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Beyond the Quest for the “Real Eliza Harris”:
Fugitive Slave Women in the Ohio Valley

KEITH GRIFFLER

In the nineteenth century, the best-known story of a fugitive from slavery was not that of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, or Josiah Henson. It was that of Eliza Harris, a fictional character in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In that runaway bestseller, the most widely read work of the abolitionist movement, a young enslaved woman named Eliza flees her Kentucky home on the southern shore of the Ohio River and makes a daring escape across the frozen surface, already broken up into floating cakes of ice, to Ohio, where abolitionists conduct her to Canada. Millions of Americans and Europeans gained their introduction to the antebellum network for aiding fugitive slaves, the Underground Railroad, through Stowe’s work. Eliza Harris became something of a symbol for what was, in Victorian terms, labeled the “panting fugitive.”

The success of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, though no doubt gratifying to the “conductors” on the Underground Railroad, might also have been just a little frustrating. The real heroes of the drama that played out north of slavery’s border were all but unknown to a public that took so much interest in mere figments of Stowe’s imagination. Left out of the memory of a clandestine operation that was on the way to achieving legendary proportions, they would be faced with the somewhat peculiar task of reclaiming a central role in an enterprise they had created and nourished.

Nothing better demonstrates this dominance of what the historian Larry Gara has called the “legend of the Underground Railroad” over the actual entity than the quest for the identity of the “real” Eliza Harris. Harriet Beecher Stowe herself inadvertently set off this strangest of historical preoccupations a couple of years after the publication of her classic with the follow-up *Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Under attack by proslavery forces for inventing a caricature of slave life, she provided a detailed volume purporting to be “the original facts and documents under which the story is founded.” Within the work, she included a reference to the Eliza Harris escape story as mirroring an actual
occurrence, and the search for the “real” Eliza was on. Given license by the
author, such Underground Railroad notables as William Mitchell, Levi Coffin, John Parker, and a son of Rev. John Rankin would include her story in
their memoirs, finding themselves compelled to claim insider knowledge of the “real” Eliza to prove their Underground Railroad mettle.

Perhaps predictably, almost all of these commentators pretending to be in the know about the “real” Eliza stuck to the details of her story and her person provided by Stowe, even though the latter admitted that she based the physical description of the character on “a beautiful quadroon girl” she saw but once on a trip through Kentucky. In meeting the expectations of their public, they endowed the “real” Eliza with attributes, the source of which had nothing to do with the purported case of a fugitive woman who crossed the icy Ohio River somewhere in the eastern portion of the state. They also all agreed that she passed through the hands of Ripley’s John Rankin, though the story Stowe used appears to have stemmed from a Cincinnati incident (probably in accordance with her reference in the Key to “a Presbyterian clergyman of Ohio”), which most readers familiar with the territory would have taken to be Rankin. Beyond that, the accounts differed widely, with each cast in an improbable light necessary to the alleged involvement of its author. Mitchell claimed to have sheltered the “real” Eliza the second night out, though he was never close enough to Ripley to have done so. Coffin went a step better and asserted that his wife gave Eliza Harris the name by which she became famous, a doubly perplexing circumstance for the namesake of a fictional character. One should trust least of all these otherwise reliable sources on the Underground Railroad, given that their motivation to stretch the truth was greatest.

The one exception to this general rule is the testimony left by John Rankin, Jr., son of the famous Presbyterian minister of the same name whose house atop the hill in Ripley has remained the Underground Railroad’s most famous landmark. To be sure, in his case no more reason exists to assume its authoritative character than in that of his better-known contemporaries. On the contrary, as one of fourteen children of a man whom he felt had an insufficiently appreciated role in the Underground Railroad, John Rankin, Jr., likely had the largest stake in claiming a connection to Eliza Harris. In contrast to his far more prominent father and oldest brother, he
alone related the story of a Kentucky fugitive slave woman—actually two slave women rolled into a composite—as that of the “real” Eliza. What makes his narrative especially interesting is neither that he claims to have known her, nor that its details appear most authentic, but that his Eliza is so altogether different from all of the others, not only in how she appears, but, more important, in what she does.

According to Rankin, Eliza’s involvement with the Underground Railroad did not end, as it does in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, when she, her husband, and her young child reached Canada. Instead, she returned to Ripley, intent on liberating more of her family. John Rankin, Sr., according to his son, “was astounded” and warned her against it. Returning whence she came could cost her her life. The woman whose winter crossing of the Ohio’s broken ice had captivated the American and British public and who had convinced the “noted negro hunter and a most noted ruffian” who found her that she deserved freedom was prepared to incur the risk.

He brought with her a French Canadian man whom she employed to scout the location and prepare the ground for the rescue. He obtained work and the confidence of the slaveholders of the district. But Eliza insisted on taking charge of the escape plot itself so John Rankin, Jr., and one of his brothers—both accustomed to helping fugitives cross the river in a northward direction—rowed the woman described as “a stout, heavy woman of about five feet, four inches in height” back into the den of slavery. John Rankin, Jr., wrote, “I never knew my Father to be so anxious about anything that had ever happened, for he was always opposed to any one’s going over there and risking his life.”

Eliza’s second crossing, as told by Rankin, though not nearly so dramatic as the one depicted in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, was perhaps even more poignant. She emerged once again, not only with her two daughters—one of whom gave birth almost immediately upon reaching Ohio—but also with four other fugitive slave children as well. Local white residents searched the African American homes in the vicinity, but found none of the fugitives. Because those in the area never spoke about the incident, it never made its way into the public’s consciousness. The youngest Rankin son wrote, “More people had the satisfaction of knowing that they had lent a helping hand to the largest known number of fleeing fugitives in one bunch, ever passing that way. And they were happy, both men, women and girls to keep the secret, and never to talk about it, as though it were their own.”

The same might have been said about fugitive slave women in general. Tellers of the story of the Underground Railroad have focused on brave and
daring men—black and white—to the exclusion of the many women who were known to participate. This omission is not owing to a lack of evidence. For example, Rankin’s father and brother corroborate that the woman who John Rankin, Jr., describes undertook the rescue mission, though neither connects it with the “real Eliza Harris.” John Rankin, Sr.—whose account may in the end be most trustworthy—attributes the frozen crossing and the rescue to two different women, though he affirms the details of the rescue operation described by his son, including the lapse of time before the fugitive’s return for her daughters, his own suggestion that she don the attire of a man, his opposition to the plan, his extreme anxiety during their absence in Kentucky, and the necessity of leaving two children behind. Adam Rankin, too, provides a matching account of a fugitive who returned with a Canadian man to secure the freedom of family members. In his version, however, the fugitive in question not only wore the clothing of a man, but was one himself. Rankin perhaps unconsciously succumbed to the notion that only a man would have hazarded such a trip. Levi Coffin relates the same history of a woman’s return for her children to the South via Ripley and the Coffin household, though omitting the participation of the Canadian and the connection to the famous fictional fugitive.

To be sure, other contemporary sources also reveal similar bias with respect to the gender of fugitives. Estimates derived from advertisements for runaways convey the impression that adult males made up eighty percent of the fugitive population. Yet the historical record is far from devoid of the presence of women. On the contrary, the available evidence shows far more women fugitives—often with children—crossing through the Ohio Valley than estimates derived from runaway slave ads would lead us to believe. Many celebrated fugitive slave cases involved women, including that of the Ohio Valley’s most famous fugitive, Margaret Garner, tried for murdering her child in 1856 in Cincinnati rather than seeing her reenslaved. For his involvement in the Queen City of the West in the escape of a woman known only as Matilda in 1837, abolitionist James Gillespie Birney found himself convicted and fined. Moreover, if the reminiscences of participants are any indication, women were well represented in the fugitive slave population making its way through the Ohio Valley. A large proportion of the cases related by such leading Under-
ground Railroad participants as Laura Haviland, John Parker, Levi Coffin, William Mitchell, and John Rankin detail the escapes of women acting alone or in groups including women. Even allowing for selection, more of the fugitives traversing the Ohio Valley must have been women than statistics derived from runaway slave advertisements suggest. While accurate numbers are impossible to ascertain, the conclusion seems warranted that women (and children) constituted a significant proportion of the fugitive slave population. The figure of the fleeing female fugitive was more common than has generally been thought.  

A second conclusion that emerges from contemporary sources and memoirs is that female fugitives, like John Rankin, Jr.'s Eliza Harris, were far more active in their own causes than the legend of the Underground Railroad might lead us to believe. The Eliza Harris escape in Uncle Tom’s Cabin was certainly brave, but desperation of the moment most certainly motivated it. Curiously, at the conclusion of her mad dash across the ice, Eliza reverts to the character of a Victorian woman. She falls at the feet of a man who determines her fate as his strong hand lifts her to safety, his heart “softened at the sight of that weak woman.” Rankin, however, had enshrined in his mind the image of a quite different woman, one not suited to the role of the young heroine of a Victorian romance, but one “short, stout,” middle-aged, strong, and determined to rescue her remaining children despite the evident apathy of her husband. John Rankin, Jr.'s Eliza is important not because she, in contrast to the other “real” Elizas, might bring us closer to the identity of the source of the fictional heroine. The significance of Rankin’s Eliza lies in the clues she provides to a more important task: shedding light on the experience of the female fugitive slave.  

Cincinnati, the city from which Harriet Beecher Stowe had first introduced the world to Eliza Harris, became the scene of an event a few years later that produced the most famous true-to-life fugitive. Like the fictional Eliza Harris, Margaret Garner’s notoriety lay with her determination to prevent her two-year-old child from suffering through a life of slavery, but in other respects the mother of four presented to the world a very different picture of fugitive slave women. Having made their escape from rural Boone County, Kentucky, Garner, her husband, and their children crossed the Ohio to Cincinnati in January 1856 and lodged briefly with a cousin. As the posse led by their master surrounded the premises, Margaret Garner cut her youngest daughter’s throat, rather than have her grow up in slavery, and would have done so to all her children had the posse not prevented her. Garner’s
case might have been unique, but her force of character, the degree to which she believed Victorian notions of women’s weakness and need for protection, and her bold defiance of a world determined to oppress her were not.12

Other fugitive women had to make what must have seemed to them an almost equally tragic choice: the decision to leave children behind in slavery. Certainly the woman who the younger John Rankin selected as the “real Eliza Harris” had to make such a fateful decision, but the same choice confronted Susan Hall, whom John Malvin assisted to freedom from a river steamer in Cincinnati’s public landing in 1829. Just before Malvin’s leadership role in the famous exodus of the African American population from the city in response to the city government’s announced intention to enforce Ohio’s Black Laws, he discovered that the two hailed from the same Virginia county and even that the woman was a friend of his mother. Malvin succeeding in getting Hall, in an advanced state of pregnancy with her third child, together with one of her children, to safety. Another daughter, however, was too closely watched, and Hall had to leave her behind, knowing that there was almost no chance of tracking her child down and successfully rescuing her.13

African Americans on either side of the Ohio seldom had the luxury of finding the same protections from which Eliza Harris benefited. When a slave catcher appeared in the early 1830s in the fugitive-dominated African American community of Cabin Creek, Indiana (in Randolph County, near the Ohio border) with a constable, a writ, and a posse of local “roughs,” the situation appeared hopeless for the two young girls they sought. Only the elderly grandmother of two fugitives from Tennessee stood between them and their return to slavery, and she was determined to forfeit her own life if necessary to save them from that fate. With her home surrounded, the old woman “seized a corn-cutter and placed herself in the only door of the cabin, defying the crowd and declaring that she would cut the first man in two who undertook to cross the threshold.” Her steadfast resolve stopped them just long enough for help to arrive. The young girls’ uncle, together with some other men, joined the woman barring the door, the small cabin’s only egress. But the dangers of the situation were by no means over, for the law was on the side of the bounty hunters, and they claimed the “fugitives from service,” as the Fugitive Slave Law deemed them. The girls’ uncle bought extra time by
demanding to see the writ and disputing its fitness and legality. The posse grew angrier and more violent. They demanded entry, and the residents finally had to yield to avoid a bloodbath that likely would have ended the existence of the community. They ransacked the premises, but could find no trace of the young girls. During the commotion, the girls had slipped out, dressed as boys, and neighbors took them away on horseback to safety.\textsuperscript{14}

The role of protector fell just as heavily on enslaved women as on their spouses. After discovering in the early 1840s that her husband was to receive three hundred blows with a wooden paddle, Eliza Little, of Jackson, Tennessee, determined that the two had to escape. Local white slaveowners had always considered John Little, born in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, a troublesome piece of property, and he had ended up on a western Tennessee plantation as a result of numerous other unsuccessful attempts at escape. A field hand on a cotton plantation there, Little married another newcomer to the area, sixteen-year old Eliza, from Petersburg, Virginia. Eliza persuaded her master, who doubled as a slave trader, to purchase her husband, but less than a year later he sold John Little and the slave again escaped, only to be captured back in Jackson. Eliza intervened to ensure his survival, immediately seeing to his concealment in the woods. When their master discovered her spouse’s absence, he subjected Eliza to the torture that awaited all who attempted or abetted escapes. Years later, she recalled that “they whipped me in the same way they did the men,” yet she refused to reveal the location of her husband. “I was put under a guard,—but I was too cunning for him, and joined my husband.” Together they made their way one hundred forty miles on foot to the mouth of the Ohio River at Cairo, Illinois. Even after her and then her husband’s shoes had fully given out, Eliza made the journey to Chicago barefooted, her feet “blistered and sore,” her ankles “swollen.” After much hardship, they eventually reached Queen’s Bush, Canada, where they became prosperous farmers. Eliza Little, who described herself as “brought up in the house” before her year in the Tennessee cotton fields, believed that the journey produced a great change in her. She forded rivers and streams and waded through bogs, side by side with her husband. She took her turns at

\textsuperscript{14} Illustration of escaping slaves from Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, The Filson Historical Society
watch, as they never dared sleep at the same time. She faced a group of armed white men alone, managing to convince them that she was not a fugitive. “I got to be quite hardy—quite used to water and bush-whacking; so that by the time I got to Canada, I could handle an axe, or hoe, or any thing. I felt proud to be able to do it—to help get cleared up, so that we could have a home, and plenty to live on.” John Little saw his wife as anything but weak and in need of his assistance. From their Canadian home, John Little put their partnership in perspective: “I did not realize...that she was a brave woman.... My wife worked right along with me...for we were raised slaves, the women accustomed to work, and undoubtedly the same spirit comes with us here” (emphasis added).15

An enslaved African American woman named Judy had to do more than work beside her husband; she had to work in his place after a debilitating beating. Judy crossed the Ohio River with her son into Indiana, probably in the 1820s, in pursuit of her husband and the “gentleman” who had purchased him, in a desperate attempt to keep her family together. Though no longer legally a slave, her husband was compelled to work in Vincennes for the man as a bound servant for a fixed term. Judy struck a deal with this new master to allow her to work for him to purchase herself as well. Her husband received such a brutal beating as the result of a previous escape attempt that she ended up working for both of their terms. Before she completed them, however, her spouse died and her master sold Judy to a slave trader who took her to New Orleans, where she suffered having her son wrenched from her arms on the auction block.16

Self-reliance constituted a common theme among fugitive slave women, many of whom took charge of daring escapes involving a number of persons. Mary French’s northern Kentucky master permitted her to work as a domestic in Cincinnati in the late 1840s, believing the family she left behind across the Ohio River effectively bound her to him, though her mistress worried that such visits would “spoil” her. French, however, had other ideas. While in Cincinnati, she approached white abolitionist Laura Haviland for help. The latter provided encouragement and suggested a plan, but ventured no more concrete aid. Some time later, enacting Haviland’s approach with her own embellishments, French arrived in Cincinnati escorting a contingent of eight children out of Kentucky slavery, slave posse at her heels. With a reward of $1,000 for their return serving as incentive for her betrayal, French took her charges to African American Baptist minister John Hall, a native of Kentucky. Some of his black Underground Railroad coworkers quickly alerted him that slave hunters were hot on the trail, and they dispersed the contingent throughout the Queen City’s extensive interracial network of activists. Mary French herself lodged with the Coffins. Cincinnati’s African American brain trust ensured their safe passage northward with an audacity and flair that revealed
the increasing boldness of the black population along the frontlines. As con-
ductors spirited the nine fugitives out of the city, they rushed a large carriage
to a location known to be under surveillance, where nine African American
residents of roughly the
same description “were
hustled in with haste, and
 driven off with speed.”
The slave catchers imme-
diately hailed the police,
who descended on the ve-
hicle. Recalled Haviland,
“[T]he [African American] man beside the driver de-
manded the reason why he
and his ladies should re-
ceive this insult to hinder
their pleasure ride. By
throwing a light from their
dark lantern in the faces of
their pursuers, the hunters they had suspected were recognized, to their great
annoyance. There were those among them who would not have been ex-
posed, perhaps, for half the amount of the reward.”17

J
ames Adams recalled his escape from Virginia slavery as one of six
children in a party that an enslaved woman led northward in 1824.
Adams lost touch with her forever when she turned back in pursuit of
her four children, whom locals had captured after false friends had be-
trayed them. Some enslaved women could do no more than assist their
children to freedom, even at the cost of remaining in the institution themselves.
The mother of a ten-year-old New Orleans girl named Lavinia instructed her
child to take advantage of a riverboat trip to Cincinnati on which she was
accompanying her master in order to effect her freedom. The woman ap-
prised her daughter of the facilities that the city offered for escape, made
known to her the legal ramifications of her sojourn onto free territory for her
status as a slave, and warned her of the consequences if she did not take full
advantage of this unique opportunity. Carefully carrying out her mother’s
instructions upon arrival, the young girl located a sympathetic African Ameri-
can family that accomplished her rescue. For the mother of fugitive Francis
Federic, the price proved high for remaining behind on the Mason County,
Kentucky farm in the 1850s: brutalization at the hands of a vengeance-minded
master combined with the searing pain of separation from her son. Her son
did not let her into the plot to gain his liberty, assisted by a sympathetic “abo-
licationist planter” in the vicinity. As he prepared to leave, the specter of the

Illustration from Narrative
of the Life and Adventures
of Henry Bibb, The Filson
Historical Society
treatment his mother would receive nearly overwhelmed Francis Federic: “I could foresee how my master would stand over her with the lash to extort from her my hiding-place.” “How she would suffer torture on my account, and be distressed that I had left her for ever until we should meet hereafter in heaven I hoped.” John Parker’s benefactor, a woman who assisted him on his escape, was perhaps even more remarkable, especially because she had caught sight of this strange teenage runaway for the first time just before making up her mind to assist him. The woman held off her master while Parker made for the woods. Decades later he still marveled at her bravery and determination to aid a fellow slave: “The last I saw of her she was fighting, scratching, holding her man, like I was one of her own children. I have often wondered what happened to her, for she certainly was in for a severe whipping.”

