Contents

Letter From the Editor ................................................. 1

‘Since This is a Horrible Thing to Think About:’ European Perceptions of Native American Cannibalism
   Evan C. Rothera, ’10 ........ 3

Female Captivity Narratives in Colonial America
   Kathryn O’Hara, ’10........ 35

Sweet Tooth for Empire: Sugar and the British Atlantic World
   Colin Walfield, ’10......... 53

Pushkin and Gannibal: Ethnic Identity in Imperial Russia
   Miriam Grinberg, ’11 ...... 60

Dwight D. Eisenhower, The National Security Council, and Dien Bien Phu
   David Putnam Hadley, ’09 ........ 66

Life on the South Side of Chambersburg Street, 1910
   Rachel A. Santose, ’11 & Sierra Green, ’11......... 115

About the Editors and Contributors ........................................ 141
FROM THE EDITOR

In 2002, the Department of History at Gettysburg College challenged its students to produce the first issue of an annual, undergraduate historical journal. Each year since that initial call for papers, student historians have eagerly prepared, submitted, revised, and edited their work for publication. Now in its eighth volume, the Journal continues to be entirely student-generated. A talented panel of current History majors supervises every step — from soliciting and critiquing papers to assembling and making available the final product. This year, the Journal was well served by Savannah Ruth ’09, Evan Rothera ’10, Lisa Ungemach ’11, and Rachel Santose ’11. The pages which follow attest not only to the efforts of our students, but to the quality of their advisors in the Department of History. Behind each paper in this issue is not only a talented student, but a supportive advisor.

The lead articles were the co-recipients of the 2008 Edwin T. Greninger ‘41 Prize in History, an annual award presented for excellence in historical writing. In “Since This is a Horrible Thing to Think About: European Perceptions of Native American Cannibalism,” Evan Rothera ’10 attempts to understand how the discovery and exploration of the New World affected the Old. Exploring the writings of Columbus, da Cuneo, and Diego Alvarez Chanca, Rothera explains that Europeans were at once horrified and fascinated by cannibalism. Originally exploited as a justification for the enslavement of indigenous peoples, with time, writers like Jean de Léry and Montaigne used cannibalism to appraise European society. Kathryn O’Hara ’10 studies female captivity narratives in colonial New England. Unpacking the conflicting voices of the captives and their male editors, O’Hara argues that these documents provide insight into the social, religious, and political worlds of Puritan New England.

Two shorter pieces follow. In an imaginatively-titled essay, “Sweet Tooth for Empire,” Colin
Walfield ’10 examines how colonialism created a new type of consumerism in the British Atlantic World. Miriam Grinberg ’11 then recalls Russian literary giant Alexander Pushkin and the efforts he made to come to terms with his past. Pushkin’s great-grandfather, Abram Gannibal, was an African slave brought to Russia in the eighteenth century and purchased by Peter the Great. As Grinberg reveals, Pushkin left unfinished a novel, *The Negro of Peter the Great*.

In an article adapted from his well-researched senior thesis, David Putnam Hadley joins the swelling ranks of Eisenhower revisionists. In particular, Hadley considers the Dien Bien Phu crisis and Eisenhower’s use of the National Security Council, further buttressing the historian Fred Greenstein’s well-known “hidden hand presidency” thesis. The journal concludes with a micro-history authored by Rachel Santose ’10 and Sierra Green ’10. Santose and Green explore the south side of Chambersburg Street in 1910. Utilizing newspapers, census records, and the archives of the Adams County Historical Society, the authors introduce us to a memorable cast of characters and place them in the context of Gettysburg’s expanding economy.

It is my hope that the hard work evident on every page of this journal will inspire other emerging historians to continue — as Simon Schama once wrote —“chasing shadows,” hailing voices “around the corner, out of earshot.”

BRIAN MATTHEW JORDAN ‘09

Editor
‘Since This is a Horrible Thing to Think About:’
European Perceptions of Native American Cannibalism

EVAN C. ROTHERA
Gettysburg College

Contemporary Italian playwright Dario Fo wrote a satirical play entitled Johan Padan and the
Discovery of the Americas which purported to be the account of one Johan Padan, a
contemporary of Columbus, who journeyed to the New World, was shipwrecked, and rescued by
some friendly Indians. At one point, Padan and a group of his fellows discussed the hospitality
of the Indians, who were quite generous. One of them expressed the fear that the Indians simply
care for them so that they will make a splendid feast. Another man remarked, quite scathingly,
“This is the third voyage I’ve made to the Indies and I’ve never met Indians with pieces of arms
and legs hung up to dry in their huts, like those charlatans Amerigo Vespucci and Alfonso
Gamberan talked about…They just told those stories to have an excuse for treating the Indians
like animals: They’re cannibals, so we can make them slaves.”

Although Fo is more concerned with literary conventions that with factual and historical accuracy, he succeeds in tapping into
one idea which partially explains the proliferation of European literature about the Indians and
their cannibalism, namely that cannibalism became a means whereby Europeans could justify
their enslavement of the Indians. However, to say that the practice of cannibalism was simply
used as justification for the enslavement of the Indians would be a grievous understatement,
because cannibalism represented so much more to the Europeans. What was noted down

---

1 The first part of this title is derived from an account written by Simone dal Verde. I wish to acknowledge
Magdalena Sanchez for providing me with the opportunity to explore this topic, and Brian Matthew Jordan for his
editorial guidance.
originally as a new, curious, and revolting but fascinating practice, gradually transformed into a justification for enslavement of the Native Americans, a method of persuasion, and a device by which some Europeans critiqued their own countries.

**A Practice Most Revolting**

Europeans had always been fascinated with what they considered the marvels of the east, with its exotic and mysterious locales and inhabitants. Historian Ronald Fritze discussed several of the races of marvels which Europeans believed abounded in Africa and Asia. There were the Gymnosophists, who “stood on one leg and worshipped the sun;”\(^3\) the Bragmanni who were “eastern wise-men who went naked and lived in caves;”\(^4\) the Amazons, a fell group of female warriors, the Cynocephali, who had “dogs’ heads and human bodies;”\(^5\) the Cyclopes, who were “one-eyed giants of a surly nature;”\(^6\) the Monoculi who were about the size of a regular human but only had one eye; the Unipeds who “had one leg and moved about by hopping;” and the grotesque Blemmyae who “had no heads and instead had their faces in their chests.”\(^7\) Fritze also discusses the Anthrophagi who feasted on human flesh and who were well known in the Europeans. Fritze maintained that “Columbus and other explorers/…/were traveling to the geographical fringes of the earth, at least from their point of view. They were taught/…/to expect abnormally behaving humans in such regions. So, it is not surprising that Columbus would return from his first voyage with reports of cannibals.”\(^8\) In Fritze’s mind, the cultural mindset under which the Europeans operated, in essence the idea that they were going to the

---

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 11.
6 Ibid., 12.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 9-11.
extreme edges of the world and therefore would be surrounded by grotesque marvelous races, informed their perceptions about the Indians and may have been responsible for their avid recording of sightings of cannibalism. It is also very likely that the Europeans also recorded these events out of a sheer sense of curiosity, or because they were fascinated by what they considered a revolting practice.

Several entries in the log from Columbus’s first voyage demonstrate that the admiral did indeed note the presence of cannibals, though some of the comments were little more than cursory notations. On Sunday January 13th, the account noted, “the admiral judged that he must have been one of the Caribs, who eat people.” On Tuesday, January 15th, the account noted, in regards to exploration, “it will be difficult on Carib, because that nation, he says, eat human flesh.” On Wednesday, January 16th, in a slightly lengthier description of the Caribs, the log observed, “in order to go, he says, to the islands of Carib; where the people were of whom all those islands and lands were in such fear, because, he says, with their innumerable canoes they used to go around through all those seas, and (he says) eat the people they could catch.” An entry on Wednesday, December 26th, noted the complaint of a local chief, or cacique, to Columbus, “he complained to the admiral about the Caribs, who enslaved his people and carried them away to eat.” Compared to later accounts, which virtually oozed with gruesome anecdotes and gory description, these small, almost insignificant mentions of the cannibalistic Caribs hardly seem worthy of the time spent reading them. However, these mentions of cannibalism were so important because they represented the seeds of European thought.

---


10 Lardicci, 118.

11 Ibid., 119.

12 Ibid., 163.
Columbus and his men went expecting to see cannibals and Columbus duly noted the alleged presence of cannibals, thus planting the seeds which would, in due time, flourish and produce the fruit, or the later accounts which drip with stories of cannibalism.

Next to the notations Columbus made in his log, one of the earliest known reports of Indian cannibalism exists in a letter written to the mayor of Seville by Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca, a royal physician who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage. Chanca wrote, “we went ashore, exploring all dwellings and villages that lay along the coast where we found quite a few human bones and skulls hanging inside the houses and used as containers to hold things.”

He then began another gruesome yarn, how “women also reported that the Caribs act with unbelievable but true cruelty, eating the offspring generated with the imprisoned women while raising only those conceived by women of their own kind. The men they are able to capture alive are brought into their huts for slaughtering and immediate consumption. They claim flesh is so exquisite that a similar delicacy does not exist in the world.” As if the reader was not already sickened, Chanca felt it necessary to add, “there, in one of the huts, a human neck was found boiling in a pot.”

