Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof, a New York City couple, began collecting quilts at antique shops, county fairs and flea markets. When they had collected about two-hundred-fifty traditional quilts, some as much as a hundred years old, Jonathan realized that many of the quilts embodied the design concepts found in large abstract paintings by painters who were currently much in vogue such as Andy Warhol, Josef Albers, and Piet Mondrian.

Holstein selected about fifty quilts from the collection and curated an exhibition displaying quilts on museum walls as fine art. The Whitney Museum in New York City presented the exhibition. It was a blockbuster and had such impact that its stay at the Whitney was extended for two months.

"The Whitney show caused a sensation...It elicited glowing reviews from a host of major art critics who had never deigned to write about quilts before," Robert Shaw wrote in his book, "The Art Quilt," published in 1997. [1]

They realized that adding aspects of quilting, such as the third dimension produced by stitching layers together and the visual effects of the surfaces of various fabrics, would expand their range of expression.

Among those whose attention the exhibition caught were artists working in other media: painting, printmaking, and sculpting. A number of these artists were frustrated with the limitations their fine art medium placed on their ability to express what they were trying to communicate in their works. They realized that adding aspects of quilting, such as the third dimension produced by stitching layers together and the visual effects of the surfaces of various fabrics, would expand their range of expression.

These artists began to innovate and, in their creativity, inspired others. Over the next few years as a body of work was created, a new fine art medium started to emerge. The first exhibition to recognize this new art form was The New American Quilt at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City in 1976.[2]

The *New York Times* reported:

> "If you expect to see neat rows of Log Cabin squares or the controlled radials of Bethlehem Stars arrayed in orderly precision on the 'New American Quilt,' take a deep breath and prepare yourself. For the thirty-four quilts in the current show at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts use the traditional quilt only as an underlying idea—and then explode from there in a dazzling variety of directions. This is a development that is not only logical, it was almost inevitable."

STARTING MY COLLECTION

I saw the exhibition, but it wasn't until 15 years later that I decided to collect art quilts. One of the works in the show that caught my attention was "Pancakes, Butter and Syrup Quilt and Bacon Rug" by Ros Cross created in 1973.

ROS CROSS, PANCAKES, BUTTER AND SYRUP QUILT AND BACON RUG. PHOTO BY ROS CROSS.

Ros Cross had come to the United States from England and was surprised with the amount of food people here put on their plates at mealtime. She expressed her amazement in the art quilt she created. This work is designed to be displayed on a bed, which is unique for an art quilt.

The term "art quilt" came into being ten years later in 1986 when two curators, Penny McMorris and Michael Kile, collaborated in producing the exhibition entitled "The Art Quilt." McMorris coined the term "art quilt." The book they produced in conjunction with the show was the first book on art quilts, also titled "The Art Quilt." For many years, McMorris was the corporate art curator for Owens-Corning Corporation, headquartered in Toledo, Ohio, and now lives in Bowling Green, Ohio. Kile was a publisher in San Francisco known for his art contacts and quilt expertise.

In 1988, I saw a BBC TV program featuring the American artist Michael James and the art quilts he was creating. His works such as "Lush Life" were captivating. I began to explore the world of quilts – all sorts of quilts. I acquired an Amish quilt, two Mennonite quilts, a Native American quilt, and a Crazy quilt. Quilt magazines gave me insight into historical and modern quilting.

A FORTUITOUS MEETING

Four years later, I recall that a quilt magazine described a major quilt event upcoming in 1992 – Louisville Celebrates the American Quilt. Six quilt shows would be held simultaneously including: African American quilts, a reprise of the Whitney exhibition, Amish quilts, and art quilts. On one weekend, four conferences were to be held. One was entitled, "Quilts and Collections: how quilts are seen, collected and used by individual and corporate collectors, and museums."[3]

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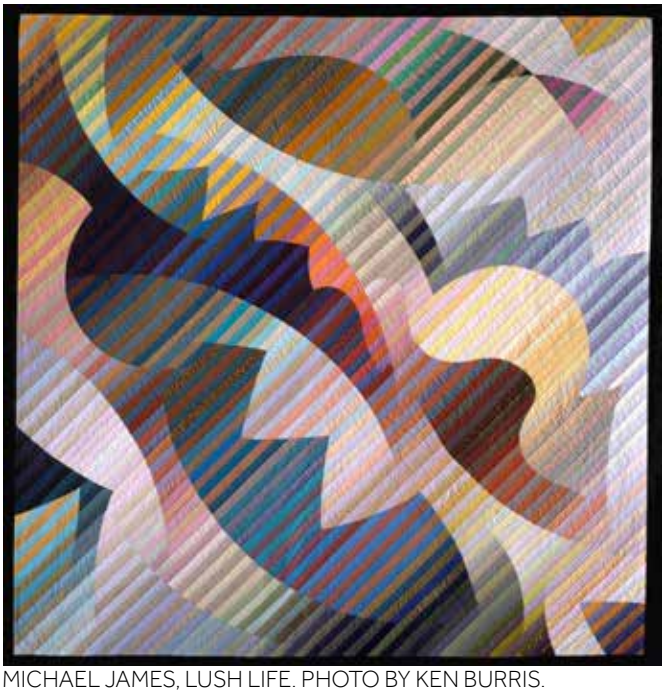
I went to Louisville for the weekend to try to find my direction with quilts. During my first twenty-four hours there, I saw all six quilt exhibitions. All were pleasing to me, and the art quilts were clearly my favorites. I wanted to pursue art quilts further but had no idea how to proceed.

At the Conference on Quilts and Collections later that weekend, the last speaker talked about collecting art quilts. She said, in short, "It is sad. There are lots of great art quilts being created and very few people are interested."

I mentally raised my hand and thought, "I can help." The speaker added that the couple who owned the world's



MICHAEL JAMES, LUSH LIFE. PHOTO BY KEN BURRIS.

greatest quilt collection, Robert and Ardis James, were in the audience. The James were philanthropists from Chappaqua, N.Y., who would found the International Quilt Study Center & Museum at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in 1997.

When the speaker was done, I introduced myself to Bob and Ardis James and said simply, "I want to collect art quilts, but don't know the first thing about it. What would you do if you were in my shoes?"

They very generously responded, "We would like to introduce you to the person who is our advisor when we buy art quilts."

They took me across the room and introduced me to the last speaker, Penny McMorris, the curator who coined the term "art quilt." On the spot, McMorris and I agreed to work together to create my collection of art quilts.

She had clearly given thought to what an art quilt collection could be and had several suggestions to offer.

- The collection should document the full range of works being created in the art quilt medium.
- It should have the best works of the best artists.
- If an artist had created great works but didn't seem currently to be working up to that standard, we should wait until the artist got back on track.

We decided to work together for a year, buy ten art quilts, and then determine if we would continue developing the collection. At the end of the year, I had acquired fifteen art quilts, and there was no question whether we would continue. Among those I bought were "Night Light" by Rebecca Shore, "For All the World to See" by Terese May, and "American Heritage Flea Market" by Terrie Mangat.

Two months after I met Penny McMorris, she invited me to her house for a crash course in art quilts. McMorris is an art historian. and she had collected thousands of slides of art quilts. Before I arrived, she selected from her collection eight hundred slides of art quilts created by fifteen artists whose work she wanted me to know about.

I arrived at her house at 8:00 AM and for the next eight hours sat with her at a light table in her kitchen looking at slides through a jeweler's loupe while she told me about each artist and their growth as an artist. When one of my eyes got tired, I switched the loupe to the other eye. At the end of the day, I had an initial understanding of the professional development of fifteen major artists and a good idea of the wide range of works being created. I started to grasp the creativity of the new medium.

I have continued collecting. So far, this year, I acquired two works. I display seven at a time in my house in Burdett, New York, where I have a 24 ft. by 34 ft by 21 feet high Art Quilt Gallery. I built a separate facility to store the rest of the collection on racks in a controlled environment.

I have a conservator (former senior conservator for the seven museums of the U.S. Navy) to guide me and the staff of an art moving company who handle the collection. A member of the professional staff of a major museum is my collection manager.

DEFINING A NEW ART FORM

Documenting the full range of works being created in the art quilt medium implies having a clear understanding of what is and what is not an "art quilt." The definition of the term "art quilt" used for my collection is broad and inclusive. It includes works that are remarkably close to traditional quilting and others that are far from it.

This definition specifies that an art quilt will include one or more elements of quilting and one or more elements of the fine arts.

This definition specifies that an art quilt will include one or more elements of quilting and one or more elements of the fine arts. Those elements may be fabrication techniques, such as sewing, painting, printmaking, and sculpting. The elements also may be design concepts such as the block layout or medallion pattern so common in traditional quilts or the portraits and landscapes found in paintings. A simple example may help clarify how this works.

INGE MARDAL AND STEEN HOUGS, THE PALLETE'S VIEW. PHOTO BY JOSEPH COSCIA.

One of my acquisitions was "The Palette's View" by Inge Mardal and Steen Hougs, two artists who had a Paris studio but who have since returned to their home country of Denmark. The work appears at first glance to be strictly a professionally painted portrait. However, there is more to it than at first meets the eye.

As a first step, Steen painted a self-portrait of himself — the view of his face and hand that would be seen by the palette holding the paints he was using. But when he finished painting, something was still missing —his hair! That was the point at which Inge took over and, using needle and thread, added the missing hair.

Creating "The Palette's View" involved a quilting technique — sewing with needle and thread and a fine art technique — painting. It didn't matter that "The Palette's View" is not the three-layer fabric sandwich normally found in traditional quilts. It still qualified for Quilt National, the major biennial, juried art quilt show, held in Athens, Ohio.

Art quilts vary in size. The smallest are a few inches square. At the other extreme is one made by M. Joan Lintault, an internationally renowned art quilter. Entitled "Four Rivers," it is 11 feet high and 72 feet wide. The final assembly had to be done in a parking lot! Lintault was an art professor at the University of Southern Illinois who died in 2020.

COMPENSATING THE ARTIST

As my collection grew, I became aware of the vast amount of time an artist could spend creating an art quilt. In many cases, the small compensation an artist received for a completed work didn't even amount to minimum wage. It seemed that spending so much time on one art quilt could cause the artist to wonder if they would sell it when it was finished. That thought could in turn inhibit creativity.

I decided to commission an artist to create a work. The commission would free the artist from being concerned about marketability. McMorris and I started looking for artists we believed could benefit from a commission. The first commission was offered to Pauline Burbidge, a major artist then living in England. I requested that her art quilt would somehow involve the subject of water. The thought was that water could be a common theme for other commissions in the future. The result was a quilt titled, "Nottingham Reflections," a nine-block quilt with each block containing the water reflection of a brick building.

Water was selected because it is ubiquitous, and the artist would be free to explore its many facets. Water was also chosen because of the importance of water in my life as a living environment and because making water safe to use has been my life's work.

TERRIE HANCOCK MANGAT, WILDFIRES/CALVING GLACIERS. PHOTO BY JOSEPH COSCIA.

In many cases, the small compensation an artist received for a completed work didn't even amount to minimum wage

When Burbidge completed the commission, she told me, "This has not only changed my work, but it has also changed the way I do my work. I now have enough new ideas to last me for the next ten years."

In 2017, I commissioned 11 major artists to each create an art quilt reflecting their thoughts about the changing times. The project was partly inspired by Bob Dylan's song "The Times They Are A-Changin."

Art quilts have several appealing qualities. They include the flow of energy that can be experienced when viewing an art quilt, different ideas may be intertwined within a single art quilt, people of all ages and varying backgrounds seem to be captivated by art quilts, and art quilts are full of surprises including the extreme range of materials used by the artists.

There often is a flow of energy from the artist through the work to the viewer. For some, it can be a quiet energy

like sitting by a woodland stream. Other art quilts are dynamic. An art quilt I commissioned, by Terrie Mangat of Taos, New Mexico, "Wildfires/Calving Glaciers" is ten feet tall. It has flames leaping up from the bottom, glaciers sparkling with hundreds of glass crystals at the top, and skeletons embedded in the glaciers reminding us that we are dealing with serious stuff.

Art quilts not only may consist of layers of fabric, but they also can have "layers of meaning." An art quilt may take several months or even a year or more to complete. As the work progresses, the artist's vision for the work may expand and new concepts may emerge. These thoughts and new ideas can all become part of the art quilt.

Take for instance Terese Agnew, a successful sculptor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who created among other works "The Wisconsin Worker's Memorial." She had switched to creating art quilts and set out to memorialize a flock of cedar waxwings that came to the AT&T Parking Lot in Milwaukee each autumn. It took her a few months to learn about the birds, assemble her supplies, and create the art quilt.

When the work was almost finished, AT&T had a major layoff. Agnew immediately grasped the symbolic connection of the layoffs and the migratory life of the birds. Like the cedar waxwings, which would have to seek their sustenance elsewhere once the berries in the trees at AT&T were consumed, many AT&T employees would have to go somewhere else to make their living. Agnew added to the images of the birds at the parking lot the figures of people holding pink slips and displaying various emotions as they walked for the final time to their cars in the AT&T Parking Lot.

People of all ages, even little children, seem to connect with art quilts. When a first-grade class visited an exhibition of my art quilts in New Jersey, the docent

TERESE AGNEW, CEDAR WAXWINGS AT THE AT&T PARKING LOT. PHOTO BY KEN BURRIS.

RACHEL BRUMER, LET HER

and teacher were surprised to see the girls in the class clustered around one art quilt, all having a lively conversation. The art quilt was Rachel Brumer's "Let Her." The work celebrated a time when Rachel's little daughter had just entered school and was learning how to choose her own outfits. The quilter had appliquéd tiny skirts and tops made from her outfits. The little girls at the show were comparing outfits they owned with ones in the art quilt. The exhibition of my art quilts entitled "Art Quilts: Contemporary Expressions" was at the Morris Museum in Morristown, New Jersey, January 13 to April 25, 2010.