Occasionally, enslaved women escaped in the effort to reunite their families in freedom. An enslaved woman whom English traveler Edward Abdy encountered in Madison, Indiana, in the early 1830s was determined to blaze a trail of freedom for her husband and children. Having been sold into Cotton Belt slavery from the Lexington, Kentucky, farm where her husband and children remained, she slipped away from the slave trader and returned the four hundred miles on foot to Kentucky. Caught and imprisoned, she again escaped, and, after a wandering existence of some three months, made it as far as Madison. The African American community there assisted her with money for the journey to Canada, where she hoped fervently that her family would join her.

Though female fugitives often struck for liberty in the company of spouses and children, large numbers of women acted in groups or alone, occasionally followed sometime later by a spouse. After the onset of the Civil War, Lucretia Harper Simpson, then in her forties, set her course for freedom together with three other women. She had lived all of her life on the same Lafayette, Kentucky, farm. Her husband had been a free man, but he had recently died, and she and her companions knew enough about the uncertainty that the war created to risk their lives for their liberty. The four traveled alone at night through the state of Kentucky from their home in Lafayette, crossed the Ohio at Maysville, and continued on to Toledo, where they found work and settled. Mattie Jackson also took advantage of the war to obtain her freedom. For six months, she got up daily at four o’clock a.m. to scout secretly around Louisville until she finally made contact with African American operatives of the Underground Railroad. On the pretext of attending a Sunday evening service, she slipped away, crossed the Ohio River with their assistance, and found freedom in Indianapolis. Similar scenes had taken place on the Ohio for decades. From Cincinnati, abolitionist editor James G. Birney reported in 1837, “Six weeks ago, a young married woman escaped from New Orleans by Steamboat and was successfully concealed by her colored friends. Yesterday,
her husband arrived, and at 5 o'clock in the afternoon they were both in the Stage on their way from this place to Canada.”

African American women in the Ohio Valley were also heavily involved in the work of receiving fugitives. Historian Julie Jeffrey has written, “Although many of the stories about conductors on the underground railroad highlight the role of men, black women, like their white counterparts, did much of the routine work upon which the smooth operation of the underground railroad depended.” They also did a great deal of the less routine work. Fugitives from slavery were also included in their ranks. Harriet Tubman, the best-known conductor on the Underground Railroad, who worked on the easternmost route, was a fugitive who always traveled armed. One of Cincinnati’s Underground Railroad stalwarts, Catherine Doram (known to friends as Kittie), escaped from slavery at the age of twelve. With the thirty-six cents she brought with her, she established herself as a seamstress. By the time of the Civil War, she was materially well off, despite evidently never having married. Doram’s friend, Calvin Fairbank, a noted Underground Railroad operative in his own right, wrote of her, “She rose in her dignity like Sojourner Truth.” Doram was among the longest serving members of what Fairbank called the Cincinnati Underground Railroad’s “directory,” in which she had served since at least the early 1840s, her activism dating to a period before the involvement of Levi Coffin. She used her home to shelter fugitives and she had enough respect to be selected alongside “President” Coffin to the committee formed to raise money for Fairbank on his release from prison in 1864. And she was among the largest donors to his cause.

Even when they were not themselves fugitives, most women who became involved in the Underground Railroad had experienced bondage. Frances Jane Scroggins, like many other African American Cincinnatians, had been born into Virginia slavery in 1819. Her grandfather, a white American officer in the War of the Revolution, emancipated his child, Frances’s mother, together with her four young daughters. No longer enslaved, they were nevertheless left without means, forcing her mother to risk placing Frances into apprenticeship, often a direct avenue to re-enslavement. Though she suffered frequent beatings, Frances was fortunate; her mother remarried a freeman and they reclaimed her from bondage. The family then migrated to Ohio and, around the age of twenty, Frances took up residence in Cincinnati, where she boarded at the home of Major James Wilkerson. Wilkerson soon found that he had much in common with his young lodger. He, too, had been born into slavery in Virginia, his grandfather had been an officer in the Revolutionary army, and he also was a newcomer to Cincinnati, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1841, when one of the largest antebellum race riots in American history broke out in Cincinnati, Wilkerson headed up the self-defense efforts of the African American com-
munity that succeeded in driving off the attackers. Frances Scroggins became an active member of the Wilkerson household.22

Scroggins soon devoted herself to the cause of abolitionism and to the assistance of runaways. When a young African American woman named Caroline, who had stepped off a steamboat in Cincinnati with her master in hot pursuit, asked Scroggins for assistance, she did not hesitate. Though a newcomer to the city and to the excitement of its escape dramas, Frances Scroggins knew just what to do. She took the woman’s hand and ran with her through Cincinnati’s streets to the nearest place of safety. The master, who saw them enter that abode, forcefully demanded the return of his slave. While he was briefly detained at the front door, conductors rushed Caroline out the back and within seconds they had hidden her at a neighbor’s house, a process that they repeated until she was safely out of Cincinnati and on her way to Canada. Scroggins soon thereafter married Thomas Brown, himself an activist in the Underground Railroad, and they relocated to Pittsburgh, where she continued her Underground Railroad work while raising two children. Her daughter became a prominent founder of the African American women’s club movement and her son went on to serve in the Ohio state legislature after the war.23

These women in the clandestine network provided some of the most efficient and effective operatives. When asked to relate the most notable Underground Railroad episode that came under his observance, noted abolitionist and former Lane Seminary student rebel Huntington Lyman recalled watching a Cincinnati African American woman row a skiff over to the Kentucky side early one morning to arrange the details of an escape. Unfortunately for her, she ran straight into the slaves’ owner, who threatened to turn the dogs on her. Still, she managed to communicate her message to the slaves. As a result of her work, Lyman recalled, “The old man, who was a slave holder when he went to bed, was a non-slave holder when he awoke.” The story of a mysterious elderly woman known only as Jinney is perhaps even more remarkable. Operating from the southern rather than the northern bank of the Ohio River, she ferried fugitives from Parkersburg, Virginia, to Marietta, Ohio, never once availing herself of the freedom she assisted countless others to reach. She opted instead to remain in slavery.24

Like their male counterparts, women operatives found themselves caught up in violent clashes between proslavery and antislavery forces. The Berry residence was a frequent stopping point for runaways, which meant it suffered frequent searches by slave hunting parties. In one encounter, members of a posse attacked Samuel Berry. As her husband endured a terrible beating, Mariam Berry sprang to his defense. This action almost cost her life, together with that of their small baby who she was carrying in her arms, when one of the assailants hurled a knife at her. Her daughter recalled, “she caught her wrapper in the door [of an old stove], just as a man cut at her with a spring dirk knife; it
glanced on the door instead of on mother. I have thanked God many a time for that stove door. But for it my poor mother would have been killed that night."23

With the exception of Margaret Garner, the female fugitives who passed through the Ohio Valley, together with the women who participated in the work of helping them, remained anonymous in their own time, and their names and their stories have been all but lost in the intervening century and a half. In their place, the fictional Eliza Harris has embedded in the figure of fugitive slave women at least some of the images of the Victorian ideology found in the description of her escape in Uncle Tom's Cabin. The quest for the "real Eliza" was both literally and figuratively the search for the identity of a figure who never existed. To that extent, it has already too long deflected scholarly attention from a much more important subject of inquiry, that of recovering a history, not of the alleged origin of a popular story about slavery and escape but of the thousands of women whose experiences have been, in effect, discarded because they did not match that of a more popularized character of melodrama and romance.  

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5. John Rankin, Jr., typescript in John Rankin Papers [hereinafter cited as Rankin Papers], box 1, folders 2, 3, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus [hereinafter cited as OHS].

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. John Rankin, "Autobiography, written by himself in his eightieth year," ca. 1873, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus Andrew Rankin, "Autobiography," 1890, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus; Coffin, Reminiscences, 262-64. Coffin's account closely coincides with those of the John Rankin, Sr. and John Rankin, Jr., though he could have known neither.

BEYOND THE QUEST FOR THE "REAL ELIZA HARRIS"

Family Ties, Party Realities, and Political Ideology: George Hunt Pendleton and Partisanship in Antebellum Cincinnati

THOMAS S. MACH

The mighty Ohio River brought much more than life-giving water to the burgeoning city of Cincinnati in 1825. Indeed, the river provided the very foundation for maintaining the Queen City's most important economic activity: commercial trade. But beyond the farm produce the city's merchants shipped south and the finished goods they brought in from the East, Ohio's fastest growing city relied on the river to transport immigrants who would comprise a significant portion of the city's population. As Cincinnati gained economic prominence, its citizenry began to make a political impact not only on the State of Ohio, but also on the nation. One of the prominent families in this river city came westward down the Ohio in 1818. Already having made a significant mark on the national political scene, the Pendleton family introduced its latest addition on July 19, 1825, George Hunt Pendleton, who would continue and ultimately expand the family's influence on the developing republic.

Pendleton's political career would be impressive: United States congressman from Ohio during the Civil War, George B. McClellan's vice-presidential running mate in 1864, United States senator from Ohio, father of the first major civil service reform legislation — the Pendleton Act of 1883 — and finally United States diplomat to Germany. Although Pendleton's father was a Whig, Pendleton chose to become a Democrat in the early 1850s as he began his political career. This pivotal decision became the foundation for the developing western Democratic political ideology in the mid-nineteenth century. Pendleton's decision regarding party affiliation proved a difficult one, influenced by a number of factors, some but not all of which were partisan. An examination of his decision provides a window through which one can view the changing political arena in Cincinnati and Ohio, as well as the variety of factors involved in making such a choice and the continuity of political ideology in the face of a dynamic party system.

The fourth of seven children, George Pendleton entered the world as a member of a founding family not only of Cincinnati, but also of the United States. Pendleton's great uncle, Edmund, served in the Virginia House of Burgesses and the Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775. His grandfather, Nathaniel Pendleton, was an aide-de-camp to General Nathaniel Greene dur-
ing the Revolution and a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Nathaniel Greene Pendleton, Pendleton’s father, migrated from Georgia to New York and eventually West to help found the Queen City. In 1841, voters sent him as a Whig to the United States House of Representatives for one term. Pendleton’s economic and political success provided his seven children with a respected family name and all the benefits that wealth could provide. Yet those same blessings brought with them high expectations and responsibility.

Reflecting their status, the Pendletons pursued the best secondary education possible for their son. They considered inadequate the state’s common school system, which the legislature had organized in 1828. Instead they selected Woodward High School, a small college preparatory institution founded by William Woodward and his wife. This school did not meet the goals of the Pendletons, however, and in 1835 they sent young Pendleton to a more rigorous school operated by General Ormsby M. Mitchell. General Mitchell continued the instruction in the classics that Pendleton had begun at Woodward until he accepted a position as Professor of Mathematics at the newly organized Cincinnati College. Pendleton pursued his studies there, focusing on foreign languages and mathematics. He eventually found that even this institution did not suit his needs, and he left in 1841 to carry on his studies under private tutelage. For the next three years Pendleton studied at home, continuing to improve his mastery of French and German as well as the classical studies. He and his brother, Elliot, spent two years traveling throughout Europe as part of their education.

Upon his arrival at home in Cincinnati, Pendleton met, proposed to, and married Mary Alicia Lloyd Nevins Key. Generically known as Alice, she was the daughter of Francis Scott Key, a lawyer and the author of “The Star Spangled Banner,” and the niece of Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Taney had served as Andrew Jackson’s Secretary of the Treasury and in that capacity had participated in his war on the Bank of the United States. After a brief courtship, Pendleton and Key married in Baltimore in 1846 and took up residence in Cincinnati. Pendleton thereafter focused his studies on the reading of law in the office of Stephen Fales, the former partner of Nathaniel Greene Pendleton. Admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1847, Pendleton soon formed a law partnership with a boyhood schoolmate, George Ellis Pugh. The partnership lasted five years until Pugh was elected as Ohio’s attorney general.

While Edward D. Mansfield, a contemporary of Pendleton, believed that
men followed the partisanship of their fathers, Pendleton broke from his father's Whiggery to become a Democrat. An investigation of this break provides an opportunity for examining party identification in Cincinnati and in the nation during the 1840s and 1850s. Moreover, it illustrates the variety of influences that went into creating the political ideology of the western Democracy that Pendleton represented and, in many ways, helped form in this period. In the end, Pendleton's story highlights the importance of family ties over family status, party realities over party nostalgia, and political ideology over political rhetoric in the process of choosing a partisan affiliation.

The factors in George Pendleton's decision to become a Democrat vary, but may provide some insight into the political composition of parties in this era. Historians have grappled for decades with the issues that induced Americans of the early nineteenth century to form and reform their political alignments. Progressive historians explored the economic determinants in partisanship, equating the Whig Party with business, commercial, and property interests. The poorer elements of society, or those not directly benefiting from the changing economy, tended to vote for the Democratic Party. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., presented a somewhat different thesis based on the political division between business elites, the Whigs, and eastern workers, the Jacksonians. Earlier studies had found similar dichotomies, although Schlesinger's emphasis on eastern workers was unique. More recent works have focused on the impact of the "Market Revolution." Those benefiting from the new commercial systems developing in the country tended to be Whigs, they argued, while those who did not tended to be Democrats. While Pendleton's Cincinnati was a commercial city and should have been strongly Whig, it was an exception to the rule, likely because the Queen City residents had suffered disproportionately during the Panic of 1819 and blamed the Second Bank of the United States for it. Though a different approach than Schlesinger's, these works focus on economic factors as causative in party affiliation.

Other historians disagree. Lee Benson argues that each party was comprised of members of all economic groups, thus refuting the assertion that economic circumstances dictated which party an individual supported in this era. Benson suggests further that ethno-cultural and religious differences played a role in party selection, and that three main elements determined political preference: national origin, region and era of birth, and religious inclination. He suggests that immigrants from the British Isles tended to vote for Whigs; those from the rest of Europe tended to vote for the Democrats. With reference to religious beliefs, Benson sees a dichotomy between those who held to "puritanical" ideals and those who revered "rugged individualism." Stephen Fox examines the political milieu in Ohio, finding similar ethno-cultural and religious divisions in Ohio politics. "Evangelicals," comprised of Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Con-
gregationalists, who wanted to maintain the moral fiber of society and who sought the eradication of evils such as alcohol, prostitution, and slavery, tended to vote Whig. "Anti-Evangelicals," who tended to be Catholics, Episcopalians, Campbellites, Unitarians, Universalists, freethinkers, deists, or atheists, and who focused on the individual rights of men (and thus eschewed increased state power for the purpose of maintaining a set of morals), were generally Democrats.