This letter to the mayor of Seville was an important addition to the nebulous school of thought concerning the New World, and was therefore disseminated widely throughout Europe. Traces of Chanca’s description can be seen in various other accounts. As Anna Unali notes, it is important to bear in mind that Chanca, unlike Columbus, “was less prone to idealize what he had observed.”

---

14 Chanca, 23.
cannibalism, in the midst of a glowing description of the new lands, where Chanca’s focus on cannibalism bordered on an obsession. Chanca did not, as the expression goes, pull any punches and he did not try to minimize what he saw. In explaining the differences between Chanca and Columbus, other factors do come into play, such as the fact that Columbus put a positive spin on events because of the very nature of his mission, where Chanca was under no such obligation. Another difference lies in the fact that Columbus did not have any substantial firsthand contact with the cannibals; he generally learned of them through secondhand rumors, where Chanca actually explored a cannibal village. As time passed, it would be Chanca’s style of describing events which would be adopted, that is to say, a blunt style, which pulled no punches, and was quite realistic. Descriptions such as Chanca’s and the subsequent ones modeled on his, would shock and disgust Europeans, but at the same time fascinate them.

Andrés Bernáldez, the parish priest of Los Palacios, a town near Seville, also commented on the presence of cannibalism in the New World. He described the discovery of some abandoned dwellings, “Of everything he took a bit, including three or four human arm and leg bones. After seeing the latter, they understood these were Carib islands.”16 In a section which is rather similar to Chanca’s writing, Bernáldez wrote, “These Carib men showed great cruelty toward them to a seemingly incredible degree, in fact they reached the point of eating the children conceived by them [the captive women] while raising only the ones born from their women. The men they are able to capture are taken into their huts and slaughtered at their whim, whereas those killed in action are eaten immediately. They claim human flesh is so good that no other thing in the world is better.”17 The fact that Bernáldez offered an account which was

---

17 Bernáldez, 93.
reasonably similar to that of Chanca demonstrated that Dr. Chanca’s brutal descriptions were already beginning to be circulated among Europeans.

Questions of Authenticity

Though all but an exceedingly small number of Europeans appeared to have accepted the fact that the Indians were cannibals, perceptions have a way of evolving over time. Today, the opinion among scholars is more balanced over the idea of cannibalism. Many scholars believe that the Indians were not cannibals and often reference Fritze’s argument that Columbus and his men were conditioned to expect to see cannibals and therefore made cannibals, even if none existed, to justify their perceptions.

However, there are other reasons why authors feel that the cannibalism should be stricken from the historical record. One author mused, “as to the truthfulness of these accounts, one cannot help wondering whether they really were cannibals—the Canibas or Caribs they had been warned about during the first voyage—or whether Columbus and his men used this to justify what would ensue. Slaughtering cannibals would be fulfilling God’s wrath/…/demonization of the victims was a way of justifying genocide,”18 Still another author opined, “the evidence that these bones and this flesh were of humans is weak. Could sailors from Seville have told the difference between the flesh of men and that of monkeys?”19 Of course, other authors do take the opposite stance: that cannibalism was indeed prevalent among the Indians. This position is quite appealing, because there are strong pieces of evidence, such as the fact that Dr. Chanca, a respected physician, did accompany the soldiers into the abandoned village and it stands to

---

reason that he would have been able to differentiate among the different types of flesh. These authors also point to the fact that too many credible writers make mention of and describe cannibalism with a high level of consistency; therefore arguing that it is highly unlikely that cannibalism was a mere figment of the European imagination.\(^{20}\)

Of course, in reality it is very difficult for 21st century scholars to form a definitive consensus on the prevalence of cannibalism, because there is no possible way for scholars to rewind time and test the contents of the pots in the village Chanca visited, or perform forensic tests upon the bones which were allegedly gnawed. And, in reality, the central point here is that both sides are right and wrong. Cannibalism was probably not as pervasive as the Europeans would have their readers believe, but there is no doubt that it was a real presence. This realization that the European accounts are most likely truthful, but perhaps exaggerated, or perhaps simply repeat someone else’s assertions, can inform and allow the reader to think and read them more critically.

**The News Was Going Out All Over Europe**

Of course, the observations of cannibalism did not stay confined within the reports of Bernáldez and Chanca. Two letters, one written by Giambattista Strozzi, the other by Giovanni de’ Bardi, offer further proof that the ideas of Chanca, and other explorers were beginning to permeate European consciousness. Strozzi, who “describe[d] the cannibals in terms like those used by Chanca”\(^{21}\) said, “many brown men with wide faces like Tartars, with hair extending to

---


the middle of their shoulders, large and very quick and fierce, and they eat human flesh and children and castrated men whom they keep and fatten like capons, and then they eat them; the aforesaid are called Cannibals."22 De’ Bardi also “recalls Chanca’s account.”23 He wrote, “the said caravels carry twenty-six Indians of diverse islands and languages; it is true that they are almost the same height, among whom are three cannibals of whom those who live on and eat human flesh, and they are of the same type as the Indians, save that they are stronger and fiercer than the others.”24 De’ Bardi also made sure to impart to his reader the grotesque details of the castration process, “and later they [the Spaniards] were on land at their houses, and they found they [the cannibals] kept certain slaves, whom they had castrated so they could fatten them up to eat them; and he came back with three of them, that is two whose virile members had been cut off, and one whose testicles had been cut off, so that you would judge them to be women. And they found many heads and bones in their houses; they say that they have eaten them all.”25

The news continued to spread all over Europe, most likely due to the fact that all of Europe was in a tizzy about the discovery of the New World; everyone wanted to know the latest information, what was going on, what had been discovered, and various and sundry other details such as these. Agents of dukes and lords wrote to their masters, to keep them informed, as did Francesco Cappello, the ambassador from Venice to Spain. He wrote, in a report which was subsequently read before the Venetian Senate, “The king [from the islands] said that it seemed to him that he was in Paradise; this one, as it is said, had 2000 persons who ate under him, and in their country they eat human flesh, that is of executed criminals.”26 That news such as this

22 Strozzi, 43.
24 Giovanni de’ Bardi, in Symcox, 44.
25 Ibid.
26 Francesco Cappello, in Symcox, 49. Please consult the footnotes on page 48 to see the source of my information about Cappello.
would be read before the Senate of the Republic of Venice indicated that the New World and its cannibalistic inhabitants had grabbed hold of the European mind and consciousness.

Before proceeding to other letters, it is important to recognize that Chanca’s report was not the only one which influenced the letters and correspondence of the Europeans. Another report had as much significance as Chanca’s letter, the report of Michele da Cuneo, an Italian “who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage in 1493,”27 and who “reports what he saw and did simply and directly—even crudely.”28 Cuneo, who became famous for his lurid description of his rape of a female cannibal, wrote, in reference to the men Columbus left at Hispaniola to form the nucleus of a new colony, “we thought the islanders had eaten them, for as soon as they have killed anyone, they immediately gouge out his eyes and eat them.”29 He also made sure to discuss the fact that “the Cannibals, when they capture some Indians, eat them like we eat young goats, and they say that the flesh of a boy is much better than that of a female. They have an insatiable appetite for that human flesh.”30 Written roughly around the same time as Chanca’s letter, Cuneo’s report was equally influential.

Simone dal Verde, a merchant living in Valladolid, also wrote a letter to his village discussing the difference between the Tainos, whom the Europeans stereotyped as the friendly group of Indians and the Caribs.31 He noted “for while the latter [the Tainos] were meek and trusting, these [the Caribs] were suspicious and cruel, for they eat human flesh, as you will

---


28 Ibid.

29 Michele da Cuneo, in Symcox, 52.

30 Da Cuneo, 57.

Dal Verde also noted what was becoming more and more common in the reports, a description of the castration process, “they found in the houses two young girls and two young boys approximately fifteen years of age who had been taken from the other islands. The genital member of the male was cut away close to the pubis: they say they fatten them up for eating. They say that they do not eat the females but keep them, as was said, as slaves.” Dal Verde was different than many of his fellow Europeans, who often gullibly accepted things at face value, and he informed his village, “since this is a horrible thing to think about, let alone assert that it actually happens, I have made every effort to obtain reliable information, and I find it without any doubt to be true. They say that these people venture forth 300 leagues during the summer, going from island to island, navigating for plunder. They eat the men and keep the women, as was said.” He averred that “the captain of those caravels that returned certified to me that very many bones of the dead were found in their houses, and in one house human flesh was roasting and a man’s head was on the coals; and those things were brought to the admiral so he could see them. I do not know if this is true, given the facility that those men have for telling lies. What I do believe, based on what everyone says, is that they eat human flesh; and the inhabitants of the other islands say the same thing.” Dal Verde proved himself to be unusually inquisitive, as he related that he had “spoken with one of the men they brought back, who understands a little of our language, and learned from him that it was true: it appears that over here he is ashamed of it and shows signs of regret.” Although Dal Verde’s letter was atypical in the sense that he went to great lengths to discover if his information was true, he nevertheless came to the conclusion that the reports were true and that cannibalism was indeed wicked.