The range of materials used to make art quilts is constantly expanding. It currently includes leather, ceramics, wood, glass, electronics, 35 mm movie film, beads, buttons, paint, and fabrics ranging from organza to mylar, wool, silk, cotton, netting, and paper.

Artists develop their own methods for making art quilts. Tim Harding, an internationally known quilter, stacks layers of fabric, each layer a different single color. He then stitches the layers together to create the pattern he wants. Finally, Harding produces the image by cutting away some of the layers of fabric to reveal different colors.

Agnew, the Milwaukee quilter who did the waxwings quilt, created "Portrait of a Textile Worker" with 30,000 labels that people had clipped from their garments. It shows a young woman at her sewing machine. Agnew spent two years stitching the labels together. "Portrait of a Textile Worker" became an icon of the labor movement. It is in the collection of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City.

Arturo Sandoval bleached 35 mm movie film to look like mother of pearl. With fabric he wove using the film,

he created "Millennium Portal #1", an 8-foot diameter round art quilt. When on display "Millennium Portal No. 1" is mounted on a mirrored disk. The disk spins at 2 rpm to give the impression of looking out of the porthole of a spaceship which rotates to provide artificial gravity. Arturo is an art professor at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

ARTURO SANDOVAL, MILLENNIUM PORTAL NO.1. PHOTO BY JOSEPH COSCIA.

EMERGING THEMES AND TRENDS

New trends are emerging. One of the latest is to expand the third dimension to the point where some art quilts are fully three-dimensional. Kay Khan of Santa Fe, New Mexico, was one of the first artists to explore this new direction with works such as "The Hitch."

Art quilts are becoming interactive with their viewers. For the body of work I commissioned, John Lefelhocz, based in Athens, Ohio, used computer driven LED's, motion detectors and range finders to create "The Many Layers of a Relief Map for the Explorer Seeking Clarity of Distance." This art quilt about social movements changes color depending on where the viewer stands. Mimicking the colors associated with the two major American political parties, the art quilt is red when the viewer is standing to its right. When the viewer moves to the left of the art quilt, it changes from red to blue.

The art quilt medium constantly evolves and grows. Originally art quilts were mostly an American phenomenon. Now, the medium is worldwide in scope. In 1989, Yvonne Porcella, a California artist, started Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA), an organization for professional artists who, like herself, were creating art quilts. Initially, fifty people joined SAQA. Today, it has thirty-four-hundred artist members in over twenty-five countries.

The popularity of art quilt exhibits has been constantly on the rise with a vastly expanded number of opportunities to see them. Over a decade elapsed between the first major exhibition of art quilts in 1976, "The New American Quilt," and the second major show, "The Art Quilt," in 1988. In 2022, there were eighteen global exhibitions of art quilts sponsored by SAQA alone.

As art quilts have become a recognized part of the fine-arts world, more and more art museums are including them in their collections and exhibitions. The prices these works can command have escalated commensurately. Thirty years ago, a person could count on the fingers of one hand the number of artists who had sold an art quilt for $10,000 or more. Now, some works sell for over $100,000.

Nevertheless, art quilts are still a very affordable form of fine art. Organizations like Studio Art Quilt Associates (www.saqa.com) have annual sales of members' works. These smaller works (often around 1 ft x 1 ft) are frequently available for a few hundred dollars. After fifty years of rapid growth and development, art quilts continue to amaze with innovative design concepts, creative use of new materials and works of surprising energy. It will continue to be fascinating to watch the evolution of this, the newest of the fine-arts mediums.

Note: The John M. Walsh III Collection of Contemporary Art Quilt is considered one of the foremost private collections of contemporary textile art. Quilts mentioned this article are in the collection, except the large art quilt by Joan Lintault and the "Portrait of a Textile Worker" by Terese Agnew.

KAY KHAN, THE HITCH. PHOTO BY JOSEPH COSCIA.

END NOTES

1 (Shaw 1977)
2 (Hammel 1976)
3 (Kenucky Quilt Project undated)

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The Challenge of Consensus:

Toward a Humane, Pragmatic Drug Policy

by Stephen A. Sterrett

I am a recreational drug user. I am comfortable in making this confession to my fellow Torch members because in my local club, I am surrounded by recreational drug users. We line up to purchase our alcoholic drink of choice during the cocktail hour prior to each of our Torch meetings.

Science and statistics tell us that alcohol is one of our society's most dangerous psychoactive substances. The National Cancer Institute defines a psychoactive substance as "a drug or other substance that affects how the brain works and causes changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings, or behavior. Examples of psychoactive substances include alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, marijuana, and certain pain medicines. Many illegal drugs, such as heroin, LSD, cocaine, and amphetamines are also psychoactive substances."[1]

You may think alcohol is different than marijuana, heroin, LSD, or cocaine because alcohol consumption is legal. Yet when Torch was founded in 1924, it was illegal to serve alcohol at the club meetings. The year 2023 marks the ninetieth anniversary of the repeal of Prohibition. The full repeal of Prohibition took effect December 5, 1933. Did the science about the impact of alcohol change in the thirteen years that the 18th Amendment was in effect? No, public attitudes changed. We would no longer tolerate the widespread flouting of the law and the growth of an organized crime underground economy.

Today the sale and consumption of alcohol is legal, but strictly controlled. To serve alcohol, the facility in which my Torch club meets must have a permit issued by the state. Under the law, the bartender is responsible for monitoring my alcohol consumption and must not serve me if I show signs of intoxication. Alcohol's legal status doesn't change the fact that it is a psychoactive substance that, like these other drugs, has both beneficial and profoundly negative side effects.

A PUBLIC-HEALTH CRISIS

This Torch paper will not debate the merits of psychoactive substances, but we will consider how we value and respond to the persons using psychoactive substances. Let me be clear: This is not a Torch paper about those drug addicts in that neighborhood on the other side of town. This is a talk about us: Those who use or abuse psychoactive substances and those who do not. With more than 100,000 drug overdose deaths in 2022,[2] we are a nation and a society in crisis. If we are to deal effectively with this public health crisis, we must recognize our common humanity.

With more than 100,000 drug overdose deaths in 2022, we are a nation and a society in crisis.

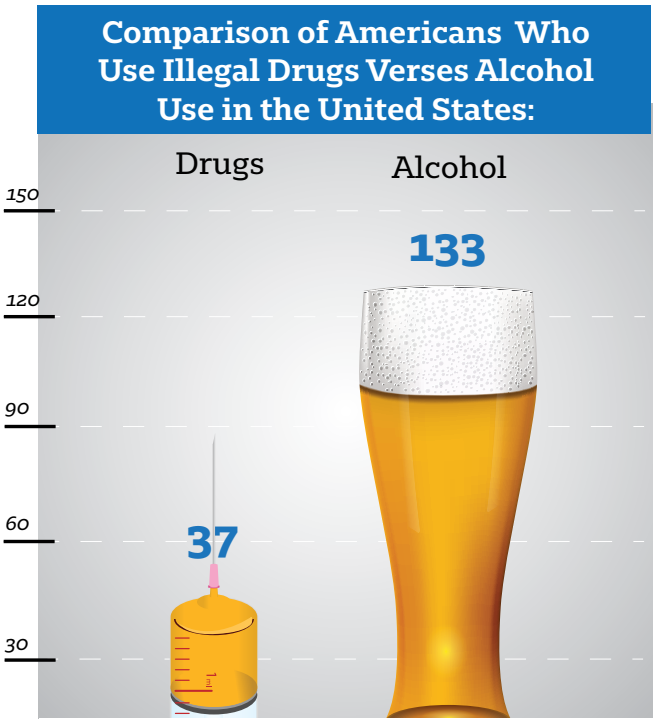
What is the scope of this public health crisis? According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the 20,000 overdose deaths in 1999 increased more than five-fold to more than 106,000 in 2021.[3]

Since President Reagan declared the War on Drugs in 1982, the federal dollars for drug control have risen from $1.5 billion in 1981 to $35 billion in 2020.[4] We have further criminalized substance use, militarized our police, targeted neighborhoods of color, filled up our prisons, undermined the economies of other nations, and disrupted the lives of millions of people.[5] What do we have to show for it?

The American people took only thirteen years to realize that Prohibition was a failure and to repeal the 18th Amendment. Why after more than forty years do we still prosecute this failed War on Drugs? It's not the whole story, but a critical component is the power of money, race, and politics.

Let's step back in time to get a clearer perspective of our current crisis.

Historian David Herzberg reports the developments of morphine from opium and cocaine from coca in the mid-19th century gave to physicians and patients for the



Numbers in the millions

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2021

first time powerful new drugs to relieve severe pain.[6] In the late 19th and early 20th century, moral crusaders and advocates of consumer protection successfully created "white-market drugs." These pharmaceuticals would have their purity regulated, they would be dispensed by prescription by licensed physicians, and they would be marketed primarily to middle-class White patients. Government regulation, not the free market, would prevent pharmaceutical manufacturers from putting profit over consumer safety. Today, these white-market drugs would include anti-anxiety medications such as Xanax and Valium, pain medications such as Percocet, and medications to combat depression such as Zoloft.

RISE OF THE BLACK MARKET

Herzberg explains, however, that for those without easy access to the white-market drugs, a black market grew for a growing list of illegal drugs. Aligning with our nation's always present racial and ethnics divides, the moral crusaders campaigned in the late 19th century to protect White women by outlawing opium dens and later opium as threats associated with the Chinese. In the 1920s and 1930s, the threat was marijuana associated with Mexicans. After World War II, the threat was heroin and later crack cocaine, blamed on African Americans. The solution to these threats from black-market drugs always was to criminalize the activity and the people.

Yet white-market drugs have posed a far larger problem of addiction and overdose, despite the expectation of government control. Herzberg writes: "During the last 150 years, small town and suburban white communities have suffered repeated crisis of addiction to pharmaceuticals. Indeed, they have been home to far more drug use and addiction than poorer communities with less access to the medical system."[7]

He cites three such major drug crises:

- The first, at the beginning of the 20th century with sharp increases in the medical sales of opioids and cocaine;
- The second, from the 1930s to 1970s with the boom in sales of pharmaceutical sedatives and stimulants; and
- The third, in the beginning of the 21st century with dramatic increases in sedatives, stimulants and opioids.

While the opioid epidemic growing from OxyContin has made headlines, other white-market drugs also raise concerns. The National Institutes of Health has issued a report questioning why benzodiazepines, a class of drugs used to treat anxiety and sleep problems, are widely prescribed when safer alternatives are

The solution to these threats from black-market drugs always was to criminalize the activity and the people.

available. Benzodiazepines, including Xanax, Valium, and Ativan, "can have serious risks.... Long-term use can lead to dependence, and stopping the drug may lead to withdrawal symptoms." NIH-funded researchers found that over a one-year period about 1 in 20 U.S. adults, ages 18 to 80, received a benzodiazepine prescription.[8]

Depression appears to be a serious problem among Americans. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that, during the period of 2015 to 2018, some 13.2 percent of adults age 18 and over used antidepressant medications in the previous thirty days. Use was higher among women (16.6 percent), than men (8.4 percent) and highest among women age 60 and over (24.3 percent). Adult usage climbed from 10.6 percent in 2009-1010 to 13.8 percent in 2017-2018.[9]

MONEY, RACE, AND POLITICS

In contrast to the punitive approach to the black-market threats, how did we respond to these white-market drug crises? We recognized them as public-health threats. Herzberg describes policies involving "a combination of strong regulation of large commercial suppliers and continued provision of safe, reliable drugs to people who needed them, including people who were addicted."[10]

Do you see the threads here of money, race, and politics?

Turning from this social history, let's consider the persons who use psychoactive drugs. For millennia, human beings have ingested these substances. Examples include alcohol, peyote, psilocybin mushrooms and tobacco. According to the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, today "half of people 12 years of age and older have used illicit drugs at least once." Among Americans aged 12 years and older, 37 million have used illegal drugs in the past 30 days. That's 13.5 percent of us.[11]

I suspect the vast majority of these 37 million Americans use these illicit psychoactive substances for the same reason I sip a bottle of beer or a glass of wine three or four times a week: it makes me feel good or more social or it relieves some anxiety or relaxes me. While 37 million Americans use illegal drugs, that number pales in comparison with the 133 million who drink alcohol.[12] Whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, these substances provide pleasure to many of us.

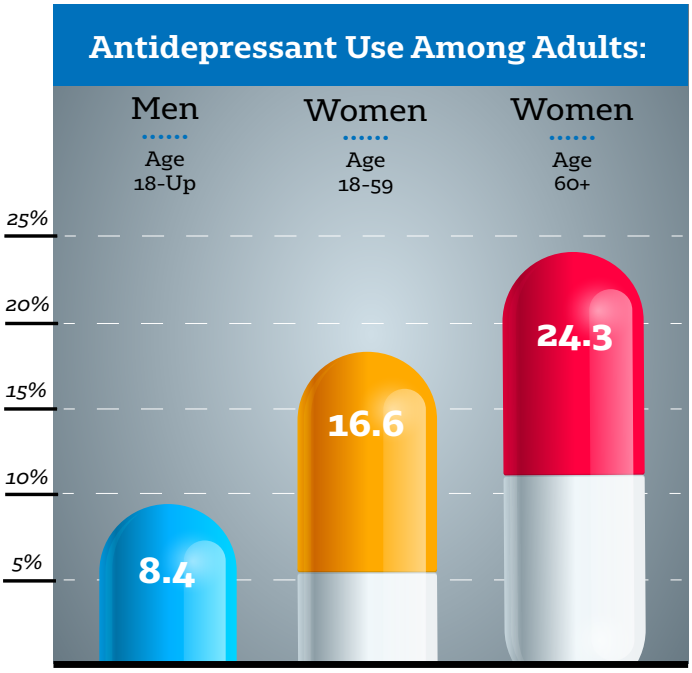
Apart from the legal consequences of using illicit drugs, the primary concern with these substances is addiction. The vast majority of these 37 million Americans using illicit psychoactive substances are not drug addicts. In fact, research indicates that only 10 percent to 30 percent of those who use even the most stigmatized drugs, such as heroin and methamphetamine, meet the standard definition of addiction.[13]

In the 19th century and much of the 20th century, addiction was seen as at best a character defect and at worse a moral degeneracy.