More recently, Daniel Walker Howe and Michael Holt have written synthetic works on Whigs, evaluating much of what the field had examined while elucidating new ideological emphases. Howe recognizes the merits of both the economic and cultural impulses that defined Whigs, but focuses on the "two great principles of Whig social thought, order and philanthropy." This focus was a key distinctive from the Democracy, which could not accept the notion of government controlling the individual. As an example, Abraham Lincoln had been a Whig, Howe argues, because he believed Whiggery promoted a more civilized lifestyle. Howe's Whigs accepted modernization with restraint. Economic advance was to be embraced and encouraged with governmental support, but they rejected "socioeconomic equality, toleration of diversity, and acceptance of political conflict." Holt notes certain economic, ethnic, and religious distinctions between Whigs and Democrats, and argues that the Whig "ideological core [was] built around beliefs in social order, Unionism, activist domestic governance, a non-aggressive foreign policy, and opposition to executive tyranny." However, Holt surpasses Howe by examining regional Whig and Democratic distinctions, including an examination of Ohio in the 1840s and 1850s, arguing that there were regional differences within the parties.

In 1850, Ohio convened a constitutional convention where Democrats held a majority. Meanwhile, the Fugitive Slave Law portion of the Compromise of 1850 that Congress passed severely divided the two parties within the state. When compromise won out at the state constitutional convention, Whigs were less than satisfied. The Democrats had gained reapportionment for the state that would largely benefit themselves. Yet the Whigs had managed to take all state appointive offices and make them elective. Whigs were weary of the "flagrant pursuit of lucrative state jobs" that often led to corruption. Recognizing that should the state's voters accept the constitution they would immediately lose control of the state legislature, they pushed through the strongly antislavery judge and former state senator, Benjamin Wade, to fill the open United States Senate seat. This action only caused further dissension within a national Whig Party already trying to recover from the Compromise of 1850 debate. In the state elections, the constitution was narrowly accepted and Democrats gained control of the state.

With the multitude of variables that determined political partisanship, as-
certaining the reasons for Pendleton’s party choice proves complex. The Pendleton family was part of the wealthy elite of Cincinnati, and George Pendleton had the benefits of this esteemed family name in addition to an inherited family fortune. He traveled extensively and obtained an excellent education. As testimony to the family’s affluence, the censuses of 1850, 1860, and 1870 enumerate at least one and generally two domestic servants in the service of Alice Key and George Pendleton. His holdings in 1860 amounted to $75,000 in real estate and $3,000 in personal property. By the following census, he had accrued through inheritance and accumulation real estate worth $250,000 and personal property totaling $25,000. Using the progressive historians’ model, Nathaniel Greene Pendleton should have been a Whig, and indeed he was. His son, according to the construct, should have followed in his father’s footsteps into the Whig fold. Employment of the Market Revolution thesis would assume that the younger Pendleton should have become a Whig. As a lawyer, he could only benefit from the increasing commercial activity and business enterprise in Cincinnati. Contrary to both models, he became a Democrat. 18

Revisionists convincingly suggest that partisanship derived from factors beyond those purely economic. Pendleton fit into both categories of native-born Americans as described in Lee Benson’s thesis. His family originally came from Virginia, then moved to Georgia and eventually to New York, before settling in Cincinnati. Benson asserted that the native-born from New York tended to be Whig, while those from Virginia held to Democratic ideals. The Pendletons were native-born citizens who migrated from the New York region, suggesting that Nathaniel Greene Pendleton and his sons would become Whigs. Again, only the elder Pendleton fits the model. It is clear that the family’s southern heritage influenced the elder Pendleton’s political ideology and eventually George Pendleton as well. The family was Episcopalian which, according to Fox, placed it within the “Anti-Evangelical” group of partisans who tended to vote Democratic. This partially explains the younger Pendleton’s decision to be a Democrat, but does little to reveal his father’s motives for remaining a Whig. George Pendleton either introduces an exception to the rule, or he is an example of the struggle many Whigs faced as their party began to disintegrate.19

The interpretations of Daniel Walker Howe and Michael Holt add to an understanding of Pendleton’s choice but do not address all the potential variables. Holt’s depiction of Ohio Whiggery in 1850 suggested a party that was losing power. The state’s turmoil and the conflicts arising from national issues, such as the Compromise of 1850, may well have signaled to Pendleton that the Whig Party was in decline.20 Yet, Pendleton was no neophyte and undoubtedly understood the ebb and flow of political power. The difficulties of the party did not cause his father to jump ship.
Howe’s portrayal of the Whig ideological distinctions may shed more light on Pendleton’s decision. The Whigs’ focus on order and control undoubtedly concerned Pendleton, for during his long career, he maintained a strong adherence to the concept of private conscience, believing that the government should not regulate private behavior. In addition, his southern heritage lent itself to a states’ rights concept of governance, including the idea that states should decide internal matters such as slavery. Perhaps the Ohio Whigs’ support for Benjamin Wade as senator solidified his resolve to be a Democrat. Yet even here, the partisan indicators are unclear. A sophisticated analysis recognizes that neither of the major parties could easily align, even on as potent an issue as slavery, and again, Pendleton’s father remained a Whig. Perhaps this discourse shows only how a multitude of factors played some role in influencing his choice of party affiliation.

In early 1841, Ohio Whigs had cause for optimism when President William Henry Harrison appointed Ohioan Thomas Ewing as Secretary of the Treasury, but Harrison’s untimely death brought doubt and disillusionment to Buckeye Whigs. They seriously wondered if the national party would consider the interests of the West, especially after a southerner, John Tyler, assumed the executive office. The conflicts within the party attributable to Tyler’s opposition to Henry Clay’s American System, and the resulting decline of the organization, accelerated during the early 1840s even as George Pendleton was determining his political loyalties. If he looked realistically at Ohio politics without concern for his political heritage, he might have been able to predict the eventual doom of the Whigs. He doubtless considered unwise a young ambitious attorney stepping aboard a sinking vessel.

In weighing the political strength of the Whigs versus the Democrats, Pendleton also looked realistically at his potential constituency. In examining the composition of the Cincinnati electorate, Pendleton could not help but notice the high percentage of foreign-born Cincinnatians who tended to vote Democratic. Hamilton County had traditionally voted Demo-
ocratic in the 1830s. As early as 1825, there were 2,411 names on the register of gainfully employed Cincinnatians, with 533 immigrants, including 210 English people, 166 Irish people, 51 Germans, 40 Scots, and a variety of other nationalities. The numbers of Irish and Germans, who were largely Catholic, continued to grow and they became, after 1830, a significant voting bloc. By 1850, twenty-seven percent of the people living in Cincinnati had been born in Germany. Seven years earlier, the Germans, realizing their growing political clout, had organized the German Democratic Union of Hamilton County. The following year, Cincinnati elected the first German-born representative to the Ohio General Assembly. Later, he was elected to the Ohio Senate and served as a delegate to the Ohio Constitutional Convention in 1850 and 1851. His understanding of the electorate in Cincinnati deterred Pendleton from considering associating with the Whigs, who used nativist tactics, and later the American Party, a nativist group also called the Know-Nothings.

Yet simply because a voter was foreign born did not mean he would vote Democratic. Political debate in Cincinnati in this period did not always revolve around traditional party issues. Rather, nativism drove much of the conflict. Consider, for example, the political behavior of Germans in Cincinnati in the 1853 municipal elections. In early 1853, Archbishop John Purcell asked for state funds to be shared with parochial schools in the Queen City. Local Catholics were concerned that the heavily Protestant public schools excluded religious instruction. Purcell’s request unleashed a firestorm. Simple prejudice drove part of the backlash, but an underlying belief that the common school system inculcated in the next generation the values and ideals necessary for citizens of a republic also caused Protestants to eschew any religious curriculum for fear of encouraging the spread of Catholicism. Sensing that neither of the two major parties, the Whigs or the Democrats, was responding appropriately to this threat to the common school system, native-born Cincinnatians and Protestant Germans formed political factions and independent parties.

Although the Democrats dominated the city by this time, owing in part to the support of its foreign-born population, the issue of foreign ascendance threatened to eat away at the party’s power base. Some native-born Demo-
Illustration from the October 8, 1864 issue of Harper’s Weekly. George McClellan and George Pendleton were the Democratic nominees for president and vice president in 1864. Although the Democratic Party platform called for a cessation of hostilities and restoration of the Federal union, McClellan repudiated the peace plank. The cartoon shows McClellan straddling a war horse and a peace donkey, ridden by Pendleton.

The Whig Party in Ohio had a history of being unable to garner much of the immigrant vote. Many Whigs were nativists, and as the party disintegrated, some formed the Know-Nothing Party. Irish and German immigrants who went to saloons on the Sabbath offended many Whigs' politicized sense of piety. Whig anti-Catholicism, xenophobia, and prohibitionism tended to push immigrants, particularly Catholic immigrants, into the Democratic fold. Because of Cincinnati’s large immigrant population, Pendleton clearly recognized his need to secure their support to be successful politically. His speeches indicate that he deprecated nativism and religious discrimination. This position was consistent with his ideological support of the inviolability of the private conscience. Whether his words drew upon ideals of tolerance or simple political opportunism is uncertain because of the lack of personal correspondence or diaries. Nonetheless, Pendleton did remain consistent in his opposition to nativism throughout his career.

Pendleton’s first campaign for the United States House of Representatives provides an example of his anti-nativist position. Pendleton had previously run for and won a seat in the Ohio State Senate as a Democrat. But by the campaign for the 1854 elections, groups opposing the Democracy attempted to make a distinction between their anti-Catholicism and the more general sense of nativism. Though an undercurrent of xenophobia ran strongly...
through these groups, particularly the Know-Nothings, the distinction helped to garner Protestant immigrant support. In this election, the issues went beyond municipal concerns to include the recent debate over the Kansas-Nebraska bill proposed by Democrat Stephen Douglas from Illinois. This bill offended the Free Soil sentiment of many northerners and westerners who viewed it as opening up previously free portions of the West to slavery. As a result, Anti-Catholic forces combined with anti-Nebraska partisans to form the Ohio People’s Party in order to oppose the Democracy. Even heavily Democratic Hamilton County, which contained Cincinnati, gave a majority vote in the 1854 election to the People’s Party. The German Democratic vote fell from eighty-eight percent the year before to fifty-three percent, signaling the growing defection from the Democracy.

The opposition fusion comprised of, according to one historian, “former Whigs, virulent nativists, anti-Nebraska Democrats, and non-Catholic immigrants” challenged Democratic ascendancy. Though Pendleton’s rhetoric in this election would tend to demonstrate a broad-brushed approach, depicting the opposition uniformly as nativists, the fusion that he faced was an eclectic collection that defied simple categorization.

In 1854, the Democrats nominated Pendleton to represent the First District in Congress. His opponent, Timothy C. Day, accused him and the Cincinnati Enquirer (which supported him) of combining the vote of the Catholics and the Miamis in his earlier bid for a seat in the State Senate. The Miami Tribe, Day asserted, was a group trying to control the regular organization of Democrats in Cincinnati that he and a radical faction of Cincinnati’s Democrats had opposed. Day was clearly trying to divide Pendleton’s support base by associating these two disparate groups. Disillusioned with the party because of the dispute over the admission of Kansas, Day secretly ran as a Know-Nothing. He had the support of some radical Democrats who held very conservative economic views, and saw Pendleton as too moderate. The Germans of Cincinnati had followed their leader, Charles Reemelin, a radical Democrat, and opposed the Miamis.

Though Democrats downplayed their party’s factionalization as largely personal squabbles over political power “founded on no differences of principle or policy,” important underlying issues existed. Pendleton responded to Day’s revival of past disputes with a speech denying any connection with the Miami political organization. In addition, he repudiated the Know-Nothings, who Day apparently represented, and suggested that the United States should not only foster immigration but also should end religious and ethnic prejudice. Pendleton continued to speak out against the Know-Nothings prior to the election, saying that they were in reality Whigs who were intolerant of religious minorities and foreigners. The Cincinnati Commercial, the political enemy of the Enquirer, alleged that Democratic city
officials had illegally naturalized large numbers of immigrants the night before the election in order to boost the party's totals.33

In spite of his efforts, Pendleton lost the election to Day, who never officially disclosed his true political persuasion. Although the Commercial referred to him as a member of the American Reform Ticket, a nativist group, it passed no judgment on Day and took no official partisan position. The Ohio Statesman, one of Ohio's leading Democratic mouthpieces, suggested that the Democrats did poorly in the election due to the strength of the Know-Nothings.34 Pendleton's anti-nativist campaign demonstrated a cognizance of Cincinnati's growing immigrant electorate. Yet, this cannot have been a decisive factor for Pendleton because the immigrant community did not vote as a block in elections during the early 1850s. Yet another factor played a role in Pendleton's decision to become a Democrat: his relationship with Ohio's attorney general and soon-to-be U.S. Senator George Ellis Pugh. Born into a Quaker family, which according to the interpretation of the ethno-cultural historians would place him within the Whig Party, Pugh held no prejudice against those of other nationalities or faiths. Indeed, he later married Theresa Chalfant, a Catholic, and converted to Catholicism himself. Interestingly, Pugh had been a Harrison Whig in 1840, but the Cincinnati Commercial noted that he later became a Democrat when the Whigs became a "hopeless minority in Hamilton County."35 Pugh grappled with this decision concurrently with his friend, Pendleton, and both apparently came to the same conclusion about their own political philosophies and which party would provide the greatest personal advantage.36

One must consider a final and decisive factor to explain Pendleton's decision to become a Democrat. Although Nathaniel Greene Pendleton was unsuccessful in passing along his political partisanship to his son, he was much more effective in bestowing upon him his political ideology. The younger Pendleton had more than one choice as he entered the 1850s. He rejected the Know-Nothings because of their nativism and disdain for his position on private conscience. Pendleton could have joined former Whigs like Abraham Lincoln and others of the Free Soil philosophy who eventually formed the Republican Party, but he could not support its association with abolitionism. This advocacy would have run counter to his family's southern heritage dating to the colonial period. The southern political philosophy of states' rights, limited federal authority, and concern for a truly democratic governing system—though reserved for white men—remained a part of Pendleton's ideology throughout his career and would ultimately influence his decision to become a Peace Democrat and oppose the Republican prosecution of the Civil War. His father dedicated himself to these principles, though surprisingly Jacksonian in concept, and he passed them on to his son. They formed the
basis of the western Democratic ideology that would dominate the party in this region for the decade to come. That Pendleton's father previously held these views further demonstrates the amalgamated nature of the Whig Party. Early in his career, Pendleton's political beliefs evolved to include other Jacksonian tenets such as a strict construction of the Constitution, elevation of the "common man" by instituting an instructed delegate view of representation in Congress, strict economy, private conscience, and opposition to concentrated power, particularly government-sanctioned monopolies or privilege. Unwilling to tolerate (as his father had) such emphases as neo-mercantilism and political piety, Pendleton's developing focus precluded association with the Whig Party. Much of this evolution arose as a result of Pendleton's focus on national rather than just local issues. His father had served in Congress, allowing him to recognize the importance of local concerns in light of national initiatives. In examining the inability of President John Tyler to become the leader of the Whig Party in the early 1840s, for example, Pendleton realized that no further impediments stood in the way of Henry Clay becoming that party's clarion voice. The Whigs, under Clay, had less and less room for those holding to Pendleton's ideals. To be successful politically, Pendleton understood that he had to temper his personal ambition with his desire to remain true to his political beliefs and his recognition of the direction of the national party organizations. Pendleton's later partisanship seems to support the idea that his father's ideology heavily influenced him, leaving him in the given time period little choice other than the Democracy. In his provocative and insightful conclusion, the historian Daniel Walker Howe has argued that "the post-war Democratic party bore certain similarities to prewar Whiggery." Pendleton represents one strain of that conclusion: he upheld his father's southern heritage, including his support for white supremacy, states' rights, and strict construction of the Constitution. Pendleton maintained these Jacksonian principles throughout his career, leading the western Democracy through the Civil War and attempting to direct it beyond. Yet he found justification
for some Whig objectives in a Jacksonian ideology reinterpreted, of necessity, because of a changing political milieu. During the war, consistent with Whig tradition, Pendleton frequently fought to limit the expansion of executive power at the expense of legislative prerogative. One cannot interpret his attacks on Lincoln's administration as anti-Jacksonian, however, because Pendleton based them on a concern for the maintenance of individual liberties. In his final initiative in the House before leaving his seat, Pendleton furthered this objective by introducing a bill to authorize cabinet members to have non-voting seats in Congress, in his mind another means of keeping tabs on the executive branch. In the end, Pendleton took many of his father's Whig ideals, reinterpreted them within the context of Jacksonianism, and developed a political ideology that defined the western Democracy for decades. 40