---

32 Simone dal Verde in Symcox, 32.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 32.
35 Ibid.
Nicolò Scillacio, an educated Italian humanist in the service of the duchy of Milan, wrote to his master, Duke Ludovico Sforza and described how the people who live on the islands inhabited by cannibals “are ferocious and unconquered, and live on human flesh, and so I may rightly call them anthropophagi.” Scillacio narrated how “they wage war constantly against the Indians, who are gentle and timid people, to get their meat: that is their conquest and prey. They ravage, plunder, and plague the Indians without mercy and devour the un-warlike people. They do not eat one another, but spare other Cannibals.” He offered the testimony of an acquaintance to buttress his story, “Pedro Margarit, a very reliable Spaniard who went to the east with the admiral, drawn by a desire to see new regions, says that he saw there with his own eyes several Indians skewered on spits being roasted over burning coals as a treat for the gluttonous, while many bodies lay around in piles, with their heads removed and their extremities torn off.” In a tone of shocked self-righteousness, Scillacio declared, “the Cannibals do not deny this, but openly admit they eat other humans.” He alluded to the idea of castration, “when they capture male infants or boy-slaves, it is their custom to castrate them and fatten them up like capons. They stuff the scrawny ones with food as well as those whose meagerness holds them back, like young lambs: soon when they are fat and delicious they are greedily devoured.” Finally he described how the cannibals would “give the women they captured to their wives as servants, or keep them for their own lust. If any of these women happen to give birth, they eat the child as they do the other captured children.” Scillacio’s condemnation of the brutality of the cannibalism is implicit in his phraseology, a condemnation which would be echoed over and over again, even in the accounts of Columbus’s voyages.

36 Nicolò Scillacio in Symcox, 34.
37 Scillacio, 38.
38 Ibid., 39.
39 Ibid.
40 Scillacio, 40.
In his account of Columbus’s second voyage, the defender of the Indians, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote, “They managed to lay hands on two young men who indicated in sign language that they were not from the island, but rather from Boriquén, the island we know today as San Juan de Puerto Rico. They also managed to convey by using sign language and with their eyes and by gesture that the inhabitants of the islands were Caribs and that they had been captured and brought here from Boriquén to be eaten, eating people being a custom of the Caribs.” Las Casas continued, saying “it soon became apparent that one of the Indians had his privy member cut off and the Christians concluded that this was in order that he could be fattened up, like a capon, and then eaten by the Caribs.” Las Casas took pains to describe how Columbus addressed the caciques, or the chiefs of the Tainos, “he went on to explain that he had been sent by a great king and queen, rich and powerful, who were his sovereigns and ruled over the kingdoms of Castile, in order to explore and learn about these lands, and in particular to discover whether there were any people in the region who harmed others—for he had heard a rumor to the effect that, somewhere in these waters, there lived a people know as cannibals or Caribs who harmed others,” Here it is possible to see how Columbus “establishes subtle distinctions between innocent, potentially Christian Indians and idolatrous Indians, practicing cannibalism.” These distinctions would prove to be of paramount importance, particularly when it became permissible to enslave Indians who were cannibals.

---


42 Ibid., 94.

43 Ibid., 126.

In his account of Columbus’s third voyage, Las Casas wrote, concerning the hospitality of the Indians, “he ordered them to barter for whatever they needed whenever they stopped off for fresh supplies, saying that, no matter how little what they offered the Indians, the Indians, with the exception of the cannibals who were reputed to eat human flesh, would have what they wanted.” Las Casas described how the men asked the Indians about gold and “they said, according to what they could understand by means of signs, that there were some islands where there was a lot of that gold, but that the people were cannibals.” Though Las Casas does not provide disturbing pictures of Indian cannibalism, it can be inferred, from reading these excerpts, that the cannibals were, at this point, an undefined threat, that they existed and that the Europeans should be wary of them.

For all that Las Casas chose not to go into gory details, (as he did in his *Brevíssima relación de la destrucción de las indias*), the notorious explorer Amerigo Vespucci made many gruesome mentions of cannibalism. In a letter to Lorenzo Pietro Francesco Di Medici concerning his first voyage, Vespucci wrote, “they eat little flesh, unless it be human flesh, and your Magnificence must know that they are so inhuman as to transgress regarding this bestial custom. For they eat all their enemies that they kill or take, as well females as males, and with so much barbarity that it is a brutal thing to mention, how much more to see it, as has happened to me an infinite number of times. They were astonished at us when we told them that we did not eat our enemies.” Though Vespucci considered his information both important and

---


46 Ibid., 36.

accurate, he nevertheless managed to make quite a serious error. In almost every other account, the writer has stated explicitly that the women were never eaten; they were used as slaves or as objects of sexual desire for the men. That Vespucci did not know this is, in and of itself, a very telling sign, and it casts doubt onto his other letters, so when the next account is presented, it must be read, as the saying goes, with a grain of salt.

In a letter to Soderini, Vespucci wrote, “he went among the women and they all began to touch and feel him, wondering at him exceedingly. Things being so, we saw a woman come from the hill, carrying a great stick in her hand. When she came to where our Christian stood, she raised it, and gave him such a blow that he was felled to the ground. The other women immediately took him by the feet and dragged him towards the hill.” Vespucci described how, “at last four rounds from the bombard were fired at them, and they no sooner heard the report than they all ran away towards the hill, where the women were still tearing the Christian to pieces. At a great fire they had made they roasted him before our eyes, showing us many pieces, and then eating them. The men made signs how they had killed the other two Christians and eaten them. What shocked us much was seeing with our eyes the cruelty with which they treated the dead, which was an intolerable insult to all of us.” He related, quite angrily, “having arranged that more than forty of us should land and avenge such cruel murder, and so bestial and inhuman an act, the principal captain would not give his consent.”

In another letter to Lorenzo di Medici, Vespucci wrote, “They slaughter those who are captured, and the victors eat the vanquished; for human flesh is an ordinary article of food among them. You may be the more certain of this, because I have seen a man eat his children

---

49 Vespucci, 38.
and wife; and I know a man who was popularly credited to have eaten 300 human bodies.”50 He also related how “I was once in a certain city for twenty-seven days, where human flesh was hung up near the houses, in the same way as we expose butcher’s meat. I say further that they were surprised that we did not eat our enemies and use their flesh as food, for they say it is excellent.”51 Again, it must be remembered that Vespucci is not necessarily the most reliable witness, but these stories are sensationalistic and disgusting nonetheless.

Switching from the explorer to a different figure, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, the author of *La Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, also wrote about the cannibals. “In these islands they eat human flesh, except in Boriquén; also in many places of Tierra Firme, as will be seen. Pliny says the same of the anthropophages of Scythia; besides eating human flesh, they drink from the skulls of dead men and weak necklaces of their teeth and hair. I have seen such necklaces in Tierra Firme.”52 Gaspare Contarini an ambassador to Emperor Charles V and Pope Clement VIII and subsequently a cardinal who led a reform faction, also recorded an interesting description of the cannibalism.53 “The inhabitants are very civilized, except in religion, because they are idolaters and sacrifice men to their idols; they follow also this savage custom, that when they fight with their enemies, they eat all their enemies who die in battle.”54 Contarini continued, “these marks of a high culture, however, stood in glaring contrast to the human sacrifice and cannibalism practice by the inhabitants.”55 Here it would be helpful to note that

50 Amerigo Vespucci, “Letter on his Third Voyage from Amerigo Vespucci to Lorenzo Pietro Francesco Di Medici,” in Markham, 47.
51 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
Contarini was talking about the Aztec culture, not the Caribbean Indians, but his condemnation of cannibalism was certainly no less vociferous.

Many people discussed and disseminated information about cannibalism, not just the cultural elites and explorers. This included Marcantonio Coccio, “an instructor of literature at the school of San Marco in Venice.” He wrote, “they are a cruel, hateful people: they feed on human flesh, which makes them a source of terror to their neighbors. They travel far and wide, robbing and looting, and killing their male captives, along with the children, and eating the flesh of their newly-slaughtered victims sprinkled with salt.” He stressed the idea that “the women are kept for breeding, and the Cannibals serve their still-nursing children like lambs or kids at their horrible banquets.” He concluded with a graphic analogy, “the Spaniards found visible proof of these reports when they broke into the houses which the Cannibals had abandoned: the tables were set, and on them were bowls like ours, filled with parrots, other birds the size of pheasants, and human flesh. Nearby hung a human head, still dripping blood.” Antonio Gallo commented, “some of them are inhabited by certain wild men, called Cannibals, who live on human flesh.” Agostino Guistiniani, “a Genoese prelate and scholar, [who] was an authority on Eastern studies,” decided to offer his proverbial two cents as well. He decreed, “it was discovered that several of these islands were inhabited by uncivilized men called cannibals, who showed no distaste for human flesh.”

57 Coccio, 69.
58 Ibid., 69.
59 Angelo Trevisan, in Symcox, 71.
60 Ibid., 77.
61 Ibid., 78.
The continual discussion of cannibalism drew into the fray, Angelo Trevisan, a “secretary to the Venetian ambassador.” Trevisan described, quite luridly, “they castrate the boys they capture, just as we castrate animals, so that they will grow fatter for eating; and the mature men as soon as they are taken are killed and eaten, and they eat the intestines and the extremities raw. They salt the rest and serve it when it is ready, as we do with hams.” Trevisan offered a description closely akin to those of Chanca and Bernáldez, “entering their houses, our men found that they had stone vessels of every kind like our own, and in the kitchen they found boiled human flesh together with parrots, and geese and ducks that were on a spit for roasting. Around the house they found bones of human arms and thighs which they keep to make the tips of their arrows, for they have no iron. They also found the head of a boy, not long dead, which was attached to a beam, still dripping blood.”