What is the standard definition of addiction? Here we enter a fascinating and complex interplay of brain science, medical practice, human behavior, and social context. In the 19th century and much of the 20th century, addiction was seen as at best a character defect and at worse a moral degeneracy. Recognizing the harm in such a definition, addiction to alcohol and other drugs has been redefined in the last few decades as a brain disease, a substance-use disorder.

A NEW DEFINITION OF ADDICTION

The National Institute for Drug Abuse now defines addiction "as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered a brain disorder because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control. Addiction is a lot like other diseases, such as heart disease. Both disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of an organ in the body, both have serious harmful effects, and both are, in many cases, preventable and treatable. If left untreated, they can last a lifetime and may lead to death."[14]



Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This definition of a substance use disorder is helpful, but it's not complete because it fails to include the influence of economic and social factors.

First, there doesn't appear to be an objective measure for a substance-use disorder. A few years ago, I asked an experienced addiction counselor if a person could take a blood test or identify a physical marker that the person is an alcoholic. Her response was to point out that most people who are arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol are profoundly impacted by the public stigma, the court fine, and the jump in insurance rates. They change their behavior to avoid another DWI. If a person is arrested a second time, he or she has failed to change behavior and, thus, likely has an alcohol problem. The brain disease model of addiction relies on observations of behavior, which can be difficult to accurately record and understand.

Second, psychologist Michael Reznicek, author of *Blowing Smoke: Rethinking the War on Drugs without Prohibition and Rehab*, argues that the brain-disease model rests on limited scientific research, but the medical establishment will receive billions of dollars from taxpayers in state and federal funding to manage a disease.[15]

Third, Gabor Maté, psychiatrist and addiction authority, writes: "The object, form, and severity of addictions are

shaped by many influences – social, political, and economic status; personal and family history; physiological and genetic dispositions – but at the core of all addictions there lies a spiritual void."[16] He argues that stress and trauma play a major role. "Drugs, in short, do not make anyone into an addict, any more than food makes a person into a compulsive eater. There has to be a preexisting vulnerability. There also has to be significant stress."[17]

Fourth, the disease model focuses the attention on the person using the psychoactive substance, rather than the social, political and economic conditions that lead people to using in the first place.

I don't reject the disease model of substance-use disorder, but we should remain open to the innovative discoveries in brain science, as well as to the many other complex factors that influence addictive behavior.

REASONS FOR HOPE

After writing of the challenges of this public-health crisis, let me now turn to the positive efforts to mitigate the crisis. There is reason for hope.

One of the most significant developments in our public-health approach to substance-use disorder has been the growth of the harm-reduction movement. Journalist Maia Szalavitz reports the movement began in the early 1980s at a clinic in a suburb of Liverpool, England.[18] British drug policy in the early 20th century had permitted physicians to prescribe cocaine and heroin at a low cost to persons addicted to the drugs. The clinic had continued the old practice, but a new director questioned the idea of providing the drugs. He received a government grant to compare drug-related issues in the clinic's suburban Liverpool location with a nearby town that had no heroin prescribing.

British drug policy in the early 20th century had permitted physicians to prescribe cocaine and heroin at a low cost to persons addicted to the drugs.

Szalavitz writes that the director was surprised to find that in the clinic's suburban location "crime rates were lower, with far fewer people needing to steal to support their habits since they got their drugs from the National Health Service. Even more counter-intuitively, the rate of new addictions seems to be reduced as well."[19] That likely was due to persons not supporting their drug habit by selling drugs and recruiting new users.

When the AIDS epidemic swept through Liverpool in the mid-1980s, the rates of infection among drug users surged as they shared needles. The experience of the suburban clinic inspired the opening in 1986 of the United Kingdom's first clean-needle exchange. The goal was to keep people alive, even if they would continue to use drugs.

Over the subsequent decades, the policies and practices of harm reduction expanded and spread internationally. "In essence," Szalavitz writes, "harm reduction is radical empathy. The basic idea is that regardless of whether people continue to use illegal drugs or engage in other problematic behaviors, their lives have value."[20] In short, people can't deal with their substance use disorder if they are dead.

THE OPIOID CRISIS

The support for harm reduction in the United States finally came with the opioid drug crisis that brought addiction and overdose deaths to middle-class White and rural communities. I'll say what we all know: White lives matter.

The City of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio, have collaborated with community partners to develop a community-wide addiction plan with clearly stated goals, interventions, and continually updated metrics. The plan incorporates many of the strategies of harm reduction: clean-needle exchange, expanded and more immediate access to treatment programs, and the distribution of fentanyl test strips so people can determine if their substances are contaminated by fentanyl. Columbus Public Health offers free distribution of Narcan Nasal Spray, the safe antidote for opioid overdose in adults and children.[21]

A DOSE OF HUMANITY

With the gridlock in Washington over cultural issues, including drug use, progress in the next few years will come from experimentation and innovation at the local and state level. To significantly reduce the number of overdose deaths, we must go beyond the current efforts. I call on our nation's heritage of pragmatism. We can't continue to tie ourselves to ideology or a moral crusade. We need to agree to recognize our common humanity. Then we must invest in a variety of strategies and programs to determine what works to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of substance use disorder, while recognizing that people will continue to use psychoactive substances.

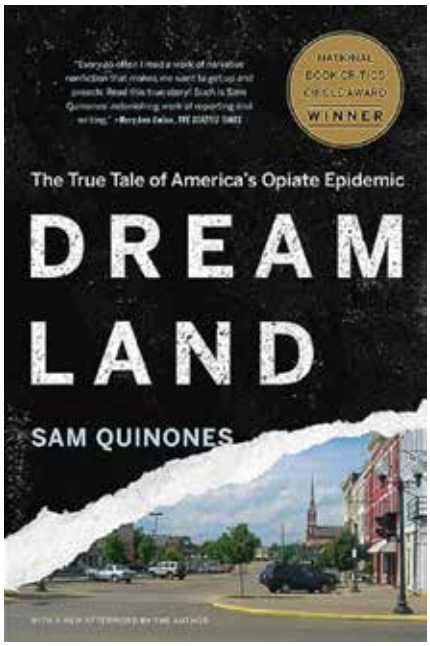
If I were the new drug czar, what would I do?

- I would declare the War on Drugs as a failure and quickly move away from using the police and criminal justice system as a hammer to fix a public-health crisis.
- I would decriminalize the possession and use

of small amounts of psychoactive substances for personal use. In conjunction with decriminalization, I would create government-sponsored programs for the anonymous testing of psychoactive substances so people know what they are using.

- I would monitor the impact of our policies and practices on the various social, racial, ethnic and economic groups in our society to assure equity and fairness.
- I would invest in comprehensive age-appropriate education programs that explain the benefits and risks of psychoactive substances. (Remember that opioids, meth, and many other psychoactive substances were developed for medicinal purposes.)
- I would invest in treatment research and a variety of treatment programs for persons with substance-use disorders, including programs that provide low-cost substances in a safe environment as part of maintenance or recovery.

Here is what I would not do: I would not trust corporate capitalism to manage our public-health crisis.



Support for legalizing marijuana for personal recreational use is growing across the nation. I am concerned, however, that state legislatures and state ballot initiatives will turn over the marketing and distribution of marijuana to profit-driven private corporations. Have we learned nothing in the past forty years? Must I remind you of the lies and deceit of the tobacco corporations in hiding their responsibility for the terrible health effects of smoking? Or the pharmaceutical corporations whose deceptive marketing of opioids and their blind-eye to the drugs' impact created the nation's biggest public-health drug crisis?

From the end of Prohibition to 1991, the sale of liquor in Ohio, where I live, was limited to state liquor stores. I argue that method of distribution sent a clear message that alcohol is a controlled substance. The state will meet a demand for alcohol, but the state won't promote its sale and consumption. I suggest the model of the state liquor store would be appropriate for the sale and potentially safe consumption of marijuana. The substance should be tolerated, but not promoted.

A major reason the War on Drugs failed is we are chasing symptoms. We refused to honestly confront the question of why so many of us in our advanced industrial nation turn to psychoactive substances for relief and even pleasure.

FEELINGS OF EMPTINESS

The Canadian psychiatrist Gabor Maté writes: "It is no coincidence that addictions arise mostly in cultures that subjugate communal goals, time-honored tradition, and individual creativity to mass production and the accumulation of wealth. Addiction is one of the outcomes of the 'existential vacuum,' the feeling of emptiness engendered when we place a supreme value on selfish attainments.... We have seen that addiction arises out of dislocation. The absence of meaning is yet another dislocation that we human beings, spiritual creatures that we are, cannot well endure."[23]

In 2015, journalist Sam Quinones published *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic*. In an incredible piece of reporting, he explained the connections between Purdue Pharma, OxyContin, pill mills, Mexican drug cartels, and the reemergence of heroin.

In 2021, Quinones published *The Least of Us: True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth*. As the book title suggests, he visited small towns and communities devastated by the opioid public-health crisis. He sees the shredding of the American social fabric in the growing income inequality, the jobs shipped overseas, and more and more families worried about rent, food, and access to healthcare. Yet he finds hope as people come together and develop innovative ways to help each other.

"In a time indeed when drug traffickers act like corporations and corporations like drug traffickers, our best defense, perhaps our only defense, lies in bolstering community," he writes. "America is strongest when we understand that we cannot succeed alone, and weakest when it's every man for himself."[24]

Quinones notes that the opioid epidemic raged in southern Ohio and Appalachia in the late 1990s, but we ignored it. "It wasn't our problem." "The scourge spread from Appalachia because, as the [COVID] pandemic is showing us years later, you cannot escape it. That's why the lesson we must learn is that we're only as strong as the most vulnerable, as people who are in pain."

We must live into our humanity and treat persons with substance-use disorders as people in pain, not as

criminals. This Torch paper raises many questions about the use of psychoactive substances. My answers are, at best, incomplete and many others simply may be wrong. What I ask for is more careful research, honest debate, and pragmatic answers to those questions if we, as a society, are to help people make good decisions about the use of psychoactive substances. At the same time, we also must confront and change the social, economic, and political conditions that foster people's use of psychoactive substances to relieve their pain.

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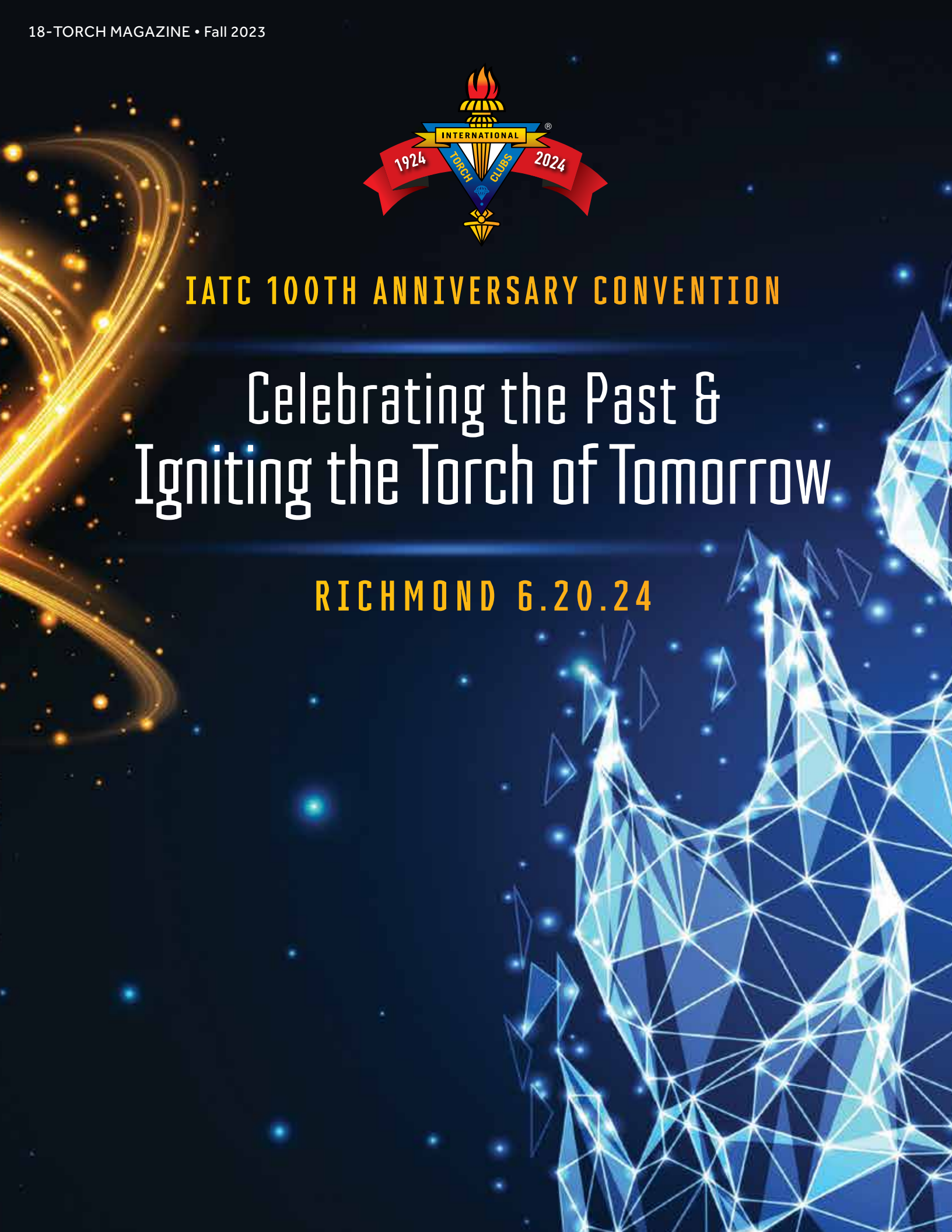