The amalgamated nature of the Democracy in the mid-nineteenth century extended beyond Pendleton and his western Democratic supporters, but he did not believe the eastern wing of the party maintained its roots in Jacksonian ideology. Pendleton never strayed from his Jacksonianism, maintaining it as his foundational political philosophy through which he evaluated all political issues. Pendleton and his western Democratic followers differed somewhat from most eastern Democrats, frequently known as “Bourbon Democrats.” Both wings of the party supported the long-standing ideals of white supremacy and states' rights. Neither could condone expansion of the central government. Yet on economic issues they parted ways. Bourbon Democrats harkened back to Whig neo-mercantilism. Pendleton parted with his father's Whig heritage here because it contradicted his Jacksonian foundation. Government involvement in support of economic interests smacked of monopoly and privilege and was anathema to any consistent Jacksonian. In his final analysis, Pendleton argued that the Bourbons had left the Jacksonian tradition behind and, therefore, he felt compelled to lead the western Democracy in a different direction. He hoped to convince the Bourbons of the error of their ways. 41

Pendleton never turned his back on the political legacy handed down to him by his father. This legacy became the centerpiece of western Democratic politics during the rest of the nineteenth century. Pendleton developed this political ideology throughout his career, reinterpreting Jacksonianism to address contemporary issues, but never straying from his ideological roots. In the end, wealth, family status, place of birth and denominational affiliation were necessary causes, but did not prove sufficient in and of themselves. The political environment of his city and his time greatly influenced Pendleton's decision. Cincinnati's inhabitants and the demise of the Whig Party certainly played their respective roles. National debates over the expansion of slavery and state squabbles over political dominance had left the party in Ohio in turmoil within and without. Though the Democrats
dominated Ohio’s politics in the early 1850s, the complex interplay between political factions and ethnic voting blocs within Cincinnati precluded certainty about the future. All of these factors, including Pendleton’s relationship with Pugh, had their place; they laid the groundwork for the most decisive influence. Pendleton was principally influenced by his father’s political ideology. In the changing political milieu of the 1840s and 1850s, many of those beliefs could no longer find a comfortable home within the Whig Party. The contemporary observer, Edward Mansfield, seems to have been partially correct when he argued that fathers influenced the party affiliation of their sons. Though partisanship was not always passed down from father to son, political ideology often was.


5. Pugh and Pendleton were schoolmates at Woodward High and Cincinnati College. Bliss, Life of Pendleton, 16; Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), 14: 419-20. Court records for Cincinnati are currently housed in the Archives and Rare Books Department of the Eblen Library at the University of Cincinnati. Records are very scarce, if at all extant, before 1857. A courthouse fire reputedly destroyed most of them. Records on Pendleton or Pugh, other than a case in which Pendleton himself was the plaintiff, do not survive. Clearly, Pendleton was involved in real estate claims. George H. Pendleton to A. M. Searles, July 2, 1850, Eben Lane Papers, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago; George H. Pendleton to Samuel Bisham, May 17, 1854, Gunther Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago; Williams’ Cincinnati Directory and Business Advertiser, v. 1-37 (Cincinnati: C. S. Williams, 1819-1887); Carrington T. Marshall, A History of the Courts and Lawyers of Ohio, (New York: American Historical Society Inc., 1934), 4: 281.


7. The Market Revolution refers to the changing economic practices of Americans after 1815. Farmers began to specialize, focusing on one or two crops to sell for a profit rather than on subsistence farming. Manufacturers began to find better more efficient ways to produce and sell goods. All of these changes were taking place in an economic milieu rife with advances in communications and transpor-


30. Ibid., 65-73, 657-61.
34. The American System was intended to benefit the home market of the United States and centered on three main parts: a national banking system, protective tariffs, and federally-funded internal improvements. The program was consistent with the Whig support of non-mercantilism, a political philosophy calling for the government to promote economic growth through its policies.
37. Ibid., 569-73, 657-61.
38. Ibid., 301.
39. Ibid., Ill.
41. Nathaniel Greene Pendleton, Letter on Our Political Troubles (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 1-8. Nathaniel Greene Pendleton held that the southern states had the right to maintain slavery and suggested that the Missouri Compromise be reinstated as the formula for admitting future states. He sought compromise to prevent war, even proposing the formation of a central confederacy made up of border states between the North and the South to prevent bloodshed. While slightly later than the time period being discussed, this letter expressed the principle of states' rights that Nathaniel Greene passed on to his son, George. Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 31; Robert V. Remini, The Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 305; Holt, Political Parties, 54.
42. Howe, American Whigs, 302.
43. Ibid., 303-305; Mach, "Gentleman George," 104-70 and passim.
44. Mach, "Gentleman George," 208-63 and passim.
In the words of the historian Charles Joyner, slave Christianity gave African Americans "a source of strength and endurance that enabled them to triumph over the collective tragedy of enslavement." Such words are typical of the way that historians use Afro-Christianity to counter old arguments saying that slavery stripped Africans of their culture and reduced them to an infantile state of existence. However, such worthy attempts by zealous historians to refute racist or inaccurate interpretations of the past have created an illusion, specifically the impression that most slaves actively participated in Christianity, attributing the religious behavior of a few slaves to the many. This strident defense of African American religiosity further suggests that no boundary imposed by slaveowners proved too great for the slaves to overcome.

Nevertheless, real institutional boundaries and obstacles both restricted and shaped the African American religious experience in profound ways. Several recent studies of slavery by Michael Gomez, John Willis, and myself suggest that no more than twenty-five percent of the South's bondsmen converted to Christianity before emancipation. The reasons for such a low participation rate include the persistence of African religious ideas and practices, too little access to churches, the example of white Christians who failed to live up to their own teachings, and a proslavery Christian message. These scholars, however, do not challenge the existence of a vibrant Christian element within the slave community. My own earlier work describes this element as the Christian core and credits its members with leading a majority of African Americans to convert to Christianity during and after the Civil War.

The Christian core among slaves formed a small but devoted segment of the larger African American population in the South. Many of these dedicated Christians willingly faced threats of physical punishment and even death in order to pursue their faith as they saw fit, in part, because Christianity gave these believers spiritual relief from the everyday pain of slavery and hope for...
CHRIST UNCHAINED

a better world to come. Most Christian slaves also believed that God would
ultimately provide them with earthly freedom when the time was right, and
they regularly but quietly prophesied and prayed about the day when God
would break the shackles of bondage and set his righteous people free. When
that anticipated deliverance arrived, Christian freedpeople understood them-

selves as justified in their faith and themselves as the greatest testament to
God’s power. The Christian core’s faithfulness and accuracy in anticipating
emancipation also attracted ever greater numbers of African American
freedpeople to Christianity. Freedom, rather than slavery, proved to be the
greatest force for conversion among African Americans in the South.

Before the Civil War, slaveholders commonly attempted to shape the
religious experiences of slaves in ways that favored the needs of whites
rather than African Americans. This could mean anything from pro-
hibiting some religious services to dictating the content of a sermon or allow-
ing only family prayer meetings. Failure to comply with these restrictions
often led to a ban of all religious services, physical punishment, and even
death for some Christian slaves. For instance, the Baptist Church in Elkton,
Kentucky unanimously adopted the following resolution in 1846:

Resolved that it is the opinion of this church that the meetings of the
colored people conducted as they are, are of no benefit to them either
in a religious or civil [sic] point of view and that the
section [sic] of this
church be instructed not
to allow them the use of
this house any more for
that purpose.

Likewise, William Williams of North Carolina recalled that his overseer
“would whip a slave if he found him praying.” The
master of Mary James, a slave
in Virginia, sold her grandfa-
ther south for being religious
and praying that God would set the slaves free. Kentucky native Isaac
Throgmorton reported that his overseer whipped slaves who “got happy” at
prayer meetings and repeatedly told them that he would rather see them stealing,
swearing, and whoring than to be religious. The master of Thomas H.
Jones swore that if he did not abandon religion “I will whip you to death.”
And while Jones’ master ultimately stopped short of murdering Thomas, the
sister of John Andrew Jackson paid the ultimate price for her religious prin-
ciples. She died at the hands of her mistress because she refused to quit praying in spite of several previous warnings to do so.  

Despite all this, some Christian slaves persisted in worshiping their God according to the dictates of their hearts. One Louisiana slave even believed that such persecution made African American believers better Christians. He argued that when slave Christians faced little opposition “All quiet, den all grow cold, and dey follers de Lord afar off.” In contrast, when slaveowners fought slave prayers with punishment or death, “all these troubles and trials dey drives us to de Lord.” Christian slaves also refused to abandon their faith because its teachings gave them an identity and future that they could embrace fully. Specifically, Christianity asserts the value of every human being whether black or white or slave or free because all individuals are an important part of the Christian God’s creation. No one, no matter how lowly in earthly status, is worth less than another person in the eyes of God, and all persons are children of God and equally subject to His commandments. The Christian God even sacrificed his only son in order to offer eternal life to every individual who accepts and follows his teachings. Furthermore, Christian theology promises the gift of eternal life, a heavenly existence of divine justice and peace.

While the Christian core certainly looked forward to heaven, salvation in their own time held an even greater appeal for slaves. Christian slaves, for example, seized on the biblical story of the Ancient Israelites’ exodus from slavery in Egypt and made it their own. As Albert Raboteau has argued, this link with Israel “gave the slaves a communal identity as a special, divinely favored people” and foretold of their future deliverance. Slaves who believed in Christ spoke to one another about their anticipated freedom and made it a common feature in their sermons and prayers. When a devout Christian named Solomon, for instance, reacted calmly to ill treatment from his overseer he was asked how he could tolerate such treatment. Solomon replied saying “it would not always be so—that slavery was to come to an end for the Bible said so.” Similarly, Mingo White believed that the slaves “had an instinct dat we was goin’ to be free” and as a result frequently prayed “for de Lawd to free dem lack he did de chillun of Is’ael.” According to Robert Cheatum, “The negro preachers preached freedom into our ears and our old men and women prophecied about it.” Finally, Victoria Perry’s mother routinely awakened her by praying: “Someday we are going to be free: the Good Lord won’t let this thing go on all the time.”

When Christian slaves learned about the Confederate assault on Fort Sumter, many believed accurately that their deliverance was at hand. As a result, throughout the war, an increasing number of slaves prayed to God for a Southern defeat and the end of slavery. In later life, former Georgia slave Mary Gladdy remembered that, during the war, slaves gathered for prayer meetings because “their great, soul hungering desire was freedom.”

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On the plantation where Maria Heywood lived such prayer meetings occurred "All bout in people house. Hold the four year of the war." Once Ebenezer Brown's masters left for the war, "All de time dey wus gone de slaves kept prayin' to be sor free." And during wartime prayer meetings that she attended, Channa Littlejohn remembered that prayers being offered asked very specifically for the Yankees to come. Such prayer meetings were so common during the war that some whites sought to prevent their occurrence lest the slaves' prayers come true. Callie Williams pointed out that "Dey tried to make 'em stop singin' and prayin' durin' de war" because whites knew "all dey'd ask for was to be set free." Williams goes on to say that attempts by whites to stop these meetings seldom succeeded. In fact, according to Tom Robinson, despite attempts by white people to prohibit petitions for divine intervention, "All over the country the same prayer was being prayed."

With the war ended and freedom secured, most former slaves had little doubt who was responsible for their deliverance. Many freedmen, like Mingo White and Robert Cheatum, believed that "Abraham Lincoln was the agent of the true and living God" sent to deliver his people from bondage. Others like O. W. Green and Clayborn Gantling emphasized that "Twas only because of de prayers of de cullud people, dey was freed...." Former Louisiana slave Charlotte Brooks gave credit for the coming of emancipation to both God and the North. Brooks believed that "We done the praying and the Yankees done the fighting, and God heard our prayers 'way down here in these cane-fields." Some freedmen, like L. M. Mills of St. Louis, proved extremely eloquent in their analysis of emancipation. Mills noted that it was no wonder God sent war on this nation! It was the old story of the captivity in Egypt repeated. The slaveholders were warned time and again to let the black man go, but they hardened their hearts and would not, until finally the wrath of God was poured out upon them and the sword of the great North fell upon their first born.

Regardless of what spin freedpeople put on their newfound freedom, most identified the Christian God as the ultimate source of their deliverance. This was even true for some individuals who previously had been skeptical about the Christian core's expectation of freedom. One freedman admitted, "I've heard them pray for freedom. I thought it was foolishness then, but the old time folks always felt they was to be free. It must have been something 'vealed unto 'em." Thus, freedpeople commonly identified emancipation as either the fulfillment of biblical promise or as the answer to decades of prayer. In either case, the faithfulness, now rewarded, of the Christian core drew thousands of previously skeptical African Americans to Christianity. Where slavery had once barred the door to Christian salvation, freedom allowed the multitude to enter God's kingdom unobstructed.

Freedpeople vividly remembered the dramatic impact that the Civil War
and emancipation had on their religious lives. For instance, Mollie Edmonds recalled: “After surrender we held meetings in big tents and had a preacher, what could tell us the word of God. Before that, there wasn’t much Christianity amongst us.” 34 Kentuckian Charles Green pointed out that immediately after the war “lots er churches sprung up.” 35 Virginian Julia Williams similarly noted that “De slaves had more meetin’s and gatherin’s aftah de war.” 36 Likewise, Henry Baker exclaimed, “We served de Lawd sho nuff aftuh we wuz sot free cause we had sumpin tuh be thankful fon. Aftuh Surrender, ‘niggers’ dey sung, dey prayed, dey preached....” 37 Similarly, Harriett Gresham recalled that upon emancipation, “One and all they remembered to thank God for their freedom. They immediately began to hold meetings, singing soul stirring spirituals.” 38 According to Charlie Robinson, “When freedom come...Dat year us all jined de church...” 39

Freedmen who had served in the United States Army also remembered their experiences during the war as being crucial in encouraging their commitment to Christianity. After serving as a soldier, Kentucky native Barney Stone became a preacher out of “…gratefulness to God for my deliverance and my salvation.” 40 Another black Union veteran credited his conversion to the fact that, since God protected him during the war, he felt it was appropriate to trust in Him after being discharged. 41 Tennessean Julius Jones “had never tended a real service before...I was grown” but “got religion while I was in one of those war hospitals.” 42 Finally, white Union soldier Zenas T. Haines recalled hearing African American soldiers who sought conversion while camped in New Bern, North Carolina. As Haines noted in his diary,

Our nights are rendered musical by the plaintive choral hymnings of devotional negroes in every direction, alone and in groups. From their open cabins come the mingled voices of men wrestling painfully and agonizingly with the spirit, and those uttering the ecstatic notes of the unredeemed. 43

Haines was hardly the only white person to detect an increase in Christian conversions among African Americans during and after the Civil War. James Mallory, an Alabama slave owner and a deeply religious man, made several observations concerning the religious condition of African Americans in his...
community between the years 1862 and 1868. On August 17, 1862, Mallory noted in his journal that “a revival is in progress amongst our blacks, a number were added to the church and baptised.” Later that year, Mallory continued to note an increase in the number of conversions among his slaves. On October 19, Mallory wrote “their [sic] is quite a revival amongst the servants, from twenty eyght [sic] to thirty were baptized today.” After emancipation, Mallory became disturbed by the intensity of the freedpeople's increased religious feelings. “Religious excitement amongst the freedmen has become alarming, they seem falling fast into idoltry [sic].” “The Negroes,” he continued, “have almost quit work, waiting for the judgment to come in a few days.” While one might interpret Mallory's observations as the bitter commentary of a slave owner stung by emancipation, this does not appear to be the case. Mallory, while frustrated by the South's stumbling steps toward free labor, was not vicious in his general remarks about the freedpeople. In fact, just a few days before expressing concern about the religious excitement taking place, Mallory dispassionately noted in his journal: “The freedmen are holding a protracted meeting near here, largely attended.” Given this earlier matter-of-fact observation, it seems that Mallory only became concerned when the freedpeople's Christian enthusiasm reached a crescendo in both scope and form that he had never seen before. Therefore, Mallory's words most likely bear witness to a religious transformation among African Americans that began during the war and accelerated with emancipation.