Another contemporary observer, Alessandro Geraldini, was a man who “believed them [the Indians] innocent and noble, free of greed and covetousness stemming from a sense of private property and eager to embrace Christianity.” Nonetheless, “he was horrified by the other side of the Indians’ nature, exemplified by the Caribs he met—or claimed to have met—on his voyage to Hispaniola. Because of their cannibalism Geraldini refused to accept them as fellow human beings.” Concerning their cannibalism, Geraldini wrote, “they ate human flesh, and claimed the mountainous places as their own, where they brought their booty of human captives, and constantly waged war with strong men who abstained from such food, and lived reverently and kindly according to the true laws of nature.” He continued, “the Caribs eventually took the bodies of those they had captured in war and, if they were plump, they roasted them

---

62 Ibid., 81.
63 Ibid., 83.
64 Ibid., 86.
66 Ibid.
hanging from large trees on poles, or boiled them in large pots made of clay, first cutting off their heads and discarding them; if they were too thin, they stuffed them with various rich foods, as we do with fowls we are saving for a feast-day.” He wrote, in great horror, “something must be said about captive children: the pitiless men make them eunuchs immediately, and after they have fattened them up, they gather them on a holiday of their country and make them sit in the middle of their circle, the poor crowd of children, the wretched troop of humans fatted for food.”

Geraldini continued to describe this atrocious practice, “with a single slash of his wooden sword, which is as sharp as if it were made of hard steel, he cuts off the heads of this one or that, as many as he pleases or has been decided on by the whole group. Then as a great cheer from the abominable men follows, they celebrate a feast-day, a day filled with pleasure, on the flesh of children fattened beyond what is human.” He ended with an earnest supplication, “I pray all pious mortals and implore the whole race of humane humanity to refuse their service entirely, to avoid the service of men swollen with the flesh of other humans.”

Geraldini, later Bishop of Santo Domingo, certainly had the ability to distinguish between the Tainos and the Caribs, but that did not lessen or diminish his disgust and hatred of the cannibalism of the Caribs.

Peter Martyr, the famous Italian humanist wrote, in his book De Orbe Novo, about the cannibalism of Indians. Martyr proclaimed, “they learned by hearsay that not far from those islands are the islands of wild men who feed on human flesh. They mentioned that this was the reason why they had fled in such panic at our arrival; they thought we were cannibals.”

He touched on the familiar theme of castration, “they castrate the boys they catch, in the way we cook chickens or pigs, if we want to rear them to be fatter and more tender for the table; when as

---

67 Geraldini, 119.
a consequence the boys have become large and fat, they eat them. When fully mature men come into their hands, they kill them and divide them into portions; they make a feast of their guts and their extremities while they are fresh; they pickle their limbs in salt, as we do hams, and preserve them for later occasions.” He added, for good measure, a description similar to that of Chanca, “entering the houses they discovered that they had pots of every kind/.../and in their kitchens human flesh, some boiled along with flesh from parrots and ducks, some fixed on skewers ready to be roasted/.../they realized the bones from human arms and shins were being very carefully kept in their homes to manufacture arrowheads/.../they throw away the other bones when they have eaten the flesh off them. They also found the head of a youth recently killed hanging from a beam, still dripping with blood.” Martyr concludes, somewhat self-righteously, “there is no one who saw them, who did not confess that a kind of shudder clawed at his stomach, so savage and hellish is the look implanted by nature and by their own brutality.”

From the information presented in these various primary sources, it is easy to see the Europeans had very negative conceptions about the cannibalism of the Indians; some even going so far as to regard it as the work of Satan. Soon the idea of cannibalism was so sunk into European culture and thought, that during the Colombian lawsuit, there is one interesting consistency in the questions put before the witnesses. In the evidence of the Admiral of the Indies given in Puerto Rico on 30 September 1514, this question appeared. “Also, if the know, believe, or heard it said and it is public and well known that the admiral discovered the islands that are more easterly than the islands of Española, which are called the Cannibals.” In the evidence of the Admiral of the Indies given in Puerto Rico on 12 February 1515, this question appeared.

69 Ibid., 46.
70 Ibid., 51.
71 Ibid., 53.
was posed: “Also, if the know and believe and have heard it said and it is public and well known that the admiral don Cristóbal Colón discovered many islands that are to the east of Española, such as San Juan and Santa Cruz, including the islands of the Cannibals.” In the evidence of the Admiral of the Indies taken in Puerto Rico on 15 February 1515, two witnesses were examined. The first one was “Bartolome Colín, citizen of this town, a witness sworn and presented in the stated cause was asked the general questions.” He provided the information that “he said that he knows that the admiral don Cristóbal Colón, deceased, discovered the islands of San Juan and the cannibals and Santa Cruz.” The second witness, “Andrés Martín de la Gorda, citizen of this town, sworn, judged, and brought in the same case, was asked the general questions.” He answered, “he knows it, he said because this witness in company with the late admiral went to discover the cannibals and the other islands contained in the question.” In every question the islands were referred to as the islands of the cannibals, thus invariably linking them with the presence of the cannibals, which is how they would be remembered for a long time. Now that it is patently obvious that Europeans had negative perceptions of cannibalism and that they believed it flourished throughout the New World, it is time to analyze the repercussions, both positive and negative, of these perceptions.

**Enslaving the “Cannibals”**

Since Spain, through Admiral Columbus, had discovered the New World, the Catholic Kings, Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile bore the onus of creating all of the policies which dealt with the newest part of their empire. However, for all that they created many new policies for the New World; it would be a more sensible idea to look at the policies of the crown

---

regarding the enslavement of the Indians and what role the negative perceptions of the cannibalism of said Indians made in the decision. Ultimately, Columbus himself forced the hands of the monarchs, in terms of their policies regarding slaves, when he transported slaves back from the New World to the Old World, as a reward to the men who had accompanied him on his voyage. Slavery was usually regarded “as an evil, a sort of living death, employed as the only alternative to killing war captives.” After all, “it was one thing to sell Muslims taken captive in war, quite another to enslave the queen’s willing subjects, as Columbus had described them.” And when Queen Isabel found out that Columbus had brought back slaves from the earthly paradise he discovered, “she became very angry saying, ‘What right does the admiral have to give my vassals to anybody?’ and other such things.” Obviously Isabel was angry at Columbus not only for trying to influence policy-making decisions, but also for the fact that he had the effrontery to enslave her subjects! Isabel then “had it announced in Granada and in Seville, where the court currently resided, that anyone to whom the admiral had given Indians, and who had brought them to Castile, must return them or send them back on the first ships, under pain of death.”

One author concluded that the arrival of the slaves “confronted the Spanish government with a grave moral dilemma. Finally the queen ordered that the Indians be freed, since as subjects of the crown they could not be legally enslaved. The issue raised here formed the starting point for the long debate on Indians’ rights and the crown’s responsibilities for them,

---

78 Nader, 35.
80 Las Casas, 121.
which would continue for decades in Spain.”

Another author duly noted, “The queen’s moratorium on the sale of enslaved Indians remained in force for the rest of her life, and most later rulers confirmed it for centuries.” Columbus tried a variety of strategies to “make the idea of enslaving Indians more palatable to the monarchs,” even going so far as to offer a proposition to “limit slave hunting to the Caribs, whose supposed cannibal habits, as he described them, excluded them from human society.” The Spanish monarchs remained firm and the royal policy against enslaving the monarchy’s Indian subjects remained the law.” Unfortunately, “the royal policy did not end enslavement of the native population.” Like Columbus, “other Spanish explorers also sent enslaved Indians to Seville, always claiming they were cannibals or had been taken prisoner in just war.”

When Columbus proposed to start trading in slaves, he “was planning to turn the earlier, unsystematic capture and sale of Indians into a regular commerce, harvesting them to make the colony economically viable. By making the enterprise of the Indies seem an attractive financial proposition, he could disarm his critics and back up the theological arguments he was constructing around his tales of an earthly paradise.” Unfortunately for him (but not for all the Indians), the crown did not want to be involved with the slave trade, so they tried a variety of different strategies. In 1498, the government established encomiendas, where a certain number of Indians would work for a landowner and the owner would provide them with the essentials of life and give them religious education. Though the theory was sound, encomiendas were not

82 Nader, 35.
such a wonderful idea in practice, because the Indians became the virtual slaves of the landholder and rarely received instruction in the faith and rarely had their basic necessities of life met.  

However, in “1503 Queen Isabel authorized the capture of those in the Caribbean who were considered ‘cannibals.’ The legal basis of this decision rested on the right to enslave captives in a just war; therefore, it affected those Indians who were perceived as a threat to the colonization effort.” One author noted that, “in the case of the Caribs, the association between the habit of eating human flesh and their sustained resistance to the Spanish invaders served as a basis for the decision to declare them slaves.” In addition to using cannibalism as the justification for the enslavement of the Caribs, “both cannibalism and sodomy continued to be justifications for the kidnapping of any [emphasis added] Indian by any Spaniard.”