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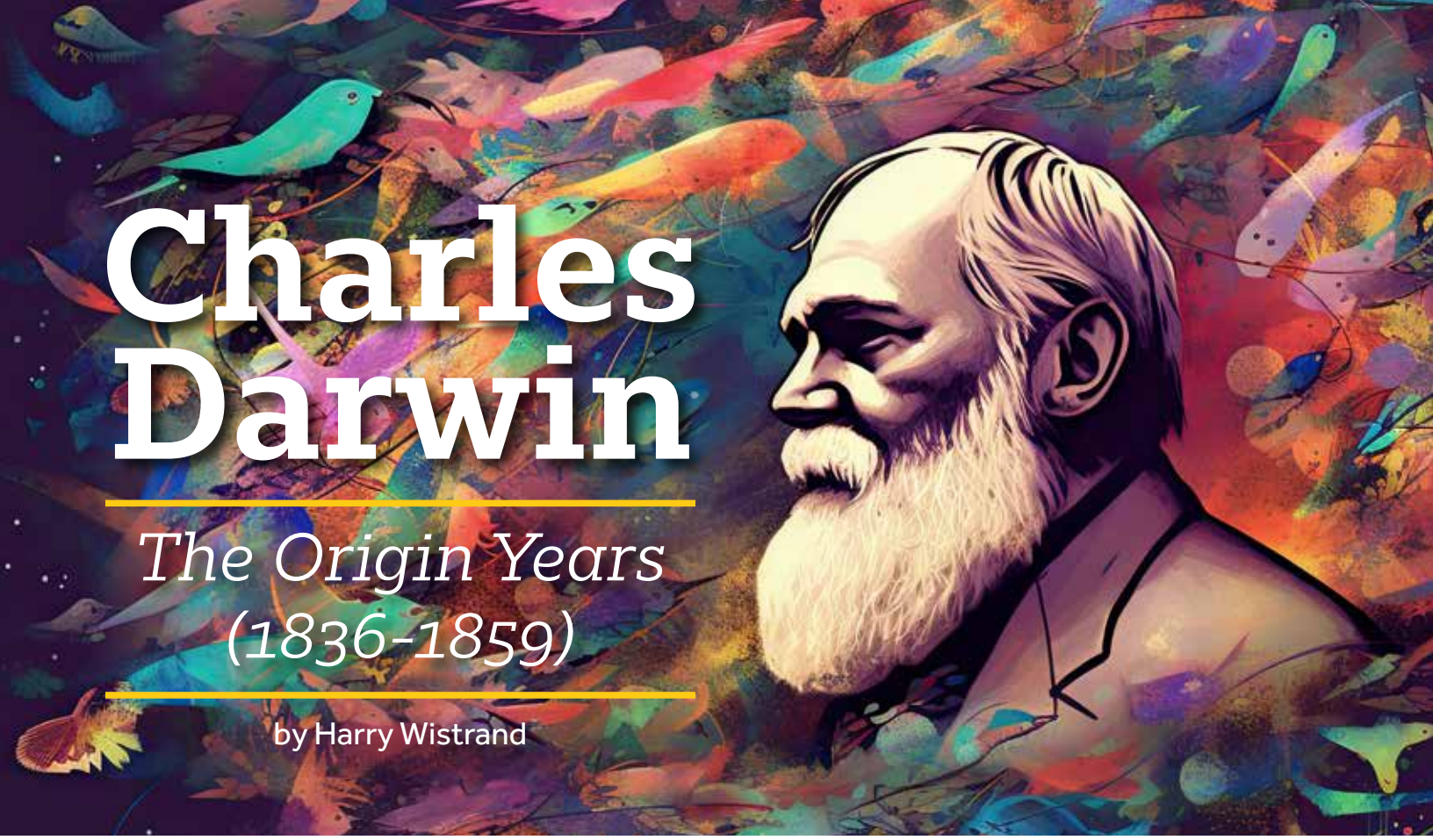


Charles Darwin

The Origin Years (1836-1859)

by Harry Wistrand

After circumnavigating the world (including the Galapagos Islands), Charles Darwin returned to England on the Beagle in October 1836. The eminent geologist Charles Lyell introduced Darwin to influential scientists and sponsored him for the Athaenaeum Club, where he and Charles Dickens were elected together. Lyell saw that Darwin was selected for the Geological Society and Royal Society.

Darwin's diary would be one of the four volumes proposed by the Beagle's commander, Captain Robert Fitzroy, chronicling its mapping and natural history voyage. *The Journal and Remarks*-1832-1836 (later titled *The Voyage of the Beagle*) was written in early 1837. (Darwin, 1957)

He received reports about his collections, especially that mockingbirds and finches collected in the Galapagos were distinct species, although on adjacent islands. He thought about the stability of species, most notably "transmutation" and change. As the Galapagos Islands were of recent volcanic origin, Darwin wondered if the Creator had made a species for each island or had they diversified from an ancestral species on one of the islands. These reports moved Darwin to the transformation (evolution) hypothesis. He edited several different editions of the *Journal and Remarks* and in the 1845 edition, he hinted, "...we seem to be brought near to that mystery of mysteries—the first appearance of new beings on this earth." (Quammen, 2006, 88)

Since the planet was changing through time, wouldn't it follow that organisms changed along with the area they inhabited?

CHANGING THE QUESTION

Since the planet was changing through time, wouldn't it follow that organisms changed along with the area they inhabited? He knew he would need to amass substantial, irrefutable evidence. Why would organisms reproduce sexually, rather than asexually, as there were many that reproduced asexually? Was there a single creation or more recent localized creations for new areas such as the Galapagos? Common ancestry must logically derive from physical similarities. Regarding Australia and its unusual fauna, he wrote in his *Beagle Diary*: "Surely two distinct Creators must have been [at] work." (Keynes, 2001) Beginning in 1837, his notebooks reveal a change in tone, from "if" species changed to "how and why" species change. Less than a year after his return to England, he was deep into associative reasoning, linking change in discrete locations as well as through time, including geological epochs.

In one of his notebooks, the transmutation notebook, he wrote that sexual reproduction was the key to variation, and thus plants and animals could change their form over generations. The geological evidence was stunning: "Animals of same classes differ in different countries in exact proportion to the time they have been separated." (Browne, 1995, 363) In the notebook, he drew a tree of life with an ancestral species and branching of the tree, subsequent species either surviving or becoming extinct. He recognized that genetics and geography were important to species formation, and that organisms became extinct because they were no longer adapted to their changed environment. He believed these ideas could lead to a unifying theory like Newton's theory of gravitation. By March of 1838, Darwin had laid out the essence of a mechanism for evolutionary change.

A FATHER'S ADVICE

He was moving away from God as a creator of fixed species to living organisms that were related to other forms and changing through time. The revolutionary nature of his thinking (and the dread from pondering the response of the public, the church, and scientists) probably had a considerable effect on his health. He had heart palpitations, stomach trouble, and skin eruptions. He visited his father (Dr. Robert Darwin, a wealthy physician) and they shared their lack of any strong religious conviction. Dr. Darwin counseled his son about his disbelief, and Charles wrote in his *Autobiography:*

By March of 1838, Darwin had laid out the essence of a mechanism for evolutionary change.

"Before I was engaged to be married, my father advised me to carefully conceal my doubts, for he said that he had known extreme misery thus caused with married persons. Things went on pretty well until the wife or husband became out of health, and some women suffered miserably by doubting about the salvation of their husbands, thus making them likewise to suffer." (Barlow, 1958, 95) Darwin worried whether he could support a family, but his father stated that his inheritance would ensure his family would always lead a comfortable life and urged him to marry before he was too old to enjoy children.

He stepped up his work and began to consider that the work of breeders to select traits in plants and animals might be analogous to what was happening in natural settings. (Barlow, 1958, 119) In September, he read Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Populations*, which put another major piece of the theory in place. (Barlow, 1958, 120) Malthus proposed that population sizes were limited by factors such as disease, famine, conflict, and others in spite of almost unlimited reproductive potential.

Darwin quickly had the insight that those that died were probably the weakest, leaving the strong to survive and reproduce, passing their traits on to the next generation, which would resemble the survivors and preserve the useful adaptations. Darwin had conceived the idea of natural selection. This was a theory beginning to take shape, and it was analogous with the competition seen in England during the industrial revolution. Darwin realized that he needed to be able to offer proof that his theory worked.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

In November he visited his youngest cousin, Emma Wedgewood, the daughter of a wealthy porcelain manufacturer. Two days later he proposed to her, and to his amazement, she accepted, and they were soon married. The combined inheritances from the Darwin and Wedgewood fathers ensured that Charles Darwin would never need to work and would have the time to study and write.

From 1839 to 1844, Darwin worked feverishly to produce several books, but his health, in spite of marriage, continued to decline. His illnesses ebbed and flowed for the rest of his life. Darwin found a house on eighteen acres in Kent in the village of Downe. It was close enough to London for his scientific pursuits yet distant enough to discourage drop-in visitors.

EMMA DARWIN BY GEORGE RICHMOND. PD US. WIKIPEDIA

During a visit to the Wedgewood home in 1842, Darwin wrote a 35-page summary of his thoughts on transmutation, without his notebooks. He incorporated evidence from the fossil record, biogeography, vestigial and rudimentary organs, and systematics (classification). He did use the term "natural selection" several times in the sketch but admitted that he did not know what caused variations in organisms.

"The gradations by which each individual organ has arrived at its present state, and each individual animal with its aggregate of organs has arrived, probably never could be known, and all present great difficulties." (F. Darwin, 1909, 16)

Darwin made a significant step forward with this essay and put it away for refinement. He began to correspond with the distinguished botanist Joseph Hooker.

"I have been now ever since my return engaged in a very presumptuous work ...At last gleams of light have come, & I am almost convinced (quite contrary to opinion I started with) that species are not (it is like confessing a murder) immutable." Letter to Hooker, 1842-(Darwin Correspondence Project, 2023)

A RADICAL CONCEPT

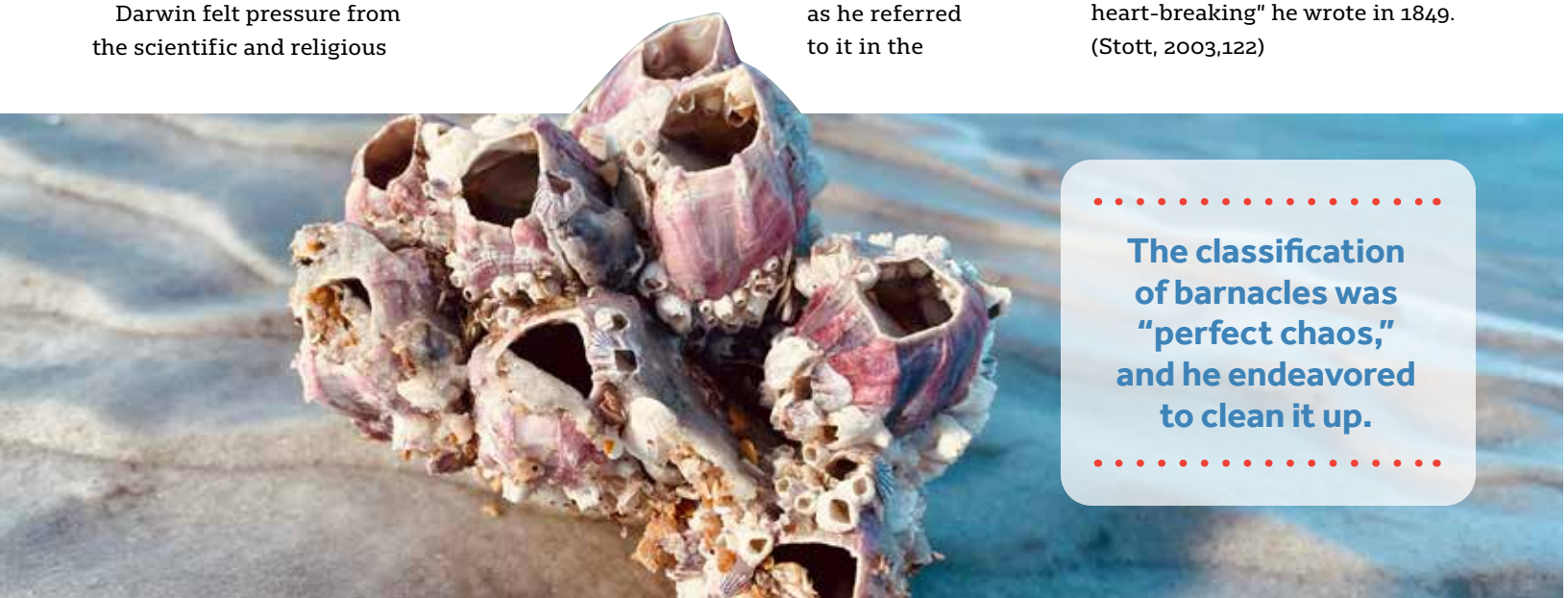
Darwin felt pressure from the scientific and religious establishment. The idea of the species changing had theological ramifications, raising questions about Biblical irrefutability and God's role on Creation. Darwin wrote a more detailed essay in 1844, almost two hundred pages longer than the 1842 sketch, with evidence clearly and logically presented. He had it neatly copied by a scrivener and stored in his office. He was convinced that it needed to see the light of day and composed a letter to Emma to have it published in case of his death. He wrote of it as "a considerable step in science" and suggested Hooker as editor.