The letters and publications of Northern missionary societies working among the freedpeople during and after the Civil War confirm Mallory's observations. Between 1861 and 1868, organizations like the American Missionary Association and National Freedmen's Relief Association consistently published accounts of religious revivals among African Americans living in Union-occupied areas. Most strikingly, these reports do not merely describe an awakening of religious enthusiasm among the freedpeople but point to a large number of conversions. In other words, most of the freedpeople described were not celebrating their age-old faith but were accepting Christianity for the first time.

The American Missionary Association's annual report for 1861 indicated that its missions to the freedpeople “give some evidence of the presence of the Spirit...” In particular, the missionaries had observed “the hopeful conversion of several individuals” as well as baptisms for “a number of converts, and they credited Christian freedpeople with improving the conditions for African American conversion.” A missionary working in Newport News, Virginia, indicated: “Were it not for the religious element among this people” the freedpeople “would be in great despondency.” A Rev. Lockwood of the Virginia mission at Fortress Monroe found that the preaching of black Christian ministers there gave African American religious meetings tremendous “spirit and power.” More importantly, Lockwood's description
of sermons delivered by freedmen reveals that the Christian core had begun actively proselytizing their many unconverted brethren. For example, during a service held near Hampton, Virginia, one preacher who had been a slave warned an African American congregation: “I see sinners out of Christ, going to hell.” Still another admonished his fellow freedpeople that “If we would have greater freedom of body, we must first free ourselves from the shackles of sin, and especially the sin of unbelief.” Such exhortations proved to be the opening salvos in what would soon become a rapidly expanding and successful battle to convert many unbelieving freedpersons.

In the years following 1861, early missionary reports of modest numbers of African American converts quickly gave way to descriptions of a rising tide of conversions that grew along with the Union Army’s occupation of more and more Confederate territory. As runaway slaves entered contraband camps and other freedpeople’s settlements that sprang up around the Union Army, white and black Christians greeted them and vigorously sought their conversion. These efforts soon bore fruit. For example, in 1862, South Carolina missionary Charlotte Forten reported that ministers in that state baptized one hundred and fifty former slaves on a single Sunday. Reverend Green of Norfolk, Virginia, noted that his Sabbath congregations grew from less than seventy-five to over one thousand participants within three weeks. Missionaries in a contraband camp at Cairo, Illinois, reported, “During the winter of 1862 there was an almost continuous revival” with conversions occurring “frequently.” A year later, North Carolina missionaries exclaimed that “The Lord is doing a great work here...and many are being converted to God.” Likewise, missionaries from Natchez, Mississippi, Norfolk, Virginia, and St. Louis, Missouri, described “many” and “frequent” conversions at their mission stations. Reverend A.D. Olds, a missionary at a contraband camp in Corinth, Mississippi, reported to the American Missionary Association that he had founded the Union Christian Church there with one hundred original covenant signers. Olds goes on to report that by June 7, 1863, between two and three thousand freedpeople attended the church services he conducted. Speaking generally about the freedmen’s spiritual condition, Olds wrote, “I have been greatly cheered to see with what frankness they confess their sinfulness & their need of a savior.” Another Mississippi missionary described conversions among the freedpeople as “a deep, quiet work of grace...extending almost over the entire colored population.” These enthusiastic reports suggest that the pure air of freedom allowed the
flame of Christianity to burn brighter than it ever did before emancipation.

The diary and letters of Sarah Jane Foster, a missionary teacher among the freed people of Martinsburg, West Virginia, illustrate a similar spiritual transformation in one African American community. Initially, Foster believed she had never attended better prayer meetings than those in Martinsburg, but she also indicated that worshipers were “few.”63 Approximately two weeks later, however, Foster wrote, “I have just returned from a good prayer meeting... nine or ten manifest a good religious interest... I [also] see great progress in many of my scholars, and the vicious seem to be becoming tractable. Some of the most troublesome are now seeking Christ.”64 By February 11, 1866, Foster reported that the prayer meetings had become so full that many had to be turned away. Foster attributed this religious awakening to “a deep and widely spread interest” with “a number... seeking to find the Savior.” As of March 5, 1866, Foster wrote that “the religious interest yet continues, and there is best evidence of genuine heart work.”65 Finally, on June 18, 1866, Foster declared that “A deep, calm, widespread interest still pervades the hearts of the young... and has hardly flagged at all since its first awakening nearly six months ago.”66

Although impressive in its duration, Martinsburg’s widespread and sustained religious awakening was not unique. In January 1866, the Methodist newspaper The Christian Advocate reported the presence of “several revivals of religion in the Virginia Methodist Churches.” According to the newspaper’s account, the Norfolk district, an AMA mission station since 1862, had experienced “nearly five hundred conversions’ within the last three months.”67 In fact, in its Twentieth Annual Report the AMA wrote, “The religious history of the year among the colored people of Eastern Virginia is marked by a great revival.”68 That same year, the Berea Mission in Kentucky reported having to raise money for a new church as its “place of holding meetings has become too strait” since its Sunday school membership had grown by a factor of four.69 Not to be outdone, Reverend Gabriel Burdett of Camp Nelson, Kentucky, described the following year how his flock experienced a “great religious interest” with over sixty new church members being added in one summer.70

Another sign of great religious change within the African American community in the South after the Civil War lay in the fact that men, not just women as before the war, converted in large numbers. Indeed, religious revivals had become common among both white men and black men in both the Union and Confederate armies.71 Scholars estimate that between 100,000 to 200,000 Union soldiers converted during these revivals and countless others participated in the associated services.72 But the unique experiences of African American men in the war made them especially receptive to these periodic revivals. Black soldiers serving with William Tecumseh Sherman, for example, marked the occasion of Charleston’s surrender with enthusiastic camp meeting revivals.73 As previously mentioned, Union soldier Zenas T. Haines recalled hearing of large numbers of
African American soldiers who sought conversion while camped in New Bern, North Carolina. Likewise, Thomas Wentworth Higginson's account of army life during the Civil War describes large prayer meetings that attracted both "the warlike and the pious." So many of the black soldiers in Higginson's camp began to attend prayer meetings that at least one Christian freedman complained of this new development. Higginson wrote that Old Jim Cushman "used to vex his righteous soul over the admission of the unregenerate to prayer-meetings, and went off once shaking his head and muttering, 'Too much goat shout wid de sheep.'" Apparently, the wave of African Americans seeking to convert during the Civil War was too much, too soon for Cushman to accept. Having spent his life as one of the Christian core's small band of believers, Cushman found the rapid wartime expansion of the faithful to be overly convenient in its timing.

Missionaries in Mississippi also noted that many African American men there converted during the war. One missionary working in an African American regiment noted that "A glorious revival has begun in connection with our labors here...Fifteen of our soldiers dropped on their knees for prayers, at the moment an opportunity was given." At Fortress Monroe, Virginia, an AMA teacher reported, "A great many old men and women are seeking the Savior...Last Sabbath 94 were baptized, a large proportion of them men." Finally, the Reverend Edward Ball of Beaufort, North Carolina, recalled that boys led his mission into a deeply spiritual revival. According to Ball, in 1870 "the most powerful revival...since the war...commenced among the boys in our prayer-meeting, and has extended among the colored people."

This momentous change in African American religious life occurred primarily because the Christian core had set an example in its faithfulness to Christianity and had accurately predicted emancipation. For several generations, unbelieving African American slaves witnessed the Christian core's steadfast faith in Christianity, despite continuing bondage and, at times, brutal religious persecution. And with their religious prophesy fulfilled during the war, what greater testimony to the power of their God could the Christian core offer prospective converts? Not surprisingly then most former slaves accepted the Christian core's interpretation of God as their agent of deliverance. Accordingly, more African American...
I was born May 1815, of a slave mother, in Shelby County, Kentucky, and was claimed as the property of David White Esq. He came into possession of my mother long before I was born. I was brought up in the Counties of Shelby, Henry, Oldham, and Trimble. Or, more correctly speaking, in the above counties, I may safely say. I was/ logged up; for where I should have received moral, mental, and religious instruction, I received stripes without number, the object of which was to degrade and keep me in subordination. I can truly say, that I drank deeply of the bitter cup of suffering and woe. I have been drag-
can American community because whites could not destroy or deny legitimacy to a societal institution that they themselves endorsed. In this way, African Americans effectively turned the old white-sanctioned institution focused on social control into a vehicle for self-protection and social change.89

A final reason for the widespread conversion of African Americans during the Civil War era lay in the fact that freedom enabled them to more effectively practice their Christian faith. Beginning in the contraband camps, untold thousands of freedpeople learned to read as a result of the war, mostly with the aid of Christian missionaries who combined literacy training with religious instruction. For example, the AMA openly acknowledged that “In the prosecution of its work among the Freedmen...it commissions no teachers that are not members of some evangelical church, and in all its work endeavors to win men to Christ.”90 This approach yielded classes, for example, like that taught by G. W. Carruthers in a Corinth, Mississippi, contraband camp. Carruthers opened his class by having the class read scripture “in concert” and then he instructed his students to repeat the text aloud individually. After Carruthers commented on the text that had been read, he prayed aloud and then asked the class recite the Lord’s Prayer in unison. Finally, the class sang hymns before breaking into smaller groups for academic instruction.91 Not only did this instruction bring many African Americans to accept Christianity, but it prepared them to take the faith back into their communities. Armed with literacy, a greater understanding of Christianity, and in many cases their own copy of the Bible, African American Christians in the postbellum era became a formidable force for conversion.92

The results of these developments could be staggering. According to historian Mechel Sobel, approximately 14.3% of the antebellum African American population, North and South, belonged to a Christian church.93 But by the late nineteenth century, 32.5% or 2.7 million out of an African American population of 8.3 million were church members.94 African American church membership more than doubled within roughly thirty years. While some of this growth reflects the merging of the slaves’ invisible institution with formal, public churches, much of it can be attributed to postbellum conversions.95 In only its second year of existence, for example, a Tennessee association of freedpeople’s churches gained nearly seven times more converts than an association that before the Civil War had supported Southern Baptist missionaries. In 1860, the Southern Baptist Domestic and Indian Mission Board reported that it served 114 churches and baptized 215 African Americans for that year.96 In contrast, the General Missionary Baptist Association of Tennessee, composed of African American churches, reported in 1869 that it represented 152 churches and baptized 1,456 new members the previous year.97 And this was despite the fact that the General Missionary Baptist Association of Tennessee represented only 25% more churches than the Southern Baptist missionaries.
This postbellum success in converting African Americans would fuel the growth of African American church membership throughout the South. In Georgia, for example, between 1860 and 1877 the number of black Methodists more than doubled (30,912 to 75,803) and that of black Baptists more than tripled (26,192 to 91,868). The Reverend Henry M. Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church described 1866 as a year of revivals in Georgia during which, in just a two month period, Turner and his subordinates received 11,000 new members into the AME Church. Turner, as well as other AME missionaries working in the South, reported that “people who were formerly thought immovable had been brought into the church and ‘powerfully converted.’” Likewise, in 1870 the Louisiana Baptist Convention reported that “the increase among the colored people has been remarkable. At the close of the war their membership did not exceed 3,000 now their churches are scattered everywhere throughout the state...” Between 1865 and 1871 the number of African American Baptists in Louisiana grew from approximately 3,000 to 30,800, leading the state’s Baptist Convention to declare this growth “unparalleled in the history of religious movements.” The First and Fourth African Baptist Churches of New Orleans alone baptized nearly 3,000 new members between 1866 and 1870. Similarly, Jacksonville Florida’s Bethel Baptist Institutional Church grew to approximately 100 members during its twenty-seven years of existence before emancipation. In contrast, the church’s membership swelled to 1,200 during the twenty-five years after the coming of freedom. A survey of South Carolina African American Baptist churches founded during the 1860s demonstrates a similar pattern of membership growth particularly through the baptism of new converts. Total membership for these churches grew from 4,789 to 9,128 between the years 1867 to 1877, an increase of over ninety per cent. A total of 4,626 baptisms or new converts accounted for the bulk of this growth. Clearly, conversions among freedpeople were the leading factor in postbellum African American church growth.

Edward Wheeler and James Washington both argue that freedom was “the central theme in the history of the black Baptist movement.” This study agrees but would broaden the interpretation to include the entire African American transition to Christianity, as does historian William Hicks who has ar-
gued that once “freedom removed the persecutions and oppressions, new zeal for the faith sprang up and the once smothered flame burst forth and its influence spread...”

So central was freedom to Christianity that in listing his reasons for gratitude to God, the Reverend Barney Stone of Kentucky specifically mentioned his deliverance from slavery before he did salvation. Another slave even rejected the Christian promise of salvation if he could not be free in this life or the next. According to the narrative of Beverly Jones, Uncle Silas, an elderly Virginia slave interrupted a church service to ask the minister “Is us slaves gonna be free in Heaven?” When the minister attempted to avoid the question by telling Uncle Silas that Jesus gave all Christians eternal salvation, the old slave responded “Gonna give us freedom ‘long wid salvation?” Uncle Silas reportedly remained standing throughout the service in expectation of an answer that did not come. Uncle Silas never attended church again.

Slaves in antebellum America lived in a world enveloped by darkness. Still, within the dark night of bondage, a flame of religious hope nurtured by a core of African American Christians offered the promise of light and guidance for those who were attracted to its glow. This flame burned steadily despite the winds of oppression that often caused it to flicker but never extinguished it. Despite its many attractive properties, however, this Christian flame proved too distant to draw all to its warmth while others, wary of its source, stayed far away for fear of being burned. After emancipation, no longer buffeted by the storms of slavery, the flame burned brighter than ever, attracting many to its light in a wave of conversions unprecedented in the history of African Americans. Freedom also allowed those who had long benefited from the flame—the Christian core—to lead others to its healing warmth and form independent churches that served the needs of African Americans first and foremost. In this way, Christianity emerged from slavery and the Civil War to become the dominant faith among African Americans.

### TABLE 1. South Carolina African American Baptist Church Growth 1867-77.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCH NAME</th>
<th>POST OFFICE OR CITY</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>BAPTISMS</th>
<th>MEMBERSHIP GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Charleston</td>
<td>1867-1877</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>1000-2216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>1867-1877</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>761-1364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tabernacle</td>
<td>Beaufort</td>
<td>1868-1877</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>941-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady's Island</td>
<td>Beaufort</td>
<td>1867-1877</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>400-789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edisto</td>
<td>Edisto</td>
<td>1867-1877</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1000-845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>1867-1877</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>50-752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zion</td>
<td>Allendale</td>
<td>1869-1877</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>200-367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>1868-1876</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>105-322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey Ford</td>
<td>Graham's Turnout</td>
<td>1868-1876</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>118-230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller Swamp</td>
<td>Allendale</td>
<td>1869-1876</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>80-272</td>
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<td>Buford's Bridge</td>
<td>1869-1876</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100-301</td>
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<td>Wilson's Creek</td>
<td>Storeville</td>
<td>1868-1877</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>34-175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*John Allen Middleton, Directory and Pre-1900 Historical Survey of South Carolina’s Black Baptists (Columbia, South Carolina: J. A. Middleton and Associates, 1992), 2, 11, 12, 14, 32, 34, 53, 63, 72, 73, 78, 80, 136.*


3. In American Slavery, Peter Kolchin suggested that the reaction to Phillips and Elkins led historians to overstate evidence for the “slaves’ resiliency and autonomy” and subsequently he pointed to the need for “modifications” in the interpretation of slave life. Kolchin, American Slavery, 1619-1877 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 137-38.


6. Ibid., 55-89.


20. Rawick, The American Slave, vol. 6, series 1, Alabama & Indiana, 416. (Mingo White)


22. Rawick, The American Slave, vol. 3, series 1, South Carolina Pt. 3 & 4, 260. (Victoria Perry) See also ibid., vol. 5, supp. series 1, Indiana & Ohio, 142-43 (John Moore); ibid., vol. 15, series 2, North Carolina Pt. 2, 130. (Fannie Moore)

23. Rawick The American Slave, vol. 12, series 2, Georgia Pt. 9 & 2, 26. (Mary Gladd) See also ibid., vol. 17, series 2, Florida, 291 (William Sherman); ibid., vol. 7, supp. series 1, Mississippi Pt. 2, 785. (Dora Franks)


25. Ibid., vol. 6, supp series 1, Mississippi Pt. 1, 249. (Ebenezer Brown)

26. Ibid., vol. 15, series 2, North Carolina Pt. 2, 56. (Channa Littlejohn)
Given the deep religious nature of the missionaries to the Freedmen, there is no reason to distrust the accuracy of these reports of conversions. However, it is important to note that a missionary’s job hinged on his or her success in converting a targeted population.