Modern authors, for the most part, tend to agree that negative perceptions of cannibalism had a strong role in justifying enslavement. One author wrote, “reports of cannibalism provided the means of justifying the enslavement and deportment of those creatures so clearly beyond the pale of God’s favor that they could be rightfully regarded as beasts,” Another wrote, “one cannot help wondering whether they really were cannibals/…/or whether Columbus and his men used this to justify what would ensue. Slaughtering cannibals would be fulfilling God’s wrath/…/demonization of the victims was a way of justifying genocide.” The negative perceptions of the cannibalism of the Indians had a great effect because even humanists like Martyr and Scillacio and educated men like Geraldini condemned the cannibals for their

---

84 Thomas, 180.
86 Ibid.
87 Thomas, 427.
88 Sale, 34.
89 Brinkbäumer and Höges, 155.
behavior and regarded it as low, inherently unworthy of human beings, and the mark of a savage people who could be enslaved. Unfortunately, one of the legacies of the decision to allow the enslavement of the cannibals was the fact that the slave traders then began to call everyone a cannibal and enslave them. King Fernando attempted to provide some protection for the Indians under the Laws of Burgos, which stated, in part, “We order that these Indians be treated without the rigor and harshness of slaves elsewhere, but rather with love and gentleness, to incline them more effectively to the practices of our Faith.”90 The King would discover, however, that just as he could not control the colonists who branded innocent Indians as cannibals and subsequently enslaved them, he could not enforce the Laws of Burgos from over three thousand miles away, so the laws remained little more than a dead letter.

**Using Cannibalism to prove a Point:**

In the later part of the sixteenth century, three famous writers utilized the cannibalism of the Indians either to prove a specific point or as a method of critiquing their own society. These three writers were Hans Staden, Michel Montaigne, and Jean de Léry. Staden, a German mercenary, fell in with the Portuguese in the Brazil, and was subsequently captured by the anti-Portuguese and pro-French Tupinambá tribe of Indians. Though he was forced to remain the “guest” of the Tupinambá for many months, Staden eventually was liberated with the help of some of his fellow Europeans and when he returned to his native Germany, he wrote an account of his trials and tribulations. The book was mainly published because Staden, who “was a very pious Lutheran and was ready to see the hand of God stretched out for his special safety in every

---

disturbance of nature,”91 wanted to show “how much we owe to God who is with us always to protect us from the day of our birth onwards.”92 In order to disseminate to a large audience the debt humans owe to God for his constant vigilance, Staden wrote what would become a popular, simply written account of his captivity with the Tupinambá people. His book was divided into two parts, the first of which is a sketch of his time with the Tupinambá and the second part analyzes certain facets of their culture and behavior.

Even though Staden began his narrative with quiet praise of God, “God is a ready helper in time of need,”93 he did not spend much time extolling the virtues of God, but moved into his capture. After being captured, the warriors, Staden wrote, “commenced to quarrel over me.”94 The reason for this quarrel, according to Staden was because all of the warriors were “demanding a piece of me and clamoring to have me killed on the spot.”95 Staden described how they “stood round me and boasted they would eat me.”96 In what must have been quite a humiliating experience, Staden was forced to walk naked through the village yelling “I your food have come.”97 He discussed how the villagers would say “here comes our food hopping towards us.”98 Staden informed the reader that the villagers “began to walk around me, tearing at my flesh, one saying the skin on my head was his, another claiming the fat on my legs.”99 However, even though it looked as though Staden was in imminent danger of being eaten, a series of miraculous events saved his life; not only did he get a toothache, which was so painful that he

94 Staden, 62-3.
95 Staden, 64.
96 Staden, 67.
97 Staden, 70.
98 Staden, 80.
99 Ibid.
was not able to eat, but the chief and his family sickened and while Staden could not heal some members of the family, he said some words over the sick chief, who was subsequently healed. He became, in a sense, a member of the Tupinambá tribe, though he continued to be revolted by many of their practices.

Staden described how, on one excursion to another village, there “was a boy with us who had a piece of the leg-bone of the dead slave with some flesh upon it, which he was eating. I told they boy to throw it away, but he grew angry, as did the others, saying that it was their proper food.”

Staden also described one of several death scenes, quite graphically, “they dragged him in front of the hut of the king Vratinge, while the two men held him, although he was so ill that he did not know what they were doing. Then the man came up, to whom the Cario had been given, and beat out his brains, after which they left him lying before the huts ready to be eaten.” Staden evinced disgust at the practiced air with which the process took place, and described how “one [man] came from the huts where I was and called the womenfolk to make a fire beside the body. Then he cut off the head…and throwing away the head, he singed the body at the fire. After this he cut him up and divided the flesh equally, as is their custom, and they devoured everything except the head and the intestines.”

With barely concealed nausea, Staden told the reader, “as I went to and fro in the huts, I saw them roasting here the feet, there the hands, and elsewhere a piece of the trunk.”

On another occasion, Staden happened to be with a hunting party, who attacked a settlement and took prisoners. He described their fate, “those that had been badly wounded they carried up to the land, where they were killed at once and cut up and roasted/…/the other was

100 Staden, 93.
101 Staden, 99.
102 Staden, 100.
103 Staden, 100.
called Hieronymus. He had been captured by a native belonging to my hut, whose name was Parwaa, and this man spent the whole night roasting Hieronymus, scarcely a step from where I lay.” Staden had the unfortunate job of informing two of the living prisoners that “their cousin Hieronymus/.../lay by the fire roasting, and that I had seen a piece of Ferrero’s son being eaten.” During this macabre ordeal, Staden approached a chief who “had then a great vessel full of human flesh in front of him and was eating a leg which he held to my mouth, asking me to taste it. I replied that even beasts which were without understanding did not eat their own species, and should a man devour his fellow creatures? But he took a bite saying…‘I am a tiger, it tastes well’ and with that I left him.” Staden would not soon be rid of the evidence of the cannibalism, because “the flesh of Hieronymus remained in the hut where I was, hanging in the smoke, in a pot over the fire for three weeks, until it was dry as wood.” Staden would only be able to leave the Tupinambá when a ship from Europe sailed in to trade with the village and the sailors helped rescue Staden.

In the second portion of his narrative, Staden devotes more attention to the description of individual facets of life with the Tupinambá. He portrayed the Tupinambá as people who “treat their enemies with great cruelty and receive the same treatment when they are captured. For example, such is their hate that they often cut off an arm or leg from a living prisoner. Others they kill, before they cut them up for eating.” He noted “among certain of the savages it is the custom to set up the heads of the men they have eaten on the stockade at the entrance to the

---

104 Staden, 108.
105 Staden, 109.
106 Staden, 110.
107 Staden, 112.
108 Staden, “Staden’s Narrative: Book 2,” p. 131. For more information, see footnote 68 on page 179 for further instances of brutality, “Not only did they cut off the limbs of their living victims, but they roasted and devoured them before their eyes.”
huts.”\textsuperscript{109} Staden explained that the Tupinambá and their foes engage in cannibalism not “from hunger, but from great hate and jealousy…all this they do from their great hatred.”\textsuperscript{110} Staden described how they are practical, in a macabre sense, “if they take a prisoner who is badly wounded they kill him at once and carry home the meat roasted. Those that are unwounded they take back alive and kill them in the huts.”\textsuperscript{111} He offered select details about the death ritual, “these women are painted and ready to take his four quarters when he is cut up, and run with them round the huts, a proceeding which causes great amusement to the others.”\textsuperscript{112} Staden described the post-mortem activity, “the women seize the body at once and carry it to the fire where they scrape off the skin, making the flesh quite white, and stopping up the fundament with a piece of wood so that nothing may be lost. Then a man cuts up the body, removing the legs above the knees and the arms at the trunk, whereupon the four women seize the four limbs and run with them round the huts making a joyful cry. At this they divide the trunk among themselves, and devour everything that can be eaten/…/when this is finished, they all depart, each one carrying a piece with him.”\textsuperscript{113}

It should be quite apparent that Staden did not have an overwhelmingly positive view of the cannibalism of the Indians; in fact it would be quite correct to say that Staden had quite a negative attitude towards said cannibalism. However, his purpose was not to express his anger and negativity towards the cannibalism, but to use it to prove his point that people who trust and believe in God, will be protected from any harm. And, it was a very convincing story. Staden was, literally, helpless in the hands of the Tupinambá, but he triumphed over all the odds and managed to survive. In Staden’s narrative, cannibalism became a force whereby he could prove

\textsuperscript{109} Staden, 133.
\textsuperscript{110} Staden, 152.
\textsuperscript{111} Staden, 153.
\textsuperscript{112} Staden, 158.
\textsuperscript{113} Staden, 161-162.
to people that he survived living among people who voraciously ate others, therefore, God must be strong and powerful indeed.