He did use the term "natural selection" several times in the sketch but admitted that he did not know what caused variations in organisms.

While he was concerned about his devout wife's reaction, the religious climate, and potential embarrassment, his hesitancy to publish primarily dealt with the need to provide more supporting evidence — "one long argument," as he referred to it in the *Origin of Species.* Hooker wrote Darwin that one could not work out the species problem until one had handled and classified many. Darwin knew he needed authoritative, plausible evidence for variation and change, and he turned to barnacles. He needed to show the relationship between living barnacle species, and trace that relationship to fossil barnacles, with common ancestors and patterns of diversification.

He took eight years to finish the barnacle work. Why barnacles? He recalled his mentor at Cambridge (Jenyns) told him the barnacle was one of the greatest mysteries of biology. Understanding lower animals was the key to understanding higher animals. Darwin had collected a new and curious barnacle in Chile during the Beagle voyage. It was minute, without a shell. Using a microscope, he began dissecting and drawing specimens of this barnacle that burrowed into the shells of marine snails.

Darwin also began to study other barnacles, contacting biologists and museums around the world for specimens. The classification of barnacles was "perfect chaos," and he endeavored to clean it up. "Literally not one species is properly defined...The subject is heart-breaking" he wrote in 1849. (Stott, 2003,122)

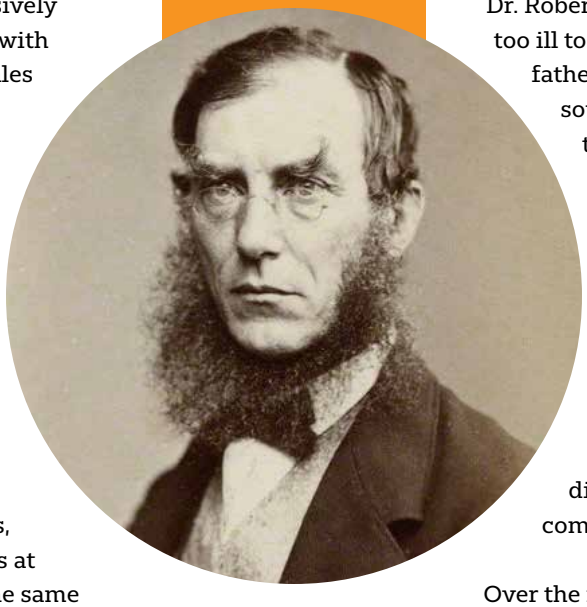


The classification of barnacles was "perfect chaos," and he endeavored to clean it up.

Darwin could have moved to complete the barnacles within a year as planned, except he became intrigued about the sex life of barnacles. Barnacles were thought to be hermaphroditic, but he began finding males and females in some species.

He was able to construct the history of the barnacles, with separate sexes in both major groups gradually evolving from exclusively hermaphrodites into hermaphrodites with supplemental males, and then to females and males. Barnacles from different oceans independently evolved similar adaptations (convergence, which illustrates the power of the environment to shape organisms). Darwin believed that all organisms were hermaphroditic in their ancestral forms, only to evolve separate sexes in later forms. Some, of course, remained hermaphroditic, while others discarded hermaphroditism. Nature seemed to head in the direction of separate sexes, but why? Hooker was studying orchids at the same time as Darwin and found the same problems. Where does one group begin and another end? There were no clear boundaries. Classification illuminated evolution and transitions, but not boundaries.

SIR JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER, 1860S. PD US. WIKIPEDIA



REWARDS FOR EXPERTISE

The barnacle volumes were published in 1851 and 1854 and are still ranked as the definitive study of barnacle biology. For the 1851 monograph, Darwin received the Royal Medal of the Royal Society and was confirmed as an expert in systematics.

Rebecca Stott noted,

> "Classifying the barnacles has given him new skills, language, and understanding; they have sharpened his mind and his comprehension of theoretical principles in zoology, embryology, and homology in particular.... they had enabled him to ruminate over his species theory and strengthen his grasp of natural and sexual selection....sharpened his writing abilities both in terms of the need for hard, uncompromising accuracy...and in terms of the need for rhetorical hesitancy.... Such rhetorical dexterity, the ability to craft sequences of clauses that moved relentlessly but cautiously from evidence drawn from the commonplace creatures such as pigeons or barnacles to extraordinary hypotheses, underpinned by modest, tactful common sense, would be crucial to the success of the On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection." (Stott, 2003, 253)

More than anything else, it bought Darwin time before the publication of the *Origin*.

Dr. Robert Darwin died in 1848. Charles was too ill to attend the funeral of his unbeliever father and was not concerned about his soul. In 1851, while he was completing the first volume of the barnacle work, his favorite child and oldest daughter, Annie, took ill and died at the age of ten. This was almost the final episode for Darwin in his unbelief of a traditional depiction of God. He couldn't be true to a religion that determined his unbeliever father was going to spend eternity in Hell. Was Annie, who did not have a strong faith, also to be committed to Hell?

Over the next few months, Darwin became more convinced, more skeptical. He now had conviction about his religious feelings. In his *Autobiography*, he described the journey as: "Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress, and have never since doubted

Nature seemed to head in the direction of separate sexes, but why?

even for a single second that my conclusion was correct... for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished." (Barlow, 1958, 87)

This was not published in the first edition of *Autobiography* six months after his death in 1882 at the request of his wife, Emma, but was restored in later editions.

Despite his loss of faith, he was not hostile toward religion. In Downe, he had a thirty-six-year friendship with the local vicar, the Reverend John Brodie Innes. With Innes and his successor, Darwin often discussed the life of the parish, gave advice, and financially supported the Sunday school of Downe and four other parishes.

THE PUSH TO PUBLISH

In 1856, Darwin began discussing his transmutation ideas with several of his closest friends, and they urged him to publish without delay. He was hesitant and knew he had to make a compelling argument for his transmutation hypothesis. He decided to begin writing, intending for a detailed explanation with several volumes in two years. He had corresponded about transmutation with Alfred Russel Wallace, a young naturalist collecting in the Malay Archipelago, and told him that he had been writing of variation and selection in notebooks and papers for 20 years. On June 18, 1858, a four-thousand-word manuscript and letter from Wallace arrived at Down House after four months in transit. Wallace laid out the idea of evolution by natural selection, in a very similar manner to what Darwin had been thinking about. Why had Wallace shared this idea with Darwin? It was because they had been corresponding, and Darwin was an eminent man in English science.

In 1856, Darwin began discussing his transmutation ideas with several of his closest friends, and they urged him to publish without delay.

Darwin wrote Lyell that same day that he was devastated by the "striking coincidence.... So all my originality, whatever it may amount to, will be smashed.... if Wallace had my M. S. sketch written out in 1842, he could not have made a better short abstract!" Letter to Lyell, 1858 (Darwin Correspondence Project, 2023).

He again wrote Lyell a few days later, "I would far rather burn my whole book than that he or any man should think that I had behaved in a paltry spirit. Do you not think his having sent me this sketch ties my hands? I do not in least believe that that he originated his views from anything which I wrote to him." Letter to Lyell, 1858 (Darwin Correspondence Project, 2023).

Lyell and Hooker convinced Darwin to allow a joint presentation of Wallace's work and Darwin's work at the Linnean Society of London. A letter to the secretary from Lyell and Hooker containing the ideas of Wallace and Darwin was read to the Society on July 1, 1858.

Darwin was unable to attend as one of his sons had died three days earlier. What is surprising is there was no discussion of the papers at the meeting after the reading of the letter. Wallace was notified after the presentation with letters from both Darwin and Hooker. He may have had a small amount of resentment, but he apparently was delighted to be recognized by eminent scientists and wrote that the solution of a joint presentation was fair to both him and Darwin. Wallace and Darwin became close friends for the rest of their lives.

Darwin began to write in earnest for ten months, producing an "abstract" of his transmutation hypotheses, an abstract of four-hundred and ninety pages! *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* sold out its initial printing of twelve-hundred and fifty copies on the first day, November 24, 1859. (Quammen, 2006, 174)

Keith Thompson summarized the significance of the publication of the Origin: "Darwin had given the life sciences a fundamental theory and in the process had created a clear intellectual link to the earth sciences." (Thompson, 2009, 242) His work was thorough, well written, and easily readable. Darwin crafted a work of art, and his literary techniques have been compared to Middlemarch and Great Expectations. A sample is his ending to the *Origin*:

> "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved." (Darwin, 1859, 490)

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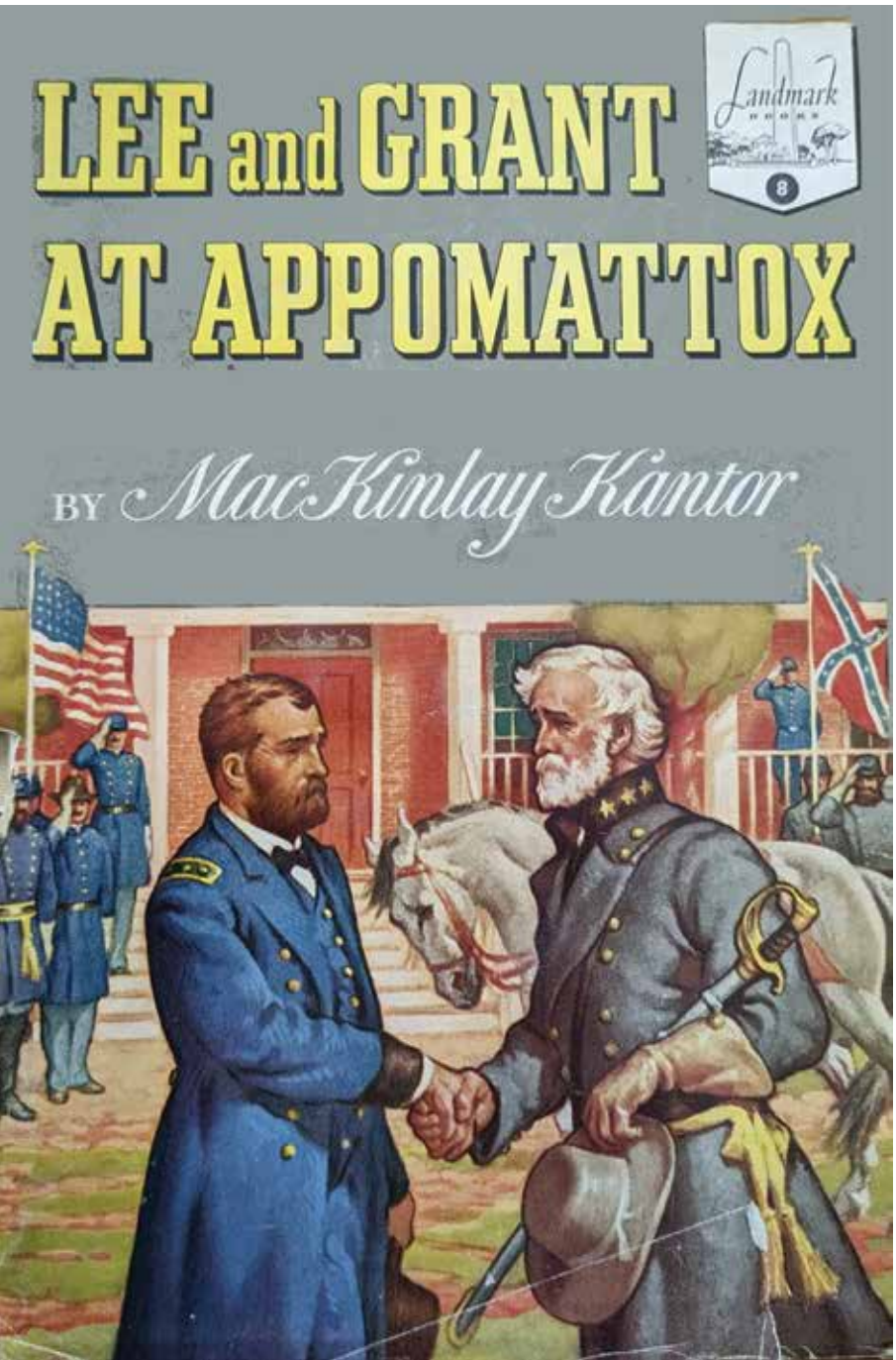
Beyond Appomattox:

The history I never was taught

by Nancy A. Carter



I was ten years old and growing up in "the thumb" area of rural Michigan when I read the book *Lee and Grant at Appomattox* by MacKinley Kantor. I was impressed by the illustration of the generals on the dust cover, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee shaking hands. That symbolic image of the North and the South meeting in civility influenced my perception of the Reconstruction and its aftermath for decades even though contrary evidence was everywhere.

The history I was taught and never was taught in the North during the 1950s and 60s reinforced my idyllic view. Later, in graduate school and in my vocation, I intentionally broadened my education, particularly in African American history. Even so, I never knew about the massacre in Colfax, Louisiana, until 2021 when I read an op-ed "The Massacre That Emboldened White Supremacists" (Briggs and Krakauer 2020). I knew I had to learn more about the Colfax massacre and decided to research it for a paper to present to Torch club.

Colfax is a small town of about 1,400 people on the Red River in the geographical center of the state. The wounds remain from a terrible event that happened on the grounds of its courthouse on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873.

What I have just described as a "terrible event" and "massacre," others have celebrated. For example, in the cemetery in Colfax, is an obelisk that says, "Erected to the memory of

the heroes, Stephen Decatur Parish, James West Hadnot, Sidney Harris, who fell in the Colfax riot fighting for white supremacy, April 13, 1873." The monument was dedicated by the town's White people on April 13, 1921 (Leman 2006, 26). Thirty years later, White citizens of Colfax placed a state historical marker in front of the courthouse: "On this site occurred the Colfax Riot in which three white men and 150 negroes were slain. This event on April 13, 1873, marked the end of carpetbag misrule in the South" (Keith 2009, xxii).