50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 43.

52. Ibid., 53.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 54. See also “Anecdote and Incidents of a Visit to Freedmen,” *The Freedmen’s Record* (October 1865): 158.

55. At least two former slaves who left narratives attributed their conversion to the efforts of missionaries sent to the South during or after the Civil War. Rev. L. R. Fereebe, *A Brief History of the Slave Life of Rev. L. R. Fereebe, and the Battles of Life, and Four Years of His Ministerial Life* (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton & Co., 1882), 10; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 610. (Harry Jarvis)


61. “Letter to George Whipple from Rev. A.D. Olds, June 7th?, 1863,” American Missionary Association Manuscripts from the Amistad Collection (Microfilm), Mississippi Roll #1, Manuscript # 71551.


63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 54-55.

65. Ibid., 70.

66. Ibid., 129.


69. Ibid., 39.


71. Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 73-110; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Civil War Rept} rts of a Massachusetts C{, rpt) 1·iii
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72. Shattuck, A Shield and Hiding Place, 92; Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, 677.

73. Shattuck, A Shield and Hiding Place, 81, 89.

74. Harris, In the Country, 171 (Entry for May 12, 1863).


76. Ibid., 256.


82. Ibid., 59-71.


84. Henry Bibb, Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave (New York: Published by the Author, 1850), 24.


86. Ibid.

87. Stowell, Rebuilding Zion, 90.


92. Christian aid societies like the AMA attempted to provide all families with copies of the Bible. For example, in 1863 the AMA mission at Fortress Monroe reported, “The children have all been supplied with Testaments, and all the families have nearly all been visited and presented with Bibles.” Seventeenth Annual Report of the American Missionary Association (New York: American Missionary Association, 1863), 37.

93. Sobel, Trabelin’ On, 182.


98. Owen, The Sacred Flame of Love, 190 (Appendix 2); Stowell, Rebuilding Zion, 80-83, 90.


101. Glen Lee Greene, House Upon a Rock: About Southern Baptists in Louisiana (Alexandria, Louisiana: Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1973), 176. See also, William Hicks, History of Louisiana Negro Baptists and Early American Beginnings from 1804-1914 (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1998), 53-55. Hicks’ research found that Louisiana’s African American Baptists grew from 5,000 in 1867 to 125,000 by 1902.


103. Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, Souvenir Celebration Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, Golden Jubilee (Jacksonville, Florida, 1938), 5.

104. Edisto’s membership dropped from 1098 in 1868 to 500 in 1869. This suggests the church probably split into two congregations. Still, the church rolls grew to 786 in 1870 and 950 in 1871.


106. Hicks, History of Louisiana Negro Baptists and Early American Beginnings from 1804-1914, 53-54.

107. Rawick, The American Slave, vol. 6, series 1, Alabama & Indiana, 188. (Barney Stone) In listing his reasons for becoming a preacher, Stone acknowledged his “gratefulness to God for my deliverance and my salvation.”

Review Essay

Liberty on the Border: A Civil War Exhibit
Cincinnati Museum Center,
April 5 - September 1, 2003

This outstanding exhibit enlightens, entertains, and challenges visitors to contemplate liberty and what it meant before and during the American Civil War in the western border states of Ohio and Kentucky. From the moment visitors enter, they are surrounded by the sights and sounds of history brought to life. Music contemporary to the time plays in the background and applies appropriately to the subject under consideration. In the soldiers' camp, for example, one hears the singing of songs such as "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground." This reviewer visited the exhibit on a Tuesday afternoon, and was impressed with the reaction of the other visitors who obviously enjoyed experiencing history "up-close." Some were standing before artist Rudolf Tschudi's large painting of Appomattox when a man told his son, "Your grandmother, mother, and I stood in that room in Virginia. This is very historic."

One considers the dilemma of slavery from several perspectives. For example, an interactive display asks what the viewer would do if he or she were a slave in Union-occupied Kentucky in 1862? Two choices emerge: If viewers decide to run away to a Union army camp in search of freedom and lift the panel for this choice, they learn that the chances are great that their master will find them, bring them back, and punish them. If they decide to stay where they are, they learn that they will continue in slavery indefinitely. Another display asks what would one do if she or he were a white resident in Ohio and a fugitive slave family appeared at their door asking the members of the household to participate in the Underground Railroad and protect them? If viewers decide to help, they learn that they might be arrested for violating federal law, and if they decide not to assist the fugitives, they will have to live with their consciences.

The exhibit is in three sections, and the first, "Liberty Denied," challenges visitors to consider the conflicting definitions of liberty in the antebellum period. Immediately slavery confronts them—an enlarged photograph shows slaves picking cotton under the watchful eye of a mounted white overseer. An interactive console of slave songs features a spiritual, ring-shout, parlor song, and boatman's dance, and as viewers move on, the melancholy music hangs in the background. Graphic panels, photos, documents, and artifacts show how Henry Clay walked "the tightrope of compromise" and advocated gradual emancipation and colonization. A minority of Kentuck-
ians, such as John G. Fee, demanded immediate emancipation and Lincoln's father, Thomas, voted with his feet by moving out of Kentucky.

Although Ohio was free of slavery, white residents denied African Americans liberty by law, social pressure, and mocking entertainment. The Black Laws of Ohio discriminated racially with restrictions such as the requirement that a black family had to prove they were free before settling in the state. Two handbills invited people to minstrel shows in which white performers in black-face makeup degraded black Americans with jokes, songs, and dances that wreaked "enormous social damage that lasted for generations." On the other hand, Levi Coffin and others conducted for the Underground Railroad, and Cincinnati became a hotbed of abolitionism that gave the nation Harriet Beecher Stowe. There is a handbill advertising the play based on Uncle Tom's Cabin, a display of Stowe's writing set that she may have used in writing the novel, and a copy of the first edition of the book.

The infamous abolitionist John Brown resorted to violence in the 1850s, and the exhibit includes, for the first time in this region, John Brown, Jr.'s collection of weapons on loan from the Ohio Historical Society. Brown's Sharps carbine, Colt Navy Revolver with shoulder stock, and, standing against the wall, Brown's pike, offer visitors the chilling realization that in the 1859 Harper's Ferry, Virginia, revolt, John Brown, Sr., planned to arm slaves throughout the South with this "crude but effective close-quarter weapon." The graphic panel, "The Case of Margaret Garner," brings into sharp focus the disagreement of the Ohio Valley public on the slave issue. Color art from the period illustrates how Garner, a fugitive slave from northern Kentucky, when surrounded by slave catchers in Cincinnati, murdered her two-year-old daughter rather than have the child returned to slavery. Proslavery people argued that the crime simply illustrated the brutality and inferiority of black people. Antislavery spokespersons said that a mother killing her child rather than have her live in slavery illustrated how horrible slavery really was.

Cincinnati and northern Kentucky had two great military alarms during the war and the exhibit's second part, "Liberty's Trial," includes both. First, residents went into a panic when the Confederate army invaded Kentucky in 1862 and General Henry Heth marched on Fort Mitchell with six thousand veteran troops. Union General Lew Wallace declared martial law, closed businesses, ordered all males into service, erected a pontoon bridge to Covington, and strengthened the defenses in northern Kentucky from Fort Thomas to Ludlow. Cincinnati police, acting as provost marshals, arrested about six hundred black men on the city's streets and at work in its shops and hotels. They marched them at bayonet point to a hog pen on Plum Street and forced them over the river to work on the fortifications without even allowing them to say goodbye to their families or to grab a hat and coat.

This might have gone down as one more example of liberty denied, but someone told Wallace about the unauthorized impressments and the federal com-
mander ordered Cincinnati Judge William Dickson to take charge and organize the men along military lines. Dickson brought the men back home, gave them some time with their families, and organized them into the “Black Brigade.” With dignity, they returned to the labor and contributed meaningfully to the successful Union defense. Heth's division withdrew without attacking and the Black Brigade was dismissed, having contributed to one of the best kind of Union victories, that with little bloodshed. Purportedly, the Black Brigade was one of the first organized uses of African Americans for military purposes in the war, and the men were so proud that they asked Peter Clark to write a book about them. The exhibit includes a copy of Clark's *The Black Brigade of Cincinnati* and the engraved sword that the men gave with gratitude to Dickson.

The region's second crisis arrived with Confederate John Hunt Morgan's crossing of the Ohio River and his subsequent raid through Indiana and Ohio. Businesses closed and local authorities declared martial law in Louisville, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport. The Union Navy closed traffic on the Ohio River and ordered the destruction of all flatboats, skiffs, and scows to prevent Morgan's escape. Federal troops captured most of Morgan's men at Buffington Island, following Ohio's only Civil War battle. Morgan himself was captured in northern Ohio and imprisoned in the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus. The exhibit includes, also on display for the first time in this region, on loan from the Museum of the Confederacy, Morgan's saddle, frockcoat, kepi, officer's belt, ivory-handled Colt revolvers, and the writing desk he used in prison. From The Filson Historical Society, the exhibit displays the autograph book of one of Morgan's officers. On the back wall of the display hangs the guidon of the federal 9th Kentucky Cavalry and, among the battle honors, it proudly proclaims, “defeated MORGAN at Buffington... Captured HIM July 26th, 1863.”

Morgan was indeed a famous Kentucky Confederate hero, and on the Union side, the exhibit features Cincinnati's most prominent military hero, General William Haines Lytle. Like Morgan, Lytle's men greatly admired their commander, and like Morgan (who was from Lexington) he was killed in the war and honored by his hometown with the largest funeral up to that time. Born in Cincinnati, Lytle was a lawyer and Democratic state representative before the war. He wrote poetry, and schoolboys throughout the nation memorized his poem, “Antony and Cleopatra.” Lytle organized the 10th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and the exhibit displays for the first time the regiment's flag, made by women in Cincinnati. When it was presented to Lytle, he said, “Sir, tell the ladies that there is not a man in these ranks who will not shed his heart's blood like water beneath these colors.”

The most striking artifact in the exhibit is the gold, jeweled Maltese Cross that the men of the 10th Ohio gave to Lytle. Epitomizing courage, he was wounded in the leg at Carnifex Ferry, Virginia, and in the head at Perryville, Kentucky. At Chickamauga, Georgia, on the Union right, his brigade came under attack by advancing enemy forces in overwhelming numbers. He declared, “All right, men, we can die but once. This is the time and place. Let us charge.” His men repulsed the Confederates momentarily but Lytle, mortally wounded, ordered a retreat. The exhibit includes his frockcoat, shako hat, boots, sword, and other personal items.

Part III, titled “Liberty's Legacy,” is unique in that it is the first Civil War exhibit to incorporate the theme of David W. Blight’s path-breaking 2001 book, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory.* Blight states that a national memory of the war, one that reunited the once-divided sections around a mythology of shared white sacrifice and valor, was achieved only through white Americans’ collective erasure from that memory of African American participation in the war and the nation’s acceptance of southern-style racial segregation as a whole. Thus, in a sense, Americans’ sectional reconciliation could not have occurred had
not the entire nation “jumped Jim Crow.” In fact, the museum staff consulted with Blight in planning the exhibit and he visited it on May 8, 2003, when he was in Cincinnati to speak in the Seminar on the City lecture series. During the introduction to his talk, he recommended the exhibit as the most outstanding he had ever seen in its depiction of the politics of Civil War memory in postwar America. He stated that *Liberty on the Border* proves especially strong in its relating of local events to national history. “All history, like politics, is local,” Blight remarked in praise.

“The Blue & Gray,” a brief, poignant video, presents film clips of the great blue-gray reunion at Gettysburg, July 1-4, 1913, on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. About 53,000 white veterans from both sides attended, and their average age was seventy-four. Newspapers hailed the event as the “Great Peace Jubilee,” and the climax was a reenactment of Pickett’s Charge, with the shaking of hands across the stone wall at the Bloody Angle. As with most blue-gray reunions, speakers ignored the fact that slavery caused the war, proclaimed that neither side was wrong, and swept aside the goal of equality for African Americans. No black veterans received invitations to the Gettysburg reunion and black editors were horrified and dismayed that participants gave no attention to the fact that Jim Crow segregation deprived African Americans of the promise of liberty. The narrator of the video points out that in 1913, white mobs across the country lynched fifty-one black individuals.

Indeed, “Liberty’s Legacy” forces visitors to confront the reality that racism continued after the war. The section includes a Ku Klux Klan robe and a bright orange minstrel show costume with a box of black face makeup. One of the features of this section is the video kiosk with segments from *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Roots* (1977), and *Glory* (1989). Very effective commentary calls attention to the stereotypes and racist attitudes in the first two movies and celebrates the more realistic portrayals in the last two, portrayals that show African Americans as intelligent, courageous, and strong.

If any criticism can be offered of this exhibit section’s sweeping and powerful assessment of national culture, it is that the local story gives way to a more national interpretation of the Civil War’s racial legacy. Its interpretation of national reunion does not account for the shift of regional politics and identity between South and North, revealed clearly by the Ohio River as border and by those who lived on either side of it. Kentuckians and Ohioans, despite their shared racist ideology, clearly did not consider themselves of the same ilk after the war. If anything, the Civil War shaped this region in terms of regional identity, politics, and experience beyond any that had existed previously, a phenomenon on which the exhibit fails to carry through. Despite this shortcoming, *Liberty on the Border* is history up-close and in-depth and, to take full advantage of it, one should allow at least three hours.

*James Ramage*
Northern Kentucky University
The Zoar Community: A Review of an Ohio Historical Site

In the early nineteenth-century, many Americans believed confidently that they could create heaven on earth. Inspired by the democratic promise of the Revolution and the perfectionist faith of evangelical religion, reformers created a number of utopian communities that dotted the landscape of the United States. At Brook Farm in Massachusetts, Nathaniel Hawthorne and other Transcendentalist writers joined George Ripley in an experiment combining literary and manual labor. At Oneida in upstate New York, John Humphrey Noyes and his followers engaged in a radical communitarian experiment based on what was termed “complex marriages.” A good number of utopian communities were religious in nature. As early as 1732, German Dunkers led by Conrad Beissel established the Ephrata Cloister in Pennsylvania. Another German pietist, George Rapp, founded the Harmony Society in western Pennsylvania in 1804. Perhaps the best known among the many religious utopias in America were the Shakers, led by Mother Ann Lee who migrated to America in 1774. By the 1830s, the Shakers had founded close to twenty successful communities.

One of the most successful religious communitarian experiments in nineteenth century America was Zoar Village in eastern Ohio. Skillfully preserved today in a charming pastoral setting in Tuscarawas County, Zoar Village stands as a vivid reminder of this important phase of freedom’s ferment in American social history. Established by German religious refugees in 1817, the community at Zoar was based on the sharing of labor and wealth. The Zoarites, originally Protestant dissenters known as “Separatists,” originated in the Lutheran State Church of Germany. Similar to other German pietistic sects of the eighteenth century, these Separatists renounced worldly possessions, emphasized a direct relationship with God, and believed that the church should be simple and bereft of all ceremony. In Germany, the Separatists had been aggressive dissenters. They refused to send their children to Lutheran schools and their pacifist beliefs shielded them from military service. The German religious refugees who established Zoar were led by Joseph Michael Baumler (later changed
to Bimler), who was born in Germany in 1778. Driven by religious persecution and a famine that struck their communities in 1816, Bimler and his followers left Germany for a better life in America.

In October 1817, sympathetic Quakers in Pennsylvania aided the Zoarites by selling them land in the Tuscarawas River Valley in Ohio. Bimler named the new community Zoar, meaning “a sanctuary from evil” after the biblical city in which Lot sought refuge during the destruction of Sodom. On April 19, 1819, Bimler established the Society of Separatists of Zoar. Driven by economic necessity, the families at Zoar pooled their resources and established what was essentially a communistic society. The organization held all property and wealth, and each member of the Society agreed to follow the decisions of the Society’s three Trustees, who each served for a term of three years and who each could be re-elected indefinitely. The Trustees appointed supervisors for each industry in the community and worked with a standing arbitration committee of five to settle all disputes. In return for following the authority of the Trustees, members of the Society received food, clothing, and shelter. Zoar was officially incorporated by the Ohio state legislature in 1823.