The second writer, Michel de Montaigne, also used cannibalism, but rather than using it to prove a point, Montaigne critiqued his society. In his famous essay *Of the Cannibals*, Montaigne contrasted the uncivilized cannibals with the civilized Europe and found that Europe came up short. He wrote, in a description of the death ritual for a condemned enemy of the Tupinambá, “He ties a rope to one of the prisoner’s arms, by the end of which he holds him, a few steps away, for fear of being hurt, and gives his dearest friend the other arm to hold in the same way; and these two, in the presence of the whole assembly, kill him with their swords. This done, they roast him and eat him in common and send some pieces to their absent friends. This is not, as people think, for nourishment, as of old the Seythians used to do; it is to betoken an extreme revenge.¹¹⁴ Clearly Montaigne felt that it was very important to mention that the Tupinambá were engaging in a ritualistic cannibalism, and did not eat human flesh for nourishment.

Montaigne then contrasted the cannibals with the Europeans. “I am not sorry that we judge the barbarity of such acts, but I am heartily sorry that, judging their faults rightly, we should be so blind to our own.”¹¹⁵ He continued with a list of faults, including his opinion that, “there is more barbarity in eating a man alive than in eating him dead; and in tearing by tortures and the rack a body still full of feeling, in roasting a man bit by bit, in having him mangled and bit by dogs and swine (as we have not only read but seen within fresh memory, not among ancient enemies, but among neighbors and fellow citizens, and what is worse, on the pretext of

---

¹¹⁵ Ibid.
piety and religion) than in roasting and eating him after he is dead.” Part of the reason why Montaigne chose to compare the two societies was because “he regarded cannibals as beings who had not been shaped by the human spirit and still lived in a state of nature.” As one author noted, Montaigne was very troubled by “the course his world was taking, so he used the case of cannibals to illustrate that his society’s way of life was unnatural and corrupt.” Far from being brutal savages and corrupt deviants, cannibals became the embodiment of the free spirit, who were not plagued by the cares of the civilized Europeans.

Unlike Staden who used cannibalism to illustrate the power of God; unlike Montaigne who targeted all of Europe; the third writer, Jean de Léry, a French Huguenot, focused his attack on one specific country, France, and a specific religious group within that country, Catholics. Léry wrote in an attempt to help people realize their own hypocrisy, “nevertheless, so that those who read these horrible things, practiced daily among these barbarous nations of the land of Brazil, may also think more carefully about the things that go on every day among us.” He reasoned, “In the first place, if you consider in all candor what our big usurers do, sucking blood and marrow, and eating everyone alive—widows, orphans, and other poor people, whose throats it would be better to cut once and for all, than to make them linger in misery—you will say that they are even more cruel than the savages I speak of.” Léry enjoined the people not to “abhor so very greatly the cruelty of the anthropophagous—that is, man-eating—savages. For since there are some here in our midst even worse and more detestable than those who, as we have seen, attack only enemy nations, while the ones over here have plunged into the blood of their

116 Ibid.
117 Roa-de-la-Carrera, 9.
119 Ibid.
kinsmen, neighbors, and compatriots, one need not go beyond one’s own country, nor as far as America, to see such monstrous and prodigious things.”  

Léry also attacked Catholics using the idea of cannibalism, “furthermore, if it comes to the brutal act of really (as one says) chewing and devouring human flesh, have we not found people in these regions over here, even among those who bear the name of Christians, both in Italy and elsewhere, who, not content with having cruelly put to death their enemies, have been unable to shake their bloodthirst except by eating their livers and their hearts?”  

He went further and insulted the Catholics by comparing them to the Ouetaca, a tribe of people so primitive that they do not even cook the cannibalized flesh, “nevertheless they [Villegagnon and Cointa] wanted not only to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ grossly rather than spiritually, but what was worse, like the savages named Ouetaca, of whom I have already spoken, they wanted to chew and swallow it raw,”  

All in all, it is not a surprise that Léry would do this, because he was part of a group of Huguenots who wrote around “two contemporary themes: 1) a denunciation of the crimes of the Spanish Conquest, using for support the Brevíssima relación of Bartolomé de Las Casas, which was everywhere translated and accessible; 2) a defense of the free and happy savage, whom the bloody conquerors should have left to his native ignorance, even at the risk of his eternal damnation.”  

In the eyes of de Léry, Montaigne, and Staden, cannibalism, was not necessarily something to be condemned or praised outright, but rather a manner whereby they could critique their own society or prove their own point.

Conceptions and Perceptions

120 De Léry, 133. Consider, for instance, the lurid spectacles during the Catholic-Huguenot strife in France in the 1570s.
121 De Léry, 132.
122 De Léry, 41.
Throughout the course of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, Europeans experienced a cultural revolution and paradigm shift when they came into contact with the Indians in the Americas. Not only were many of the idea of the Europeans shattered, such as their theory that there were three continents which represented the three sons of Noah, but the Europeans also had to determine what the status was of the Indians. Were they human? Did they have souls? To a twenty-first century observer, these questions seem silly and the answers obvious, but to the Europeans they were baffling. It is certain that the cannibalism which the Europeans attributed to the Indians helped to play a part in convincing the invaders that these people were primitive savages and that it would be perfectly permissible to enslave them. While there is no doubt there were other factors at play: the Indians also worshipped multiple gods, there were no impressive cities in the Caribbean, and they went around naked; these factors could have been an indication of an earthly paradise. However, the presence of cannibalism proved to be sufficiently gruesome and allowed the Europeans to enslave the Indians with justification. For the sins of a few cannibals, an entire native population would pay the price: they would be branded cannibals and enslaved. Cannibalism would be an excuse, a justification, and later in the century, a method by which writers critiqued their own society or proved their points. In one last irony, the “gentle natives” who were so scared of the cannibalistic Caribs were branded cannibals and enslaved along with them proving that sometimes there is no justice to be found in this world.
Female Captivity Narratives in Colonial America

KATHRYN O’HARA
Gettysburg College

The female captivity narrative provides a complex view of colonial American history by recounting the experiences of women captured from their colonial homes by Native Americans. Male editors, often family friends or town ministers, generally compiled the experiences of female captives, and separating the voice of the female captive from influence of the male editor presents a challenge. Puritan captivity narratives in particular demonstrate conflict between attempts by Puritan ministers to impose a unified religious message in the sagas and the captives’ individual experiences, which often contradicted Puritan doctrine. During the early colonial era, ministers’ attempts to promote the Puritan covenant conflicted with the individual salvation testimonies of the female captives. In later narratives, white male editors attempted to impose white cultural values on the female stories, while the captives’ experiences reflected acculturation and integration into Indian society. Female captivity narratives played contradictory roles; while they recorded each captive’s unique experience, male editors often included their own cultural, moral and religious values in the written work.

Developments in historical scholarship on female captivity narratives demonstrate efforts by historians to consider the perspectives of colonial Americans as well as Native Americans. More emphasis on identifying the voices of the female captives in works edited by males reveals the strong influence of male editors conflicting with the determination of female captives to tell their own stories. Recent research also attempts to interpret the narratives from Native American
viewpoints. The general trend in the scholarship on female captivity narratives reflects an effort to separate the captives’ voices from the influence of male editors and to consider how the captives’ acculturation to Indian life affected their stories.

Nineteenth-century American writers John Greenleaf Whittier, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Sarah Josepha Hale reevaluated Hannah Dustan’s captivity saga in prose and poetry. Whittier’s piece, “The Mother’s Revenge” is written for entertainment and to preserve the legend of Dustan’s escape.\(^1\) Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Duston Family” illustrates strong criticism of Dustan’s violent escape and traces her desire for revenge to the murder of her infant.\(^2\) Thoreau’s piece comes from his work *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and describes Dustan’s escape.\(^3\) His account is not as blatantly critical as Hawthorne’s is, but he also does not praise Dustan as a heroine. Sarah Hale’s poem “The Father’s Choice” addresses only Dustan’s husband and his struggle to save his children; she ignores Hannah Dustan’s captivity and escape completely.\(^4\) These sources illustrate changes that developed in the treatment of female captivity narratives in media depictions during the century following the narratives’ publication.

Edited collections of the captivity narratives generally include the editors’ commentary on each individual narrative, and these commentaries do not attempt to examine the narratives from a new perspective. Carla Mulford’s introduction to Mary White Rowlandson’s narrative in *Early American Writings* places the saga in the context of King Philip’s War and examines the

---


characteristics of the captivity narrative genre but does not provide new insight into the narrative.\(^5\) Wayne Franklin’s comments on Hannah Dustan’s captivity tale and on Elizabeth Hanson’s narrative give a detailed and chronological review of the captives’ experience but do not provide a drastically innovative interpretation of the narrative or its place in historical scholarship.\(^6\) In *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*, editor Kathryn Derounian-Stodola offers historical background on each captive and some insight into potential discrepancies or inconsistencies in the narratives of each captive.\(^7\)

*The Captive’s Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*” by Teresa Toulouse examines how colonial male leaders used the Puritan female captivity narratives to facilitate transformations in cultural identity at the end of the seventeenth century.\(^8\) Toulouse identifies areas that she feels other historians have neglected, particularly in relation to shifts in political and religious authority.\(^9\) Toulouse’s article “‘My Own Credit’: Strategies of (E) Valuation in Mary Rowlandson’s Captivity Narrative” examines the representation of valuation shown through status, martyrdom and providence.\(^10\) Toulouse’s work reflects a strong focus on the role of gender in Rowlandson’s narrative and she argues that Rowlandson pursues several avenues of gaining credit, or valuation, for her story and redemption from her readers because of her gender.\(^11\)

---


\(^11\) Toulouse, “‘My Own Credit,’” 656.
Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney’s book *Captors and Captives: the 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* examines the political and economic catalysts for the French and Indian War and the attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts. They question earlier examinations of the American colonial frontier and examine the lives of the captives once they reached New France and cultural competition between the French and the Indians for control of the captives.