Since Reconstruction, Colfax has had more Black people than White, but before 2023, no formal monument or marker positively remembered the massacred freedmen. In the first half of the 20th century, however, an almost miraculous fiery fountain ascended from a well near the courthouse. For many African Americans in Colfax, that pillar of fire was God sent. "The well stopped working the same day they put that sign up in front of the court house," declared Willie White in 1989 to the reporters for *The Angolite* (Wikberg, Carter, and Webb 1989, 51).

A HAUNTING TALE

After the author Lalita Tademy read in *The Angolite* the disturbing story about the massacre, she queried her Aunt Ellen in Colfax: "'Our people were there,' [Aunt Ellen] volunteered for the first time. 'Some got out, and some didn't.'" Tademy mused, "Those words have haunted me from the first time she uttered them years ago. They haunt me still" (Tademy 2007, 417).

Like the once bright fountain of Colfax, the memory of those massacred began to rise up again. The authors of three books brought the light of the complete story into a broader public arena and corrected the dominant narrative. In 2007-2008, Tademy's novel *Red River* and two scholarly books *The Colfax Massacre* by LeeAnna Keith and *The Day Freedom Died* by Charles Lane were published.

The Colfax massacre was both an outgrowth of earlier violence against African Americans and a springboard for further terror and destruction. Once known as Calhoun's Landing, Colfax in Grant Parish is on land that had belonged to Meredith Calhoun, who enslaved about seven hundred people and was exceptionally cruel (Keith 2008, 29).

Created in 1869 during Reconstruction, Grant Parish was named after President Ulysses S. Grant, and Colfax after Vice President Schuyler Colfax. Most of the White people in Louisiana despised Grant and Colfax. So, who did that? Apparently, the new Louisiana state senator William Smith Calhoun, son of Meredith, made it happen.

The Colfax massacre was both an outgrowth of earlier violence against African Americans and a springboard for further terror and destruction.

NO LAND FOR FREED PEOPLE

The Union might have conquered New Orleans in 1862 and won the war in 1865, but it did not win the hearts and minds of most White people in the South. For example, to prevent formerly enslaved laborers from being self-sufficient, plantation owners near the Red River agreed not to sell or lease land to them. They also joined newly formed White supremacy organizations. White men harassed, threatened, and even harmed teachers at Freedman's Bureau schools. (Keith 2008, 48-52).

William Calhoun was different. At a time when most schools run by the Freedmen's Bureau had been forced to close, Willie opened a school for Black children. He was the only plantation owner in central Louisiana who rented and sold parcels of land to African Americans and even gave them his family's hogs and cattle (Keith 2008, 50; Lane 2008, 35). He became a state senator in 1868, thanks, in part, to the Louisiana Constitution of 1868.

AVERY HAMILTON, LEFT, AND CHARLES DEAN WOODS STAND NEXT TO THE NEW MON
1873. COLFAX MEMORIAL ORGANIZATION. CREDIT: COLFAXMEMORIAL.ORG

After the U.S. Reconstruction Acts of 1867 called for new state constitutions, an interracial convention of Republicans wrote a new one in 1868 that included a bill of rights, created integrated schools, and enfranchised Black men but disenfranchised most White men.

Across the state, angry White men who, unlike William Calhoun, refused to pledge loyalty to the United States, increased violence against African Americans. (Keith 2008, 54-61; Lane 2008, 40-43). Senator Calhoun made sure that a unit of the newly formed Louisiana State Militia was assigned to protect the freed men and women of Colfax. Every man who served in the militia at Colfax was African American. William Ward, a former Union soldier who could read and write, led them. Captain Ward commanded two lieutenants, eleven noncommissioned officers, and seventy-two privates (Lane 2008, 56).

Across the state, angry White men who, unlike William Calhoun, refused to pledge loyalty to the United States, increased violence against African Americans.

Ward used his military know-how to go after and arrest nightriders and other criminals in Grant Parish. His gruff assertiveness created controversy and fear among many White people, including some Republicans. He could and did cross the line of decorum especially when he brandished and sometimes fired his pistol.

Political power in Louisiana shifted after the Amnesty Act of 1872 signed by President Grant allowed most ex-Confederates to vote and hold office again. That year, William Ward was the Republicans' candidate for state representative of Grant Parish. He was opposed by James West Hadnot, a leader in the Ku Klux Klan. Hadnot ran on a Fusion ticket supported by Democrats and White Republicans who were uncomfortable with the power of Black men had gained (Lane 2008, 64-65).

In 1872, Republican voters in Grant Parish were better protected than in 1868. Imagine the momentous scene: Captain Ward's men escorted a long column of Black men to the polling place. "Their raucous shouts and singing lay claim to the victory of being counted and the certainty of superior numbers. Sending William Ward to the statehouse—and delivering a landslide for President Grant..." (Keith 2008, 81).

The elections in Louisiana produced disputed results. Two sets of officials laid claim to almost every state office, even in Grant Parish. Claiming victory, Fusionists Christopher Columbus Nash and Alfonse Cazabat moved into the courthouse in Colfax as the new sheriff and judge. William Ward was not about to let that go. On the night of March 25, 1873, Republicans broke into the empty courthouse and claimed the offices of sheriff and judge respectively for Daniel Shaw, a White man, and R. C. Register, an African American man (Lane, 70).

They falsely claimed that Black men were wreaking violence on White people and property and raping White women.

RALLYING THE WHITE CITIZENS

The Fusionists were furious. James West Hadnot and some of his allies dispatched secret messages that called White men from across the parish and beyond to come to Colfax on April 1. They falsely claimed that Black men were wreaking violence on White people and property and raping White women. After Hadnot boasted about their plans in front of one of his Black laborers and bragged that he would lynch Captain William Ward, the laborer warned his new state representative.

NUMENT HONORING BLACK RESIDENTS KILLED IN THE COLFAX MASSACRE DURING

By the morning of April 1, two dozen men, most of them Black, guarded the courthouse (Lane 2008, 71-72). Saber-rattling, bloodless skirmishes, and attempted negotiations between Fusionists and Republicans filled up the next four days.

Everything changed on April 5. White marauders murdered Black farmer Jesse McKinney on his own property in front of his wife and little boy. "'The poor man was wet with the sweat of honest toil when he fell.'" his wife, Laura, later testified (Keith, p. 139).

Fearing for their lives, Black families flocked after this incident to the guarded courthouse grounds. By nightfall, about four hundred people of all ages had gathered. (Keith 2008, 91; Lane 2008, 79).

Whatever else the captors did to Calhoun was so traumatic that he could never remember how he was let go and why he was not killed

William Ward knew they were in trouble. Right away on April 5, he sent a note to a Black pastor who lived nearby: "'I am in command, all I Lack is help.'" On April 5 or 6, Ward wrote another letter (since lost) to Republican Governor William Pitt Kellogg in New Orleans asking for government troops (Keith, p. 94).

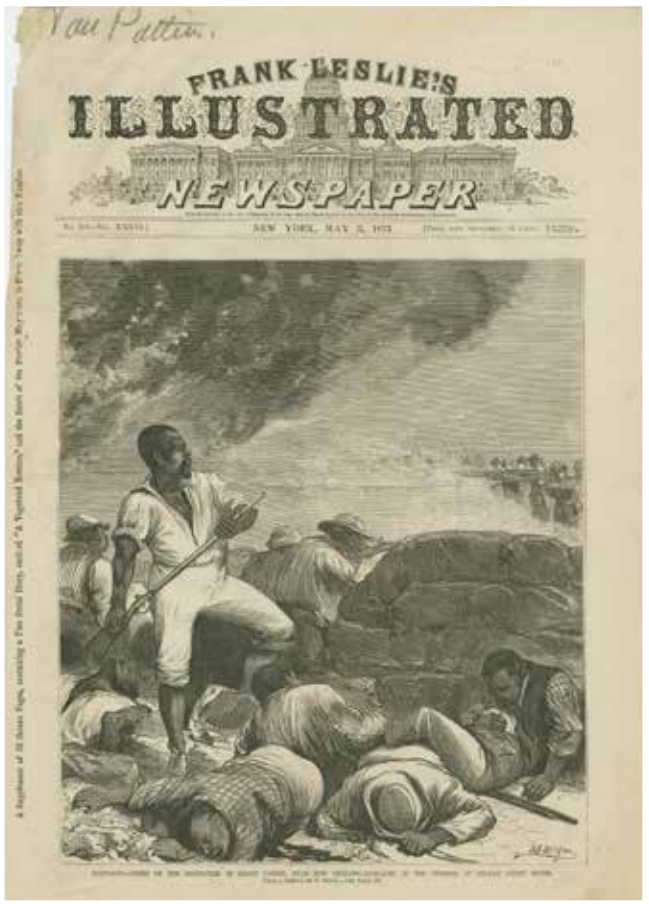
Ward gave the letter to Willie Calhoun. Unfortunately, their adversaries captured Calhoun. When they stripped him naked, they found Ward's letter hidden in his boot. Whatever else the captors did to Calhoun was so traumatic that he could never remember how he was let go and why he was not killed (Keith 2008, 95).

By April 13, only Black people remained on the grounds. In the absence of William Ward, who had gone to New Orleans, Benjamin Levin Allen took command. At best, one-half of the men had firearms. Most had shotguns, not military grade rifles. (Keith 2008, 93)

AN EASTER ATTACK

On Easter morning, Christopher Columbus Nash met Captain Allen. Below is part of their conversation as reported two days later by Colonel Theodore W. DeKlyne and affirmed by both sides of the conflict:

> **NASH** — We want that courthouse....
>
> **ALLEN** — We are going to stand where we are until we get United States troops or some assistance.



SCENE OF THE HOSTILITIES IN GRANT PARISH, NEAR NEW ORLEANS – MASSACRE OF THE NEGROES AT COLFAX COURT HOUSE.

> **NASH** — Then go in there and say to your people that I advise them to get out of there. I give you thirty minutes to remove your women and children (DeKlyne 1873, 26).

No women or children were killed. Some African American women witnessed parts of the conflict and the brutal treatment of prisoners. They told Colonel DeKlyne that they had seen two wagonloads of Whites, wounded and dead, carried away. The White men denied it when questioned. This intriguing story was still circulating in the African American community of Colfax in 1989 but has never been verified (DeKlyne 1873, 23; Wikberg, Carter, and Webb 1989, 50).

After that, it was loss upon loss for the defenders. Captain Allen could not rally his men.

On that fateful Easter Sunday, a White militia of at least a hundred and forty men attacked the courthouse from three directions. Stephen Decatur Parish manned a small four-pound cannon until he was killed. After that, it was loss upon loss for the defenders. Captain Allen could not rally his men. Some fled to the road, others into the bayou, and still others to the woods, including Allen.

About sixty-five men retreated into the courthouse. Theirs was the worst choice. Soon the courthouse was set on fire. "I warned our people not to go in the courthouse," a survivor reported a month later. Scared of the cannon, he went inside anyway. "Then the burning roof began to fall on us, and everyone was praying and shrieking and singing and calling on God to have mercy" ("Statement of a Negro" 1873).

What began as a mismatched battle became a massacre. Almost every man who tried to leave the burning building was killed (Keith 2008, 101-102). Colonel DeKlyne reported that "It is our opinion that few of the colored men had been killed up to this time, but that when forced by the fire to leave the courthouse, they were shot down without mercy. The position and condition of many of the bodies go far to prove this....Many were shot in the back of the head and neck; one man still lay with his hands clasped in supplication..." (DeKlyne 1873, 24).

That night, the young guards got drunk and sadistically murdered the rest of the prisoners near a stately pecan tree—or so they thought. A few badly wounded Black men played dead and survived to testify later in court.

DOCUMENTING THE MASSACRE

On the Tuesday after Easter, Colonels Theodore W. DeKlyne and William Wright from New Orleans arrived in Colfax on assignment by the governor and wrote a detailed report with invaluable historical information. They documented seventy-one unburied bodies of African American men. "With a candor that would never be repeated in subsequent incidents of racial violence in the United States, the organizers of the Colfax raid endorsed Deklyne's body count, conceding that additional victims had been buried or killed outside the confines of the little town" (Keith 2008, 111-112).

For a time, it appeared that justice might prevail. A grand jury overseen by Republican Judge R. C. Register in Colfax indicted ninety-seven co-conspirators. Fearing arrest and prosecution, the suspects fled. Unfortunately, only nine men were captured and imprisoned.

The trial began in New Orleans in February 1874. U.S. attorney J. R. Beckwith did his best with meager resources. Many witnesses testified for the prosecution including Colonels DeKlyne and Wright, William Smith Calhoun, and Levin Allen. The widow of the farmer Jesse McKinney told her harrowing story. Mothers and widows of other Black men who had been killed also took the stand. Other women revealed how the White men taunted them with sexual innuendos (Keith 2008, 139).

In March 1874, a mistrial was declared. The lone African American juror had voted to convict the men. The others voted to exonerate some or all of them (Keith 2008, 131-143; Lane 2008, 154-185).

"UNWHIPPED OF JUSTICE"

Afterward, U.S. attorney J. R. Beckwith tried another approach. He brought Federal charges against eight of the original defendants based on the 14th Amendment. That amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States and prohibited depriving anyone of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." In *United States vs. Cruikshank.* Beckwith argued that the murdered Black men had been deprived of their constitutional rights.

The court convicted William J. Cruikshank, Bill Irwin, and John P. Hadnot, nephew of the deceased James West Hadnot, but the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the decision. The justices ruled that the 14th Amendment was not designed to protect individuals from the actions of other individuals but only from actions of the state. That decision limited the ability of the federal government to protect the civil rights of newly freed African Americans and signaled to racists that they could wreak murder and mayhem on Black people in states like Louisiana and escape punishment (Keith 2008, 142-148; Lane 2008, 186-214).