Zoar succeeded in becoming an economically self-sustaining communitarian society, aided in part by its location on the Ohio-Erie Canal. Zoarites, in fact, helped to construct the canal by digging seven miles of the trench for which they were paid $21,000 by the state of Ohio. The residents of Zoar also profited from their location by selling food, clothing, and other goods to canal workers. Even without the canal, Zoar prospered. Local residents produced a subsistence for themselves and even created a surplus that they sold in surrounding towns. The settlement at Zoar included a sewing house, a tailor shop, print shop, pottery, butcher, tannery, and sawmill. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Zoar grew wealthy. By 1874, the Society owned about 7,000 acres of land and local residents were reputed to be worth more than one million dollars. But several factors led to the eventual demise of the Zoar community.

The death of Joseph Bimler in 1853 denied the Society the charismatic leadership that had sustained it during its first three decades. The Civil War challenged the community’s pacifist ideals, as several Zoarite men went off to fight for the Union. The building of railroads in the 1880s brought more of the outside world into an otherwise isolated community. And the rise of mass production in many industries made their small shops obsolete. Finally, in 1898, the Zoar Society voted to dissolve. Each member received land, a house, and possessions in the division of assets.

Zoar resembled other utopian communities in early nineteenth century America in two crucial ways. The first was an emphasis on labor. Historians now believe that a Market Revolution that be-
gan shortly after the War of 1812 transformed the American economy from a self-sufficient agrarian order to a commercial and industrial one. In this process, small independent artisans like those in Zoar witnessed an erosion of their skills and autonomy as they became entwined increasingly in a market economy. By the mid-nineteenth century, these artisans had become wage earners, providing a basis for the much vaunted “free labor” order in the North. Yet the transformation to capitalism was ambiguous, complex, and contested. Specifically, Americans in this period explored the meaning of free labor in a variety of ways that included such utopian communities as Robert Owen’s New Harmony settlement in Indiana. Zoar proved no different. Labor there became central to the communistic endeavors of that community. Practically everybody—including children—engaged in productive work. Teenage girls worked in the dairy to make cheese and butter, milking cows twice a day, and they carried heavy buckets of milk on their heads. Those members of the Society not already engaged in skilled labor assembled each morning at 5:30 a.m. to receive their work orders for the day. People usually lived where they worked. For example, it is believed that the young girls who worked in the dairy slept upstairs in that building. Like agrarian communities of the late eighteenth century, workers at Zoar practiced traditional skills and manufactured goods on a small scale. Zoarites grew their own flax and produced their own linen. They built wagons that became noted for their quality and traditional blue paint. Even a Zoar furnace was built to forge locally mined iron.

Zoar also allowed women a more expansive role than was customary in nineteenth-century America, and, like other utopian communities often unintentionally elevated the status of women. For example, of the original signers at Zoar who created a “community of goods,” approximately 66% were women. Indeed, at times, women constituted roughly two-thirds of the membership of Zoar. Men and women possessed equal political rights, and women could hold office in the Society. Like the Shakers, the Zoarites first chose celibacy, although the Society permitted marriage after 1830. Marriages were contracted by mutual consent, and children were taken from homes at age three so that their mothers could work.

The Zoar Village of today closely approximates the appearance of the community in the nineteenth century. It remains neatly arranged along rectangular streets. Many of the original buildings, such as the dairy, the greenhouse, the bakery, the tin shop,
and the wagon shop, still stand and are open to visitors. The dominant building on the Village site is the Number One House, once the home of Joseph Bimler. Built in 1835, it is an impressive two-story home executed in the Georgian style. It has a deep and cool cellar used to store food for the entire community. Today, the house serves as a museum, explaining the origins, growth, and decline of the Zoarites and displaying examples of Zoar furniture and crafts. All the buildings at Zoar house are faithful reconstructions of life in the community during the nineteenth century. The garden, situated prominently at the center of the village, reflects the religious beliefs of the founders. It was planted in neat geometric patterns to symbolize the New Jerusalem described in chapter twenty-one of Revelation. Twelve paths lead toward a center of thirteen trees, representing direct routes to Christ.

Historic Zoar Village is a testimony to the dedication and skills of public historians at the Zoar Community Association, the Historic Zoar Garden Club, and the Ohio Historical Society. Visitors are offered two separate tours of the buildings that are led by informative guides in period costumes. Each tour takes approximately forty-five minutes. Annual events include a Harvest Festival in August, an Applefest in October, and Christmas celebrations. Zoar Village is located approximately thirty miles south of Canton and is easily accessible from Interstate 71. For more information, see the Zoar website at www.zca.org or email TourZoar@wilshire.net.

Mitchell Snay
Denison University

Tin shop (1825), reconstructed in 1970

Writing a state history (or a good one at any rate) is a formidable task. How does one provide a coherent narrative for an essentially arbitrary political entity—the boundaries, population, and culture of which blend so indistinctly with those of neighboring states? Many state historians have resolved this conundrum essentially by ignoring it, choosing to focus on the relatively well-defined record of the state’s political history or sidling into unabashed hagiographies of famous residents and their deeds. However, Andrew R. L. Cayton has risen to this unenviable challenge by teasing out themes and meanings in Ohio history for a unique and useful contribution to the genre.

Cayton, a celebrated historian of the Midwest and a Distinguished Professor of History at Miami University, organizes his material in a thematic and chronological style, his chapters (e.g., Improving Ohio, Considering Ohio, Defining Ohio) simultaneously reflecting both general eras and underlying motifs. Drawing on copious social, economic, political, and literary data from a wealth of primary and secondary sources, he insists that the book is “above all a narrative driven by the stories people have told about life in an American state.”

For Cayton, the overarching theme of Ohio’s history is “the transformation of a radical imperative to do good into a conservative desire to live well.” The lives and work of a multitude of Ohioans exemplify for him a social evolution that began with a nascent nineteenth-century middle-class culture of respectability undergirded by a belief in progress and in serving the public interest. From that starting point Ohioans have moved to a more individually focused twentieth-century ethic of material well-being and self-fulfillment. Cayton’s attention to these larger themes, however, does not prevent him from
exploring a number of other ideas and experiences, nor does it undermine the narrative cohesion of the book as a whole. In this, his volume is far superior to Walter Havighurst's now dated thematic study *Ohio: A History*.

Despite its many excellent points, this book (like any) has some shortcomings. There are, for example, a few factual errors, for example, the minimum number of acres for purchases under Congress's 1820 Land Act was 80, not 8 [p. 16]; the dates of Rhodes's and Celeste's terms as governor are misreported [pp. 385 and 393]; and former Daytonian Larry Flynt publishes *Hustler*, not Penthouse [p. 390]). But these small glitches are not enough to detract significantly from the text's utility as a reference. In addition, Cayton's laudable desire to let the words of Ohioans tell the story too often gets the better of his own manifest literary gifts. As a result, many sections are littered with fragments of quotations—often as short as one or two words—interspersed with similarly fragmented links of his own. The overall effect can be distracting, leaving the reader to wish the author had brought his considerable talent to bear on paraphrasing a bit more.

Other significant limitations in this book arise from Cayton's otherwise welcome thematic approach. For example, his presentation sometimes precludes a meaningful discussion of aspects that do not "fit" within his thematic contexts, for example, Ohio's Native American, colonial, and territorial heritage. At the same time, Cayton's desire to emphasize his major themes sometimes feels forced, resulting in generalizations that seem too broad. The idea of "progress" is a useful theme to be sure, for example, but did the pioneers clearing their land in the early 1800s understand this concept, if they thought about it at all, in the same way that industrial-age progressives did? Was it true that nineteenth-century Ohioans never meant for their art, architecture, songs, and literature to be "strictly ornamental," but "always in the cause of something larger than aesthetic satisfaction?" (76)

Were all "respectable Protestants" of the late 1800s really "aware of the dilemma created by their advocacy of a public culture that reflected their values and silenced alternatives?" (215) Statements like these—as well as several others starting with "Ohioans felt" or "Ohioans thought"—leave the critical reader asking, "Can he really say that?"

None of this is meant to slight the importance of this work to the field of Ohio history. While it does not replace George Knepper's classic *Ohio and Its People* as a comprehensive volume of the state's history, it is not really meant to do so. Rather, it serves as an impressive complement to that work, and one that all devotees of the subject must read.

Kevin Kern
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Indian resistance to the assertion of British authority over the region that is now the American Midwest has been studied by several historians recently, but prior to the publication of Gregory Evans Dowd's *War Under Heaven*, the last scholarly monograph with a sharp focus on Pontiac to appear was Howard Peckham's *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* which was published in 1947. Since that time most discussions of Pontiac's War have presented it as an episode in a larger process occurring over decades on a continental scale. Thus in *The Middle Ground* Richard White begins his analysis in New France in the seventeenth century and proceeds through the end of the War of 1812. Eric Hinderaker in *Elusive Empires* and Dowd himself in his earlier book, *A Spirited Resistance*, start their stories in earnest in colonial Pennsylvania, and proceed like White to the nineteenth century. *War Under Heaven* is different, both in focusing on
events in 1763 and 1764, and in concentrating on a narrower region, though admittedly a large one, south of the Great Lakes, north of Ohio River, and east of the Mississippi.

Dowd gains much by keeping this focus. He convincingly demonstrates that neither the exchange of goods (a preoccupation of White and most other scholars with a French Canadian orientation) nor the intrusions of land-hungry white settlers (a prominent theme in discussions of colonial Pennsylvania and the history of the Ohio Valley after Daniel Boone) caused the disputes that led to war. In 1763, very few agriculturally minded settlers had come to the region where the war started, and the Indians there were demonstrably more upset with the British army than they were with any traders. It was the proliferation of forts that angered them. At its heart, Pontiac’s War was a struggle over the future direction of British imperial policy, and the Indians’ refusal to acquiesce in what they feared would be the imposition of military rule. This perspective makes the Indians’ actions more comprehensible, and Dowd’s close analysis of their military strategy — aimed at forcing the British to abandon their forts — makes the Indian leaders seem less quixotic than they generally appear in historical accounts with a longer time frame.

Dowd makes a significant contribution to British imperial history by drawing attention to the importance of changing understandings of what it meant to be a British subject in the middle years of the eighteenth century. Increasingly, that meant more than owing allegiance to the sovereign. British subjects enjoyed particular rights, rights that few officials ever intended to grant to Indians. Consequently, in the years leading up to Pontiac’s War the British stopped calling Indians subjects of the crown. Instead they granted Indians a less well-defined subordinate status that would evolve, Dowd argues, into their position in the United States as “domestic dependant nations” neither sovereign in their own right nor fully “American.” This shift in British and Anglo-American thinking was accompanied by slights and insults against the Indians that were hard to miss. Dowd can only guess at the Indians’ motives for fighting the British, but he makes a compelling case that they saw the future awaiting them under British and Anglo-American rule.

Utopian societies compel our attention because of the fervor of their founders and participants. As Catherine M. Rokicky points out, beginning in the 1960's, when dissatisfaction with society again peaked in America, historians began to re-examine the communitarian movements in the nineteenth century. They produced serious work on religious and secular utopias, founded predominantly in two major periods—the first from 1842 to 1848 that resulted in the establishment of fifty-five utopias, and the second from 1894 to 1900 that saw thirty-six more experiments. Rokicky has gathered the best historical work, including biographies of leaders such as Joseph Smith and recent studies of the charismatic perfectionist movement, the Spirit Fruit Society of Lisbon, Ohio.

Writing for the Ohio Bicentennial Series, Rokicky concentrates exclusively on utopias within Ohio, asking, “Why did so many people in search of creating a perfect world look to Ohio for refuge?” (5) Her answer and ensuing analysis of the failure of both secular and religious utopias provides the framework for a readable, clear introduction to Ohio's role in nineteenth century utopian communities. Rokicky spends whole chapters on the Shakers, the Zoar Separatists, and the Mormons, reserving a single chapter for smaller, secular societies. She concludes that without dynamic and able leadership, communitarian experiments were doomed, most lasting less than two years, and some had as few as twelve members. Long-lasting utopias could formally claim economic successes, such as the furniture, seed, and handicraft enterprises of the Shakers or the Zoar stove and milling businesses. With prudent leadership and the use of mediators who provided a buffer between these isolated colonies and the world, the Shakers, for instance, lasted well over a century.

In comparison, the Mormons were driven out of Kirtland, Ohio. Rokicky's analysis of the contention and religious anger in this community, in which leaders from orthodox religions challenged the Mormon teachings, is the best work in the book. She carefully traces the scriptural and, eventually, Mormon doctrinal origins of polygamy, demonstrating, as she does also with Zoar Separatism, that these utopian theologies evolved over time. Letters, court records, and original or revised charters help to show this.

Additional strengths of this slim work lie in the way Rokicky draws connections among evangelicals, reformers, and utopians, showing that cross-migration from one group to another characterized the nineteenth century, especially in Ohio. For instance, the Quakers financially assisted the Zoar Separatists, the Campbellite movement contributed many members to Mormonism, and migrants from Owenite communities ended up at Shaker spirit feasts. Rokicky explains the importance of both Ohio's river system and national migration patterns, especially from the Burned Over District of New York into the Western Reserve, in drawing evangelicals and social reformers. She also examines the role of women in utopian societies.

Yet while Rokicky discusses some national and international events and movements, these remain generalized and do not provide as much texture as they perhaps should. She identifies westward expansion, industrialization, and slavery as imping-
ing on utopian movements but discusses them broadly. She doesn’t develop, for instance, the strong, interactive nature of Owenite societies with English reformers or the connections among abolitionists and utopians. Her focus remains specifically Ohio and the fertile ground it provided for experimentation.

Morgan McFarland
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Roger Fortin’s *Faith and Action* makes an important contribution to the history of Catholicism in the United States, and to American urban history. And the author succeeds admirably in both tasks. As the first complete history of the archdiocese in over seventy-five years (since Rev. John H. Lamott’s centennial *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1921*), Fortin’s book elucidates several modern themes in American Catholic Church History, particularly the taxonomic shifts affecting the “relationship of being American and Catholic.” (xiii) The latter topic has been the emphasis of a host of recent works including Mark S. Massa’s *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team* (1999), Jim Cullen’s *Restless in the Promised Land: Catholics and the American Dream* (2001), and the American Catholic historian laureate Jay P. Dolan’s *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (2002). Fortin’s exploration of American Catholicism’s efforts to reconcile its European roots with the urban nature of the Catholic Church in the United States makes his study an important addition to the “Urban Life and Urban Landscape Series” of the Ohio State University Press, edited by noted urban historian Zane L. Miller.

Fortin’s work is divided into four chronological parts that focus on “immigrant Catholicism (1821-1870s), bureaucratizing Catholicism in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (1880s-1920s), modern Catholicism in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (1920s-1960s), and local church transformed of, by, and for the people (1960s-1996).” (xiv) Its footnotes and bibliography reflect a rich use of primary sources, including the *Catholic Telegraph*, the archdiocesan archives, and the archives of the University of Notre Dame. Woven into the account are references to major topics in both American urban and American Catholic history: trusteeism; fund-raising in Europe, especially from the Propagation of the Faith and the Leopoldine Foundation; the recruitment of orders of priests and nuns; the establishment of churches, schools, seminaries, orphanages, hospitals and other charitable institutions; participation in national and international church councils; the role of the laity; nativism; the public school question; temperance; financial crises; parish territorial disputes; devotional Catholicism; labor; World War II; racial issues; Civil Rights; and the reforms of Vatican II. The issue of sexual abuse is sufficiently covered, particularly when consideration is given of the fact that many of the current legal cases facing the Archdiocese of Cincinnati post-date the 175th anniversary curtain call of this study.

While a work of such breadth as *Faith and Action* cannot include every possible subject in detail, it was somewhat disappointing that Fortin’s treatment of such wealthy, philanthropic converts as Sarah Worthington King Peter and Reuben Springer did not receive greater attention. On the other hand, Fortin’s explanation of the financial crisis in 1878 involving Archbishop Purcell and his brother, Fr. Edward Purcell, is excellent. Further, the inclusion of an appendix listing chronologically the foundation dates of parishes as well as closures and mergers is very valuable. Of use to the general public and to historians of the American Catholic
Despite the overwhelming literature on the American Civil War, when it comes to West Virginia, historical scholarship has been a mile wide and an inch deep. While there are some fine studies on the mountaineer state, few studies exist that really penetrate the complexities of the war for the citizens of the fiercely divided region that came to form a new state during the military conflict. The publication of Darl Stephenson’s fine study on guerrilla warfare in the state adds significantly to West Virginia history.

When one thinks of guerrilla warfare or partisan rangers in West Virginia and, in particular, the Shenandoah Valley, the name John Singleton Mosby immediately comes to mind. In the collective memory of Americans of that region the thought of Mosby conjures up images of southern chivalry, dashing heroism, and swift cunning raids, all combined to give the “Gray Ghost” legendary fame. Thus, partisan warfare in this region has been viewed essentially through the lens of those seeking to give Mosby his place in the historical literature of the American Civil War. Stephenson’s new book on the Independent Scouts will help balance the story of partisan warfare in West Virginia.