In “The Figure of Captivity: The Cultural Work of the Puritan Captivity Narrative,” Tara Fitzpatrick examines the paradoxical role of captivity narratives in the context of Puritan theology. She argues that while Puritan ministers attempted to impose a socially and theologically unified interpretation of the captive experience, the captives maintained unique understandings of their captive experience and their spiritual destinies. Fitzpatrick also explores the changing perceptions of the American wilderness. Susan Walsh evaluates the narrative of Mary Jemison’s captivity narrative as recorded by James Seaver. She contends that previous scholarship on Jemison’s narrative focuses only on the white perspective and questions the accuracy of the account written by Seaver.

Relations between colonial communities and local Native American tribes evolved over time, and the outbreak of conflict between the two often contributed to an increased number of raids on colonial communities. Encroachment of the British onto Indian lands and insensitivity by the British towards surrounding Indian communities contributed to the outbreak of King

---

13 Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 3.
16 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 2.
17 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 3, 17.
Philip’s War.\textsuperscript{19} Carla Mulford sees the collaborative efforts of the traditional enemies, Nipmucks, Narragansetts and Wampanoags, as a fight to preserve a Native American way of life, which British cultural practices and materials increasingly overwhelmed.\textsuperscript{20} John Easton, a Welsh immigrant and governor of Rhode Island during King Philip’s War,\textsuperscript{21} recounted the murder of the Indian John Sassamon and maintains that three other Indians confessed to murdering Sassamon but accused Metacomet, the Native American chief, of ordering the murder.\textsuperscript{22} The Indians feared English retaliation against Metacomet and therefore claimed the English coerced them into accusing Metacomet.\textsuperscript{23} The complicated origins of this conflict demonstrate the complexity of Indian and British relations during this period. A single murder sparked King Philip’s War, which resulted in high casualties for both sides, and these tenuous relations continued to evolve throughout the century.

The Indian attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1704 demonstrates a culmination of the cultural conflict between local Indian tribes and the colonial communities. Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney assert that Deerfield held more significance than simply an isolated frontier settlement; rather, it represented the aggressive and expansionist colonial culture which threatened Indian society.\textsuperscript{24} The Native Americans who attacked the community held distinct cultural, political and economic interests, and the authors distinguish the varying interests of the different Indian tribes involved in the attack.\textsuperscript{25} While the Abenakis and Pennacooks viewed the raid as an act against English threats to their land, the Huron, Iroquois and Mohawks waged a
“parallel war.” The authors cite historian Peter MacLeod, who defined a parallel war as “a war within an imperial war for personal goals rather than national interests.” The lives of Native Americans in the Deerfield area changed dramatically with colonization; deadly diseases decimated the population of the Pocumtucks, who had inhabited the area for thousands of years. Settlement and hunting depleted natural resources such as beaver and alliances between Europeans and natives caused conflict with neighboring tribes. King Philip’s War affected the English settlement at Deerfield as well as the native inhabitants; over half of the village’s adult males died in battle. While Deerfield remained a center of conflict and vulnerability, by 1682, families returned to reestablish the community. Fighting broke out again in 1688 during the Second Anglo-Abenaki War, but by 1703, peace returned to Deerfield. The outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession again placed the community in a vulnerable position; the town minister, John Williams recorded his concerns and wrote, “Strangers tell us they would not live where we do for twenty times as much as we do…” His statement reflects the extremely vulnerable position of the Deerfield community prior to the 1704 raid.

Governmental and religious structure in New England influenced the development of Puritan captivity narratives. Toulouse identifies four political events that not only influenced Massachusetts governmental structure but also the decisions of New England ministers to promote women’s captivity narratives. Threats to the original Massachusetts charter began in

---

26 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 2.
27 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 2.
28 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 12-14.
29 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 12-14.
30 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 20-21.
31 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 22.
32 Haefeli and Sweeney, Captors and Captives, 28.
33 John Williams, quoted in Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, Captors and Captives: the 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield, a volume in the series Native Americans of the Northeast: Culture History and the Contemporary, ed. Colin G. Calloway and Barry O’Connell (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 33.
34 Toulouse, The Captive’s Position, 2.
the 1660s and resulted in the eventual loss of the original charter in 1685. A group of colonists used the example of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to justify the overthrow of Edmond Andros, the first royal governor of the New England Dominion in 1689. Toulouse also maintains that reactions to the Glorious Revolution influenced the new Massachusetts charter, negotiated by Increase Mather with King William. King William’s and Queen Anne’s War, which Toulouse identifies as the third and fourth events, instigated boundary and trade wars in New England that involved continually changing Indian allies. A dramatic increase in the number of captives taken in New England occurred as a result of these wars; Toulouse cites a study which estimates that up to seven hundred New Englanders experienced captivity between 1675 and 1713. The close connection between government and religion in New England resulted in a religious context surrounding the political changes that Toulouse identifies. The association of religious affiliations with national identity characterized King William’s War and Queen Anne’s War, and while France identified with Catholicism, the English became identified as overwhelmingly Protestant. Prominent Puritan ministers including Increase and Cotton Mather supported William after the Glorious Revolution. Toulouse, however, argues that these religious elites supported a Whig policy of political rights and religious toleration to protect “certain traditional New England charter and church privileges which deny rights and toleration to those who dissent from them politically or religiously.” The publication of Puritan female

captivity narratives coincided with these religious and political threats; the publication of Mary White Rowlandson’s narrative in 1682 occurred during a time of renewed charter threats.  

The majority of captivity experience during the colonial period came from women; the Native Americans considered women to be ideal captives, and women’s narratives served as a useful tool for promoting Puritan theology. Toulouse identifies three explanations for the use of female captivity narratives to promote Puritan theology and address threats to the community. Women comprised the majority of New England captives and therefore held the largest base of experience with captivity. In addition, many captives, including Mary White Rowlandson, Hannah Dustan and the Williams family, had personal connections to either Increase or Cotton Mather. Toulouse also asserts that ministers promoted stories of women surviving captivity and returning to the Protestant community to counter tales of women converting to Catholicism or entering into French or Indian marriages in Canada. While several female captives including Mary White Rowlandson and Elizabeth Hanson recorded, or allegedly recorded, their own experiences, many female captives, including Hannah Dustan and Mary Jemison dictated their stories to a male editor. Each captive experienced captivity uniquely, and their narratives create a complex picture of intercultural relations and tensions.

Mary White Rowlandson’s narrative provides a clear example of the paradoxical roles of a captivity saga. Rowlandson wrote her own narrative but did not publish it until 1682, probably with encouragement and possibly assistance from Increase Mather. Rowlandson wrote her narrative with a two-fold message; while she testifies that all must repent or face severe

---

afflictions, she simultaneously affirms the redemptive opportunity in her affliction, her captivity. The covenant at the center of Puritan theology plays an essential role in understanding the contradictions in Rowlandson’s narrative. According to Puritan doctrine, the covenant depended upon the entire community’s adherence to sacred principles; if a single community member disobeyed or lost faith, the entire community suffered. To Puritan ministers, including Cotton Mather, Indian raids reflected punishment for the disobedience of community members. Colonists also interpreted the Indian attacks as punishment for corruption and sin in their communities. Through sermons, or jeremiads, Puritan preachers expressed their concern to their communities, and captivity narratives mirrored the structure of jeremiads. Fitzpatrick argues that Cotton and Increase Mather, who transcribed many captivity narratives, attempted to impose a uniform theological message in the narratives as a means of bringing the community back to the covenant. The publication of Rowlandson’s narrative coincided with a decline in membership in the Congregational Church, and this evidence supports that Increase Mather may have viewed her narrative as a means of promoting traditional Puritan theology and a method of bringing the community back to the church.

Religious themes appear constantly in Rowlandson’s work. Fitzpatrick also, however, identifies a distinct conflict between the ministers’ attempts at orthodoxy and the captives’ insistence on relating their individual experience and salvation. In describing the Indian raid on her home, Rowlandson writes, “The Lord hereby would make us the more to acknowledge His

48 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 1.
49 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 3-4.
50 Mulford, “Mary White Rowlandson,” 306.
51 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 4.
52 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 6.
54 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 6.
hand and to see that our help is always in Him.” This statement clearly reflects Rowlandson’s faith and her belief that the Lord would guide her through her affliction. The death of her sister profoundly affected Rowlandson; she writes of her hope that, “she is reaping the fruit of her good labors, being faithful to the service of God in her place.” Her account demonstrates a strong connection to Puritan doctrine; Rowlandson believes that her sister will be rewarded in heaven for her service to the Lord, as the covenant promises. The theme of God supporting Rowlandson and fulfilling the promises in the covenant figures prominently in Rowlandson’s narrative.