White supremacists, led by the newly formed White League in Louisiana, went on a rampage for months afterward.

MR. R.H. MARR ADDRESSING THE WHITE CITIZENS AT THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL.

White supremacists, led by the newly formed White League in Louisiana, went on a rampage for months afterward. On January 13, 1875, President Grant railed against the miscarriage of justice: "Fierce denunciations ring through the country about office holding and election matters in Louisiana, while every one of the Colfax miscreants goes unwhipped of justice, and no way can be found in this boasted land of civilization and Christianity to punish the perpetrators of this bloody and monstrous Crime" (Grant 1875).

In the next decades, Black voters were mostly disenfranchised. Racial segregation and White supremacy were institutionalized. Unpunished lynching of African Americans continued.

"This is not a story that will go down easy, and the backwash still got ahold of us today," said one-hundred-year-old Polly in the novel *Red River* (Tademy 2007, 1). Her statement sure is true. I wish it were not. I also wish that the image of Grant and Lee shaking hands and all that it symbolized to me were true, but it is not.

A NEW DAY

The true story of the Colfax massacre was lost for a while. In the past decade, however, more and more people objected to the "Colfax Riot" marker. Without success, many asked local authorities to remove or replace it or to add a second historical marker that put the older marker into historical context.

In the meantime, two men, one White and one Black, met and worked together to try to make things right.

In the meantime, two men, one White and one Black, met and worked together to try to make things right.

Each was a descendant of a man who had been in Colfax in April 1873. C. Dean Woods, after learning about the massacre from *Red River*, was shocked to discover that his ancestor Bedford Woods was among the men who attacked the courthouse (McNamara 2021). Woods met the Rev. Avery Hamilton whose ancestor was the murdered farmer, Jesse McKinney. They worked together with state officials for change. Finally, on May 15, 2021, the sign was removed and placed in the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum (McNamara 2021).

Grant Parish officials refused to allow a new historical sign in front of the courthouse. Hamilton and Woods raised funds for a beautiful and educational memorial on land about a mile from the courthouse, dedicated on April 13, 2023, the 150th anniversary of the massacre. Over a hundred people were present including Governor John Bel Edwards, Charles Lane, LeeAnna Keith, Lalita Tademy, and other members of her family. Notably, descendants of William J. Cruikshank whose conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court, also attended and were supportive of the new memorial (Roberts 2023; Schrader 2023; KLAXProduction 2023).

The celebration marked a new day for all the people of Colfax, Louisiana. It did not happen easily or quickly, but it finally did, thanks to the courage and persistence of many of the people mentioned in this article and many more who have not been named.

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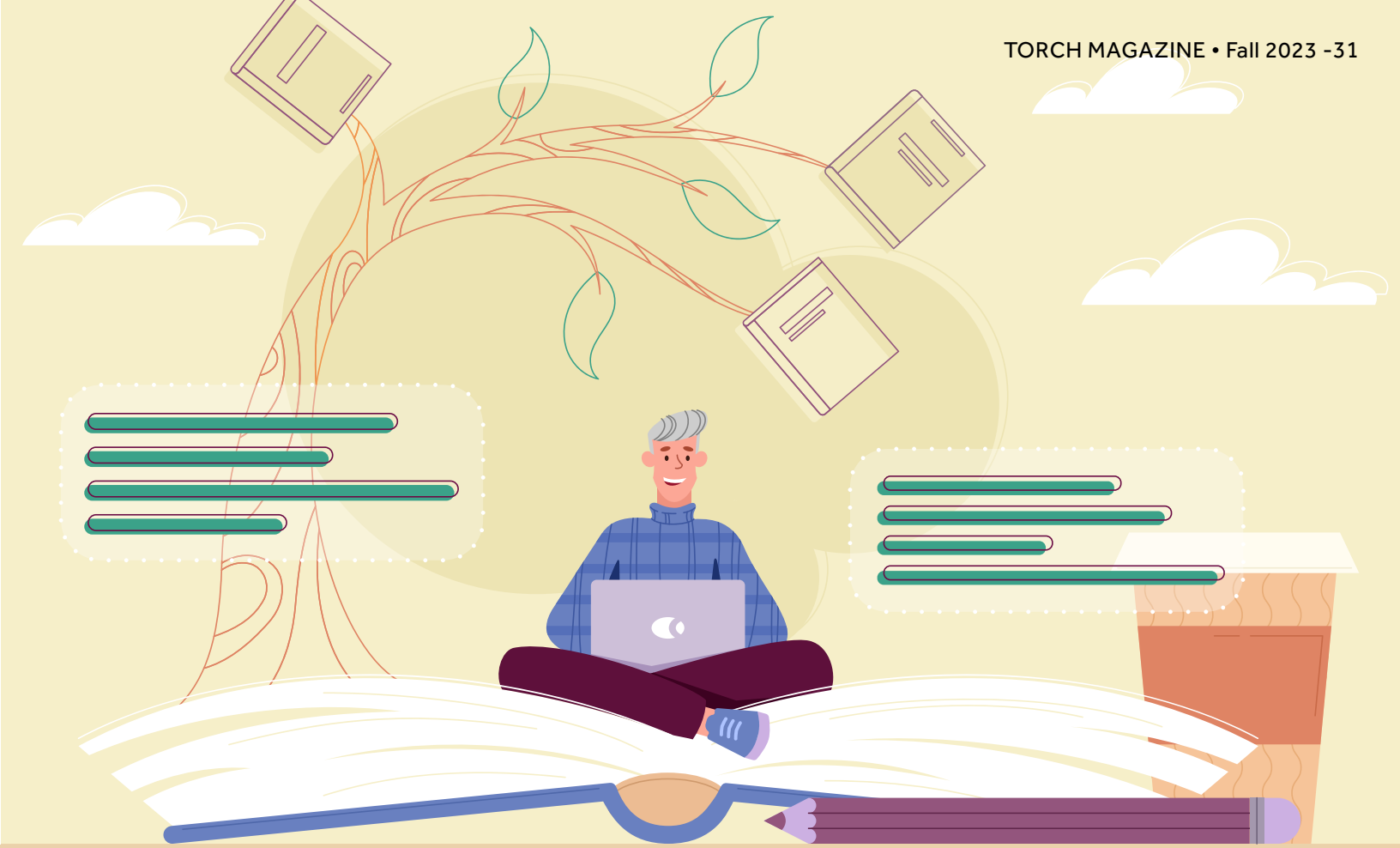


RESEARCH AND CHARACTER in the Historical Novel:

A Case Study

by Charlie Lovett

Every writer has heard the adage "Write what you know." I interviewed a fellow novelist who verbalized exactly how I feel about that tired old saw. We shouldn't write what we know, rather we should write what we *want* to know, and the bridge from what we know to what we want to know is research.

Although all my novels require research, this article will focus on my 2020 novel *Escaping Dreamland*. The book was inspired by my childhood love of children's series books like *The Hardy Boys*, *Nancy Drew*, and *Tom Swift*. I wanted to explore the world out of which those series grew, so I set the novel in New York City, much of it in and around 1906.

I feel a deep connection between place and story. When writing a novel set in a medieval English cathedral (*The Lost Book of the Grail*), I found it easy to understand the setting. There are plenty of medieval cathedrals still standing in England, and I had been inside most of them. When writing about Jane Austen in *First Impressions*, I visited the village of Steventon where she once lived. The New York City of 1906, however, has almost completely disappeared.

Though I wandered the city and found places and buildings I would use in the novel, nowhere in New York can one fully experience the world of 1906—not just the sights but the sound and the smell. Many of the iconic locales of the novel have disappeared forever—the old Madison Square Garden, Paresis Hall, the laboratory at Wardenclyffe, Child's Restaurant, and Dreamland itself are all gone. I was going to have to do deep background research.

BUILDING MY CHARACTERS

To become familiar with the period and its major events, I read books about the Gilded Age in New York. Since my novel explored the world of children's books and publishing, I read Horatio Alger and other children's adventures. From that, I began to build my characters and as those characters coalesced, they guided my research in new directions. Some examples of this came from my three main characters in the 1906 parts of the novel—Thomas De Peyster, Magdalena Hertzenberger, and Eugene (Gene) Pinkney.

Tom, Magda, and Gene each write a children's series, and they come together to create a crossover series called *The Tremendous Trio*. When I began my research, I knew almost nothing about Magda, Tom, and Eugene—not their names or their backgrounds or why they wanted to write children's books. My research into the period started to shape them.

Magda's character grew out of a headline-making tragedy almost completely forgotten today. On June 15, 1904, a steamship called the General Slocum caught fire in the East River and ran aground on North Brother Island. About 1,000 people were killed, the largest single loss of life in New York City prior to 9/11. Hundreds of headlines about this tragedy appeared in papers around the county, including the *New York World*.[1]

Magda, I decided, would be on that boat. That one decision informed Magda's character in many ways, including telling me a lot about who she was *before* she got on the boat.

The Slocum was transporting a group from a church on the Lower East Side, the neighborhood then known as Kleindeutschland, or Little Germany. In the late nineteenth century, Kleindeutschland had the largest German-speaking population of any city except Berlin. The local church held an annual summer picnic, and the Slocum carried mostly women and children, heading to Long Island for a day in the sun. That meant Magda was German, living in Kleindeutchland. Suddenly, I had not just a person, but an immigrant. How did she come to America? When? Why?

Since my novel explored the world of children's books and publishing, I read Horatio Alger and other children's adventures.

I knew Magda would survive the tragedy, and that told me something about her too. How would she react? What would she do after her neighborhood had been decimated and her family killed? From those questions came some of Magda's essential character traits—her desire to be fully American, her independence, her stubbornness, and her attitude toward the past.

The decision to put Magda on the Slocum even led to her name. I took all the surnames and given names of my German immigrant characters from the lists published in the papers, including the *New York Tribune*, of those who died on the Slocum.[2] I mixed up first and last names so no character would be named after a real person, but Magda's name came directly from these lists.

The Slocum disaster was a huge story—front page headlines for days on end.

How do you find the details of something that happened in 1904? I didn't want to experience the events filtered through the eyes of a later historian, but in their raw, immediate nature. For that reason, my biggest single resource was newspapers. The Slocum disaster was a huge story—front page headlines for days on end.

ON JUNE 15, 1904, GENERAL SLOCUM CAUGHT FIRE AND SANK IN THE EAST RIVER OF NEW YORK CITY.

Firsthand accounts printed in the daily papers under headlines such as "Rescued Tell How Lives Were Saved," in the Evening World, and "Stories Survivors Tell" in the Sun didn't just give me the details needed to create a riveting scene, they also taught me about the use of language of the time, the rhythms and the syntax.

FINDING CLUES IN THE PAPERS

Instead of travelling to New York and spending months searching by hand through newspaper archives as I might have done fifty (or even twenty) years ago, I had access on my own desktop to searchable images of tens of thousands of pages of newspapers from the period. I used mostly the free Library of Congress newspaper archive, but I've used others like Newspapers.com and the British Library Newspaper archive, for other projects. For *Escaping Dreamland,* newspapers proved useful in so many ways—not just the articles, but the advertisements were a rich resource.

Newspapers were especially helpful for answering the questions that pop up daily in the process of writing a novel. How does Magda travel from one part of the city to another? What is on the menu of the restaurant where she eats? What is the weather like on a specific day? Every day of writing presented its own questions. I'll give you an example.

I wanted Magda to go to a concert. Where? Pick some place my readers might have heard of—in 1906 New York that meant Carnegie Hall. What's happening at Carnegie Hall in the autumn of 1906? Start looking in the newspapers at the advertisements for theatres and concert halls. Camille Saint-Saëns, the French composer of "Carnival of the Animals," is playing a concert, according to an advertisement in the New York Daily Tribune.[3] Now, I have a location and an artist my readers probably know. Read a few reviews of the concert, and I'm on my way to creating a rich believable scene that is true to the time period and will resonate with modern readers. I did the same thing for Broadway plays, baseball games, and vaudeville shows.

Every day of writing presented its own questions.

The newspapers provided a wealth of information that allowed me to put my fictional characters into real places, often having experiences that would, in some small way, link them to today's reader. Peppering the narrative with names of those famous at the time like Wilbur Wright, George M. Cohan, John Singer Sargent, Enrico Caruso, Mark Twain, Nikola Tesla, William Howard Taft, and William Randolph Hearst isn't just name dropping. It's finding those tiny links between the twenty-first century readers' knowledge and 1906, trying to ease the reader into that unfamiliar world by providing the occasional signpost of a well-known name, place, or event.

In addition to newspapers, I used magazines, photographs, atlases and maps, city directories, and even some early motion picture footage—all of which had been digitized by institutions like the New York Public Library and the New York Historical Society. When I wanted Magda to eat lunch at Child's Restaurant, I found a menu in the New York Public Library collection so I could decide exactly what she would order and know how much it would cost.

I wanted my three young protagonists to represent as broad a cross-section of New York in 1906 as was reasonable. If Magda was an immigrant from a working-class family living on the Lower East Side, Tom would be from an old New York banking family living in a mansion on Millionaire's Row on Fifth Avenue. The oldest New York families were Dutch, so I christened him Thomas De Peyster, named after my wife's ancestor Isaac De Peyster Teller, who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1639, according to genealogical research by my father-in-law. (I will cover Gene later.)

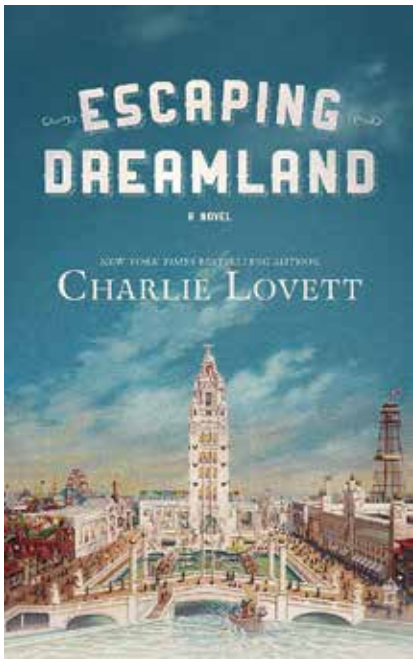
I knew one thing about 1906 before I began working on this book, and that fragment of knowledge would end up causing a lot of trouble for poor Tom.