Organized in the fall of 1863 by Union Colonel Carr B. White, the Independent Scouts were an unlikely group. Consisting mainly of farmers from the mountains of southeastern Ohio and West Virginia, these men became quite effective as scouts and sharpshooters in fights with bushwhackers in the mountaineer state. Although White authorized three officers to command the unit, Captain Richard Blazer, a pre-war hack driver, essentially took charge of the scouts. According to Stephenson, although nothing in his prewar life had marked Blazer as a commander who “would excel at special service in the army,” he possessed the aggressive spirit necessary to wage the kind of war the region demanded and in doing so was quite successful. So successful was the Independent Scouts that it hardly ever lacked for volunteers.

The Independent Scouts campaigned throughout West Virginia in 1863 and 1864. From the Kanawha Valley to the Shenandoah, Blazer’s men performed well against Confederate raiders. General George Crook was so impressed by their success that he mounted the group on horses in 1864. And in the Shenandoah Valley, General Philip Sheridan equipped the men with Spencer repeating rifles and ordered Blazer’s men to track and destroy Mosby’s Rangers. In the summer and fall, Blazer’s scouts encountered Mosby’s men in and around Harpers Ferry and, in a series of conflicts, managed to disrupt the partisan ranger’s ability to attack Sheridan’s rear guard. Blazer did so, in part, by effectively turning the tables on Mosby, dressing his Union men as Confederate rangers and penetrating Mosby’s ranks in disguise. The final battle between Mosby and Blazer came in November 1864 at Kabletown, and Mosby’s men defeated the scouts and captured Blazer.

Stephenson has done a fine job of piecing together the life and times of Blazer’s Independent Scouts. His research is impressive and his writing style is lucid
and clear. Students and scholars alike will find *Headquarters in the Brush* indispensable when studying guerrilla warfare in West Virginia.

*Stephen D. Engle*
Florida Atlantic University


In the 1880s and 1890s, a number of wealthy society women emerged as important art collectors in America: Isabella Gardner in Boston, Bertha Palmer in Chicago, Louise Havemeyer in New York, Jane Stanford in San Francisco, Arabella Huntington in Los Angeles, and Alice Barney in Washington D.C. Millard Rogers’ biography of Mary Emery helps fill in the collective portrait that is emerging of these women’s activities, as well as suggesting how Cincinnati’s art “matronage” developed in a unique direction.

Emery was representative of her peers. Well-educated, her marriage to manufacturer and real estate magnate Thomas Emery brought her great wealth. She held a secure place in Cincinnati’s high society, with a mansion in town and a summer home in Newport, RI, which lent her cultural authority and confidence. As Rogers emphasizes, she also strongly believed in the responsibility of the rich to spend “for the physical, social, civic and educational betterment” of their fellow hometown citizens. She was also typical of her generation in coming to philanthropy after being widowed and with no living children as heirs. Creating a legacy, in the names of her husband and children, was an explicit goal.

Unlike more flamboyant contemporaries, Emery did not challenge genteel norms for women. She conducted her benevolence indirectly, relying heavily on her secretary Charles Livingood, rather than acting on the boards of the many organizations to which she gave money. She similarly collected art not to found her own museum, but with the understanding that it would be bequeathed to the Cincinnati Art Museum (where the author of this book served as director for 20 years). Emery, however, exerted considerable control over the art she collected. Consulting local and international experts but always making her own decisions, she began in 1907 to buy painting done in a conservative style—Barbizon landscapes, eighteenth-century aristocratic British portraits and European old Masters—which she hung in her home, Edgecliff. Her attention to framing, wall surfaces, spacing and furniture suggests she intended to create a complete aesthetic environment.

Emery’s philanthropy also extended to organizations that, like museums, aimed at improving the domestic and urban environment and the education of the masses: colleges, hospitals, the YMCA, the zoo, the Episcopal church and various “homes” for orphans, students, working girls, and destitute mothers. She continued her husband’s tradition of assistance to African Americans, if not his refusal to fund organizations that drew a color line. Her largest project, though again one in which she did not actively participate, was the construction of a town for factory workers, intended to avoid the congested conditions of low-income housing elsewhere. Instead, Mariemont, ten miles outside Cincinnati, would be modeled on the architecture and ideal of community of an old English village. Rogers does not place Mariemont within either the City Beautiful movement or other planned communities such as Pullman, but he promises a future book dedicated to the town.

*Rich in Good Works* in general does not offer a detailed contextualization of Mary Emery’s life and work within regional or national trends, but its thorough excavation from primary sources of Emery’s history is a welcome addition to the literature on Gilded Age women, a contribution that sees elite women less as Thorstein Veblen’s vicarious consumers than as cultural entrepreneurs.

*Wendy Jean Katz*
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Rising from an impoverished Iowa childhood, Billy Sunday became the best-known American revivalist between the beginning of his ministry in 1896 and his death in 1935. By espousing a fundamentalist Christianity in earthy and provocative sermons centered on uplifting the nation through personal salvation and individual morality, Sunday reached millions and became a national sensation. At the height of his fame in 1917, Sunday held a revival in New York City lasting a full ten weeks. Although his influence declined subsequently, he was still an important enough figure that, upon his passing, his family received condolences from President Franklin D. Roosevelt among others.

Robert F. Martin’s new biography rescues the memory of Billy Sunday from earlier assumptions that “his ministry was more a matter of escapism or obstructionism than an honest confrontation of the issues of his day” and places Sunday’s appeal in the context of several important trends in Progressive America. Martin contends that Sunday’s ministry, while sometimes rooted in nostalgia and myth, represented an attempt to reconcile the home-spun Christian values he cherished with an increasingly modern United States. (xiv) Furthermore, Martin finds that Sunday’s popularity was largely rooted in his image that embodied many modern values characteristic of the early twentieth century, even as his thought harkened back to an earlier time.

After opening chapters detailing Sunday’s childhood and rise to moderate prominence as an outfielder in the fledgling National League, the conflict between image and reality in Sunday’s life becomes Martin’s main focus and greatest contribution. Here he argues that Sunday appealed to both old and new moral values in his ministry because, while his focus on sobriety, moral discipline, and faith were not original, his style and methods were. Billy Sunday seemed the very epitome of the American dream and of Victorian ideals regarding manhood, success, and moral reform. Having risen from poverty and gained attention through his own daring and hard-work on both the baseball diamond and the revival circuit, Sunday offered living proof that America offered opportunity to all and that a Christian life (which Sunday believed led to material gains) could help deliver success. Likewise, Sunday brought the methods of business to the revival tent, relying on advertising and a sophisticated numerical accounting of the souls he helped save that meshed with the enthusiasm for efficiency that characterized Progressive America. Sunday also appealed to contemporary ideas of masculinity that Americans increasingly conflated with character and morality by arguing that Christianity and manliness went hand in hand. His own successes seemed to prove as much.

While Martin recognizes that Sunday’s social thought naïvely posited an inseparable association between larger social problems and individual morality (i.e. vice resulted from personal failings and not social factors), he argues that Sunday was not entirely out of step with other Progressive reformers who attacked society’s ills, reformers who often saw personal moral change as a prerequisite for social improvement. In any case, Sunday’s shortcomings as a true Progressive were probably offset by his many other appealing characteristics, especially his identity as a Midwesterner steeped in the values of his native region—and this is perhaps the most novel argument Martin makes. At the time, the Midwest benefited from the perception that the East coast was declining while the West remained underdeveloped and therefore it was a good thing to be a son of the heartland. According to Martin, these many factors combined to make Sunday an ideal figure to “alleviate the tension and anxiety that resulted from the transition from the rural age-
Despite an over-reliance on block quotes, Martin's writing is generally crisp and clear. Although his argument forces him to juggle several distinct historical literatures—including scholarly understandings of masculinity, regionalism, and the growth of professional sports—Martin manages to keep his book both accessible to non-specialists and thorough enough to interest most scholars in the fields he touches. In doing so he, like Billy Sunday, bridges gaps in a manner that will likely please his audience.

KEVIN P. BOWER
University of Cincinnati


Judith Ezekiel’s thoroughly researched history of feminist movements in Dayton, Ohio, challenges commonly held beliefs about the development and characteristics of feminism in the United States. The few scholarly histories of second-wave feminism currently available center on “big-city feminism,” and are focused primarily on New York, Boston, or Washington, D.C. These studies claim to represent the national movement, yet feminism, like so many reform efforts in the 1960s and 1970s was primarily a grass-roots activity. Just as scholars of civil rights have moved beyond key leaders and theoretical contributions to investigate the movement’s impact on the local level, Ezekiel urges scholars of feminism to venture beyond the east coast in their search for the meaning and experience of second-wave feminism.

Dayton, viewed by many as a “typical American city,” the “heart of Middle America,” (vii) yielded a very different kind of movement than did New York or Boston. Ezekiel, a native of Dayton and a self-proclaimed feminist, experienced firsthand the surprise of outsiders who assumed that the Midwest and social reform must be mutually exclusive. Yet not only did feminism in Dayton thrive, it did so in a manner that might surprise some scholars. Second-wave feminism is usually characterized as a two-part movement in which liberal feminism predated radical feminism and proved more successful in accomplishing its goals. In Dayton, however, a “single strand of feminism emerged” (242), one which more closely resembled radical feminism. Dayton had no local NOW chapter, and no vocal liberal movement until the Freedom of Choice coalition developed in response to an Ohio antiabortion law in 1978. Feminism in the heartland was no watered-down version of east coast feminism: it was in some ways more coherent, less fractured and more radical.

Ezekiel’s study focuses on four overlapping feminist organizations: Dayton Women’s Liberation, the Dayton Women’s Center, Dayton Women Working, and Freedom of Choice. She uses the emergence of each organization to demarcate a new stage in Dayton’s feminist movement, as issues and interests diversified to include abortion, rape, and sexual harassment in the mid-to-late 1970s, and the early idealism borne of consciousness-raising was replaced by pragmatism and single-issue agendas. Sprinkled throughout these institutional histories are the voices of fifty-nine women interviewed between 1980 and 1999. Their fascinating stories personalize the narrative and allow Ezekiel to rightly claim that her study creates “space for new voices.” (x)

Ezekiel’s organizational analysis is particularly strong. In part due to the thoroughness of her research, she speaks with authority about the development, structure, and impact of each group. She analyzes the role of leaders and participants, as well as their relationship to the media and to other major political and institutional forces in Dayton, such as churches that were, surprisingly, the most im-
important external source of income for Dayton Women’s Liberation. She convincingly argues that Dayton feminism was less fractured than in other cities because there was little antagonism between feminists and the New Left. This observation is particularly important because it weakens scholars’ claims that feminism emerged out of the sexism of the New Left. In Dayton, the break between feminists and the Left was more of a “no fault divorce.”

The author is less successful, however, in her examination of individuals than of their organizations. Their stories are captivating, so much so that at times, Ezekiel prefers to take them at face value rather than to interpret them. Eager to let these women speak for themselves, she appears hesitant to impose her own analysis on her subjects. Nevertheless, these voices are important to her story, and make it a compelling read. Judith Ezekiel’s *Feminism in the Heartland* is a fascinating and important contribution to the history of second-wave feminism and, more generally, American social movements, especially in the Midwest. It is also a significant contribution to feminist scholarship that should encourage more research of feminist organizations at the local level.

Wendy Kline
University of Cincinnati


Cincinnati adopted the first comprehensive master plan for an American city in 1925, but over the years the city’s planning efforts have not been without detractors. Most recently, in 2002, spurred by allegations that planning interfered with economic development, the city abolished the planning department and (sub)merged the Land Use Management Group and the Historic Conservation Office into the Department of Community Development and Planning. Wallace T. Collett’s brief book, *McCarthyism in Cincinnati: The Bettman-Collett Affair*, provides an insider’s view of attacks on planning in an earlier era and in a different political climate.

Based on his personal journals, Collett’s book presents a multi-faceted collection of documents and commentary chronicling the election-season red-baiting campaign he faced, as a member of the Cincinnati City Planning Commission along with Henry Bettman, the commission’s chairman. Bettman and Collett had allowed Sydney Williams, who had previously belonged to a Marxist study group, to be appointed Director of Planning for the City of Cincinnati in 1953. That fall Republican politicians, fed information by the FBI, brought Williams’ past to light. The Commission promptly fired him. City Council then demanded that Collett and Bettman, who had defended Williams, resign their positions. Fifty years later, Collett decided to tell his story, believing, as he writes in his preface, that the events chronicled “will be instructive as we seek today to understand how political practices can at any time
veer far from basic American principles.”

The anti-Communist hysteria of the 1950s is not a new story. However, it is unusual to read of a community that successfully mobilized to challenge red-baiting tactics. Not only did Collett and Bettman refuse to resign, but citizens in Cincinnati organized to contribute time and money for their defense, as well as to support civil liberties in general. In the words of civic activist Iola Hessler, “I think that the jackals of Cincinnati are about to feast on the corpse of the freedom of thought and the right of an individual to pursue the truth.” (28) The work of Hessler and others resulted in the Republican Party losing its city council majority in the fall elections. This was a clear vindication of Bettman and Collett, although Williams did not regain his job.

*McCarthyism in Cincinnati* is the memoir of a participant, not a scholarly treatment of the events. But, as Americans once again face challenges to their civil liberties, Collett’s fascinating little book successfully reminds us of the ability of citizens to mobilize to defend their rights and of the importance of citizens telling their stories.

*Andrea Tuttle Kornbluh*

*University of Cincinnati*
Upcoming Events

Cincinnati Seminar on the City, 2003-2004

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal
Department of History, University of Cincinnati

Oct. 9, 2003
Walter Langsam, University of Cincinnati
A Higher Standard of Excellence: The Development of the Architectural Profession in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Before World War I

Nov. 13, 2003
Bridget Ford, University of California, Davis
Borderlands of Belief: Religion and Race in Cincinnati and Louisville on the Eve of the Civil War

Dec. 11, 2003
Ruby Rogers, Cincinnati Museum Center
Ohio Remembers the Civil War in Metal and Stone

Jan. 8, 2004
James Ramage, Northern Kentucky University
Morgan's Raid in Ohio

Feb. 12, 2004
John Fairfield, Xavier University
Movies and Cities: An Historical Account of Their Interpretation

Mar. 11, 2004
Tracy Teslow, University of Cincinnati
Exhibiting Difference: Natural History Museums and the Race Question

Apr. 8, 2004
Kim Gruenwald, Kent State University
Technology and Regionalism in the Ohio Valley

May 13, 2004
James Holmberg, The Filson Historical Society
Down the Ohio and into the Wilderness: The Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Ohio Valley

Cincinnati Seminar on the City is a joint program of Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal and the University of Cincinnati Department of History. The lectures, which take place the second Thursday of each month from October 2003 through May 2004, at 7:30 p.m., are held in the Reakirt Auditorium or the Newsreel Theater, Cincinnati Museum Center, 1301 Western Avenue. A special subscription for the Seminar series is available at $5 for CMC members and graduate students and $10 for non-members. The subscription includes notes on the lecture, monthly reminders, and a reservation form for dinner. The lectures are free and open to the public.

Please join us for the twelfth annual Cincinnati Seminar on the City.
Filson on Main – Now Open

“Lewis and Clark: The Exploration of the American West, 1803-1806”

The Filson Historical Society brings you this new exhibit to introduce you to the significant role that the Louisville, Kentucky area and the Ohio Valley played in this national story. As the nation celebrates the bicentennial of the Expedition, children and adults alike can come into contact with the genuine substance of our country’s history at Filson on Main. Housed in Brown-Forman Corporation’s newly renovated building at 626 West Main Street, the exhibit features The Filson’s nationally recognized Lewis and Clark Collection, which tells the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition through portraits, artifacts, letters, diaries, documents, books, maps, newspapers, and photographs.

Louisville played an important role in the legendary journey west that took place between 1803 and 1806. William Clark, expedition co-leader, lived in Louisville with other members of his family. Meriwether Lewis came to Louisville to meet Clark on October 14, 1803, thus forming one of the most famous partnerships in American history. Now, experience the journey for yourself at Filson on Main.

Location:
626 West Main Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
(502) 566-0084

Hours:
Monday - Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Group rates are available.

A gift shop offers a variety of books, dolls, maps, and other memorabilia. Parking is widely available near the Main Street gallery, and several restaurants cater to Main Street traffic.