I wanted my three young protagonists to represent as broad a cross-section of New York in 1906 as was reasonable.

If you asked me five years ago, "What happened in 1906?" I would have said, "The San Francisco Earthquake." I knew this literally earth-shaking event that killed thousands and reshaped a major American city had to be part of my novel. I sent Tom to San Francisco as a journalist, covering a performance by Enrico Caruso. The Italian tenor had opted to take

the trip to San Francisco, instead of returning to his native Naples because Vesuvius was erupting, and he wanted to avoid natural disasters. It didn't quite work out the way he planned. Try to keep an historical novelist away from that level of irony and see how far you get.

Tom is severely traumatized by what he sees in San Francisco on the day of the quake, and that trauma gave me an amazing opportunity later in the novel. The title of my book, *Escaping Dreamland*, is a reference to a pivotal scene in the narrative—a day-long excursion that Magda, Tom, and Gene take to the Dreamland amusement park on Coney Island. I wanted to know the details of every attraction at the park. How did you get there from Manhattan? What did you eat for lunch? How was the park laid out? The answers to all these questions led me in great narrative directions that I never would have chosen had I simply created the entire scene from my imagination without research.



RELIVING THE TRAUMA

One attraction at Dreamland was an outside stunt show called "Fighting the Flames." An audience watched while a street scene devolved into chaos as a building caught fire. Flames poured from the windows as fire fighters arrived. Women and children jumped into waiting nets, the fire fighters doused the flames, and a half hour later the whole thing happened again. I thought it would be fun to send my trio to enjoy the show. Then, I began to dig a little deeper. The San Francisco Earthquake took place on April 18, 1906. Dreamland opened for the summer season at the end of May. In those few weeks, I discovered, "Fighting the Flames" was redesigned, rechoreographed, and rebranded as "The Great San Francisco Earthquake." [4]

That meant that I could force Tom to relive the greatest trauma of his life as an amusement park entertainment. I never would have dared do such a thing if my research hadn't led me to it, but what a fantastic opportunity to explore Tom's character.

Magda faced a similar experience earlier that same day. The advertisements in the New York papers informed me that the quickest way to get from Manhattan to Dreamland was on a boat operated by the Iron Steamboat Company. These steamboats departed from lower Manhattan, just steps away from the building that had processed Magda's family upon their arrival in the United States, in the days before the center on Ellis Island was created. That was a nice touch, but as I looked further into the Iron Steamboat Company I discovered two things—the boats looked almost exactly like the General Slocum, and the slogan of the company, plastered on a huge sign over the pier, was "They cannot burn, they cannot sink," clearly a reference to the Slocum, which had done both. Like Tom later in the day, Magda, in coming face to face with that boat and its slogan, is forced to confront the tragedy of her past.

ANOTHER DREAMLAND MEMORY

My research provided me with another Dreamland-related moment later in the novel. Magda and Gene are walking down the Ladies' Mile—then the center of New York shopping—at Christmas time. The day at Dreamland is a wistful memory that they both, each for their own reasons, would like to put behind them. I wanted them to look at some of the Christmas displays in the store windows. I began to scour the newspapers for advertisements describing these windows and discovered that for Christmas 1906, Siegel's, at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Fourteenth Street, had window displays showing Coney Island, "in the good old summertime," including an entire window devoted to a five-thousand-dollar gleaming white model of Dreamland. Maybe some novelists can make up such marvelous moments of synchronicity, but I can't.

This led me to a sad but not surprising realization—marginalized communities are not so much written *out* of history; they are never written *into* the historical record.

Before I began my research, all I knew about Gene was that he was a scientific genius and what we would call in the 2020s a gay man. The scientific part was easy to research. Gene's eventual boss, Nikola Tesla was a famous inventor and hugely well documented. He was also a White, cis, straight male—just the sort of person the establishment of 1906 loved to document

.

What was not so well documented was queer life in the early twentieth century. This led me to a sad but not surprising realization—marginalized communities are not so much written *out* of history; they are never written *into* the historical record. I had no idea what being queer meant

in 1906, what words would be used to describe Gene, how he would behave, dress and so on.

I turned to my child, Jimmy, then living in New York, who had taken some courses in queer history at college and referred me to a book called *Gay New York 1890–1940* by George Chauncey. Even in that doorstop of a study, only a few short chapters covered the 1890s and early 1900s, but they helped me create not just the world Gene inhabits, but the sort of person he is. The world of gay New York in the early twentieth century was radically different from what I had imagined. In the 1890s especially, societal attitudes toward homosexuality were much less repressive than in, say, the 1950s. Chauncey helped me understand the language, sociology, and geography of gay New York in 1906.

Gene's sexual orientation is part of a larger theme of identity in *Escaping Dreamland* that plays out in many ways, especially around the question of gender identity. Gene dresses in effeminate clothes when he works at a nightclub called Paresis Hall; Magda dresses as a man for a job interview because she knows the boss will never hire a woman. It was amazing how my research supported me in weaving this idea throughout the narrative.

Does research shape the character or does the character shape the research?

I wanted my trio to go to a vaudeville house, so I started researching acts. What acts resonated with my characters or might be familiar to a modern reader? Tom loves baseball, so I included DeWolfe Hopper reciting "Casey at the Bat." Magda was writing a book about the circus, so I wrote about a series of circus acts at Tony Pastor's vaudeville house. What about Gene? It didn't take me long to find accounts of one of the most famous acts of the day, a chanteuse named Eltinge who dressed in a glamorous gown and sang through her entire act before, in a move straight out of *Victor/Victoria*, taking off her wig and revealing herself as a man.

Maybe my favorite gender-bending discovery just dropped in my lap. The three young writers in *Escaping Dreamland* are all interested in writing children's series books like those published by Edward Stratemeyer (creator of *The Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* among others). I didn't want to copy any existing series, but, after weeks of brainstorming and throwing away ideas when I discovered that there was already a series, for instance, about radio or motorcycles or aviation, I finally came up with my three series: Gene would write *Alice Gold, Girl Inventer*; Tom *Drew Stetson, Cub Reporter*, and Magda the *Daring Dan Dawson* about a circus performer.

RESEARCHING THE CIRCUS

I started reading newspaper accounts of circuses Magda might have seen in New York. Ringling Brothers Circus played at the old Madison Square Garden in 1906. I had already written two scenes for Gene that took place in that building, so sending Magda there would be a nice connection. When I read about the Florenz Troupe, an Italian family of acrobats, I knew I had found the act that would inspire Magda to create Dan Dawson. The youngest member of the troupe was a girl of about twelve or thirteen. Or at least that's what everyone watching in Madison Square Garden thought, judging from her outfit and her fairy-like grace. But the journalist whose account I read in *the Evening World* informed me that "the sprite in the white satin dress . . . was a little boy dressed in girl's clothes."[5]

No circus detail could be more perfect for inclusion in a novel like *Escaping Dreamland*. I literally cannot make this stuff up.

Does research shape the character or does the character shape the research? Both. There is a constantly evolving symbiotic relationship in the same way that the world shapes you and you shape the world. The surprise for the historical novelist—and this applies not just to me but to many other historical novelists whom I have interviewed—is that the research so often, as in the examples I have cited, reveals a real world much more surprising, apt, and frankly novelistic than anything the novelist could ever have invented.

ENDNOTES

1. (List of Slocum's Dead May Reach 1,000 1904)
2. (Newly Identified Dead 1904)
3. (Advertisement 1906)
4. (New Wonders at Coney 1906)
5. (Shockers and Thrills Fill the Bill of the Greatest Circus) 1906

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Gold awards

Richmond & Fredericksburg, Virginia

Lynn Bernard, former Region 3 Director and past club officer roles, received the Gold award recognizing her indefatigable efforts for Torch, for her clubs individually and through regional conventions, as well as being a driving force behind the 2023 Baltimore Convention.

Saginaw Valley, Michigan

Dwight Williams, Region 6 Director and past club officer, received the Gold award for his work with struggling and fallen-away clubs in his region as well as the nearly two years he spent guiding the drafting of the restated bylaws, and then editing, explaining, and shepherding those through to their final approval last fall.

Congratulations to both of our deserving Gold award winners!

Silver awards

Frederick, Maryland

The Frederick club has recognized two of its members with the Silver award.

Peter Hanson Michael, has been Secretary of the Frederick Torch club and faithfully produces a world-class monthly newsletter. Peter has presented several beautifully illustrated papers. His most recent highly regarded Torch effort is about Francis Michael, who created new settlements in the eighteenth century. Finding this ancestor piqued Peter's interest, resulting in his eighth book. Our club is honored by having wonderful by-products of a Torch presentation becoming a success on a larger scale. Peter's new book is yet another example of this and we hope he submits one of his papers to *The Torch* magazine soon!

The club that has a member such as **John F. Hewetson, Ph.D.**, is very fortunate. John served a term as President in the 2009-10 Torch season, but since has served as our Vice President. Year after year he has been willing to step in for the President at the last minute in case of illness or other life vicissitudes. No drama, no big deal, just excellence at everything he takes responsibility for as a member of the club. John is a valued member of the board of the club, whose wise counsel is heeded and appreciated by the other members.

Trenton, New Jersey

Francis O'Brien has served as president of the club for six years and a member of Torch for twelve years. As president, she has demonstrated outstanding leadership setting up the club for ongoing success by tirelessly increasing membership, transitioning to new leaders, and organizing excellent programs to encourage lifelong learning. As a member, she continues to contribute greatly to the fellowship and camaraderie of our club.

Montgomery County, Virginia

Two esteemed members of the club have received the Silver award.

Mary Pettitt served two years as president of the Montgomery County Torch club, a year longer than most presidents have served. She kept the club strong during the Covid pandemic and worked tirelessly to organize Zoom meetings and encourage all our members to participate. Our club remains a strong Torch club due to her efforts.

Robert Beckman has been a member of the Montgomery County Torch club since 2013 and has been our club secretary for five years. He has served with passion and precision supporting both our existing and new membership.

TORCH FOUNDATION Honor Roll

AS OF AUGUST 4, 2023

IN HONOR OF:

BEARER: ($1,000 to $4,999)

Lynn Bernard By: Ann Weller Dahl, Rod Gerwe, Leo A. Kellogg

Richard Davis By: Arthur Bloom, Ann Weller Dahl, Richmond Torch club (VA)

Norine Haas By: John and Antoinette Clarke, George Conklin, Ann Weller Dahl, Anneliese D. D'Souza, George B. Du Bois, Jr., George Heron, Anna D. Johnson-Winegar, Claire W. Kondig, Lynda and Brian Lockard, Jack and Anne Miller, Dr. Francis Moul, Leland and Linda Robinson, Mary Ann Simmons, Timothy M. Spaeder, Pat and Fred Spahr, Anne D. Sterling, Westminster Torch club (MD)

Leo A. Kellogg By: Arthur Bloom, Susan Breen-Held, Ann Weller Dahl, Rod Gerwe, Richard R. Lynch, Anne D. Sterling, Adirondack Torch club (NY)

P. Scott Stanfield By: Susan Breen-Held, Leo A. Kellogg, Anne D. Sterling

SPONSOR: ($500 to $999)

George Conklin By: Lynn Bernard, Susan Breen-Held, Ann Weller Dahl, Richard Davis, Leo A. Kellogg, Richard R. Lynch, Elizabeth Short, Timothy M. Spaeder, Anne D. Sterling, Stephen T. Toy

Ann Weller Dahl By: Leo A. Kellogg, Anne D. Sterling

Roger Kramer By: Susan Breen-Held, George Conklin

Richard R. Lynch By: Leo A. Kellogg, John M. Reilly, Judith Shub

Anne D. Sterling By: Ann Weller Dahl, Leo A. Kellogg, Richard R. Lynch

PATRON: ($100 to $499)

Susan Breen-Held By: Leo A. Kellogg, Richard R. Lynch, Sandra G. Stewart

Dorothy Driskell By: Arthur Bloom, Leo A. Kellogg

Shirley Eberly By: Richard R. Lynch

Dale M. Herder By: Douglas Johnson

Linda Porter By: Richard R. Lynch

Patricia Shutterly By: Ann Weller Dahl, Harry Wistrand

Boards of IATC & Torch Foundation By: Ann Weller Dahl

FRIEND: (Up to $99.00)

Cecelia Barbieri By: Leo A. Kellogg

Arthur Bloom By: Patricia Shutterly

Nancy Carter By: Leo A. Kellogg

Paul Joslin By: Susan Breen-Held

Virginia LaPointe By: Adirondack Torch club (NY)

Edward Latimer By: Lynn Bernard

David Lynch By: Susan Breen-Held

John Reilly By: Leo A. Kellogg

Steven Sosson By: Ann Weller Dahl

Gerald Stulc By: Arthur Bloom, Leo A. Kellogg

Flynn Warren By: Susan Breen-Held

Buffalo Torch club (NY) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

Elmira Torch club (NY) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

Erie Torch club (PA) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

Geneseo Torch club (NY) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

Rochester Torch club (NY) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

St. Catharines Torch club (ON) By: Timothy M. Spaeder

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Dr. Francis Moul
By: Ann Weller Dahl, Theodore and Norine Haas, Daniel J. Looker, Maxine Moul, Anne D. Sterling

SPONSOR: ($500 to $999)

Ralph Falconer, Jr.
By: Akron Torch club (OH)

PATRON: ($100 to $499)

Daniel Bolovan
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