Rowlandson’s description of the Indians’ feast the night of the raid illustrates a belief in the immorality and sin outside of the Puritan community. She describes it as “the dolefullest night” and compares the Indians’ celebration to a “lively resemblance of hell.” The belief that the Lord would provide and guide Rowlandson through her trials shapes her narrative; she testifies that, “I thought we should there have ended our days, as overcome with so many difficulties. But the Lord renewed my strength still and carried me along….” Rowlandson emphasizes how her spiritual disobedience led to her affliction when she writes, “I then remembered how careless I had been of God’s holy time, how many Sabbaths I had lost and misspent and how evilly I had walked in God’s sight, which lay so close unto my spirit that it was easy for me to see how righteous it was with God to cut the thread of my life and cast me out of His presence forever.” This statement demonstrates Rowlandson’s belief that her failure to respect the Sabbath directly influenced her captivity and suffering and reflects a strong connection to the doctrine of the Puritan covenant. Clearly, Puritan theology played a major role

---

56 Rowlandson, “Narrative of the Captivity,” 308.
57 Rowlandson, “Narrative of the Captivity,” 308.
in Rowlandson’s experience, however, her narrative also demonstrates contradictions between her unique experience and salvation and the orthodoxy of Puritan doctrine.

While Rowlandson’s Puritan faith clearly shaped her experience, her unique individual experience contradicts the community based Puritan covenant. Captivity narratives emphasized the redemption of the individual captive, not the entire Puritan community. 60 Rowlandson testifies to the Lord’s strength in carrying her through her ordeal “so much that I could never have thought of it had I not experienced it.” 61 Her statement emphasizes that her personal experience is unique; by enduring captivity, Rowlandson achieved an understanding of the Lord’s power that she could not have achieved otherwise. Her knowledge of the Lord sets her apart from the rest of the community; through her affliction, Rowlandson achieved redemption for herself but not for her community. In the final sentences of her narrative, Rowlandson states, “But now I see the Lord had His time to scourge and chasten me” and claims unique understanding of the Lord’s mercy as she has “learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles and be quieted by them.” 62 When Rowlandson’s hope of rescue by the English and her husband failed during her captivity, she asks her captors to allow her privacy so she “might get alone and pour out my heart unto the Lord.” 63 This incident demonstrates a very personal relationship between Rowlandson and God; Rowlandson alone communicates with God without the mediation of a minister. Her direct communication and personal relationship with God challenges the community based Puritan doctrine, and it demonstrates that the isolation of wilderness captivity allowed for an unmediated connection with God.

60 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 6.
The perception of the American wilderness by New Englanders changed as a result of the captivity narratives. Prior to the publication of captivity narratives, many Americans viewed the wilderness as a frightening wasteland. Female captivity narratives, however, depicted survival in the wilderness and the wilderness came to be viewed as a place of opportunity for success. The transformation of colonial perceptions of the wilderness also included a strong religious element. The wilderness came to reflect an opportunity for religious enlightenment; while Rowlandson’s isolation from her community tested her faith, it simultaneously provided her with a unique chance to rely fully on God and to develop a strong personal connection to her faith. In the Thirteenth Remove of her narrative, Rowlandson writes, “Thus the Lord carried me along from one time to another and made good me this precious promise and many others.” The Lord fulfilled promises specifically to Rowlandson, not to the entire Puritan community, and only in the wilderness did Rowlandson experience this direct connection with God.

The narrative of Hannah Dustan reflects discrepancies between Puritan theology and her captivity experience. Indians attacked Haverhill, Massachusetts in 1697 during King William’s War and captured Dustan and her midwife Mary Neff. While Dustan’s captivity experience and escape lacked any basis of religious inspiration, Cotton Mather incorporated religious themes in his text on her experience to justify Dustan’s murder of her captors. Dustan’s escape from her captors lacked any divine inspiration; after her Indian captors told her that she would be forced to run the gauntlet, Dustan made her desperate decision. Dustan enlisted captive Samuel Lennardson to help her murder ten Abenaki and wound another, and she scalped her victims to

---

64 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 3.
65 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 3.
66 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 17.
69 Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 14-15.
70 Franklin, “The Bloody Escape,” 111.
provide evidence of her exploit to her community. In Cotton Mather’s record of Dustan’s experience, “A Notable Exploit: Dux Faemina Facti,” Mather includes religious themes and justification for Dustan’s actions. In describing the plight of Dustan and another female captive, Mather writes, “the good God, who hath all ‘hearts in his own hands,’ heard the sighs of these prisoners, and gave them to find unexpected favor from the master who hath laid claim unto them.” Mather inserts the influence of God into this situation; however, it is unlikely that it reflects Dustan’s belief in deliverance by God. Mather depicted Dustan as the model of a captive female; her physical, intellectual and spiritual superiority to the Indians allow her to escape. However, later writers challenged this depiction of Dustan.

Interpretations of Dustan’s experience in the nineteenth century reflect a stronger influence on Dustan’s maternal role than in Mather’s original text. In John Greenleaf Whittier’s interpretation of Dustan’s story, he examines how despite the inherently “milder and purer” attributes of women, the perils of early New England settlements brought manifestations of female strength and courage. Whittier extols Dustan as a symbol of this heroism and describes Dustan’s strong maternal attributes prior to the attack on her home. However, he sees a transformation in Dustan when the Indians murdered Dustan’s infant daughter. The murder of Dustan’s daughter, to Whittier, marks the beginning of Dustan’s desire for revenge on her captors, which he describes as, “an insatiate longing for blood.” Whittier’s statement that, “an instantaneous change had been wrought in her very nature; the angel had become a demon”
demonstrates Whittier’s belief that Dustan’s desire for revenge overcame her maternal nature only after daughter’s murder. Nathaniel Hawthorne, however, demonstrates much less sympathy toward Dustan.

Hawthorne’s piece, “The Duston Family” severely criticizes Dustan’s murderous escape from captivity. While Hawthorne praises Dustan’s husband for saving the remaining seven of his children from the Indian raid, Hawthorne criticizes Dustan for murdering her captors and traces her desire for revenge to the murder of her infant. P79 Hawthorne writes, “But, O, the children! Their skins are red; yet spare them, Hannah Duston,” but “there was little safety for a redskin, when Hannah Duston’s blood was up.” P80 He emphasizes Dustan’s vengeance and contrasts it with her husband’s compassion and bravery in saving his children. Hawthorne’s scathing criticism of Dustan illustrates his disapproval of her violent escape, which Mather portrayed as heroic. Cultural and religious conflict plays a role in Hawthorne’s work; Hawthorne condemns Mather as “an old hard-hearted, pedantic bigot” who “seems trebly to exult in the destruction of these poor wretches, on account of their popish superstitions.” P81 Hawthorne praises the Indians for practicing domestic worship among the “dark, mysterious woods,” P82 and his admiration for the Indians’ religious practice reflects an attempt to acknowledge the legitimacy of a religious tradition other than Puritanism. According to Hawthorne, even though the Indians practice Catholicism, their religious beliefs and practices demand admiration.

The captivity account of Elizabeth Hanson demonstrates a surprising combination of stoicism and ethnography in her observations of her captors and reflects cultural conflict and religious influence. Indians attacked Hanson’s Quaker community in New Hampshire in August

81 Hawthorne, “The Duston Family,” 125.
82 Hawthorne, “The Duston Family,” 125.
1724 and captured Hanson, four of her children and a servant.\textsuperscript{83} The attackers also killed two of Hanson’s younger children.\textsuperscript{84} Hanson describes her capture and the murders of her children in surprisingly calm detail; she writes, “I bore this as well I could, not daring to appear disturbed or show much uneasiness lest they should do the same to the other, but [I] should have been exceedingly glad they had kept out of sight till we had been gone from the house.”\textsuperscript{85} Derounian-Stodola argues that Hanson’s apparent detachment from her experience may indicate a variety of factors, including acculturation, attempts to understand her captors, an attempt at ethnography, or an inability to deal with her trauma.\textsuperscript{86} She also asserts that the stoic and detached tone of Hanson’s narrative may reflect an outside influence, as Hanson probably dictated her story but did not actually write it herself given her lack of education.\textsuperscript{87}

Hanson’s efforts at ethnography occur throughout her narrative; in describing the murder and scalping of her children, she explains that scalping was, “a practice common with these people, which is whenever they kill any English people they cut the skin off from the crown of their heads and carry it with them for a testimony and evidence that they have killed so many.”\textsuperscript{88} Hanson’s narrative also demonstrates the influence of religious themes; Derounian-Stodola asserts that Hanson’s saga served as a perfect model for the Quakers’ promotion of women’s affliction as private submission to God’s will.\textsuperscript{89} Hanson describes the difficulty of her journey and notes that, “the Indian, my master, would mostly carry my babe for me, which I took as a


\textsuperscript{84} Hanson, “God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty,” 150.
\textsuperscript{85} Hanson, “God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty,” 150.
\textsuperscript{86} Derounian-Stodola, \textit{Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives}, 64.
\textsuperscript{87} Derounian-Stodola, \textit{Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives}, 63.
\textsuperscript{88} Hanson, “God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty,” 150.
\textsuperscript{89} Derounian-Stodola, \textit{Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives}, 64.
great favor of God that his heart was so tenderly inclined to assist me….” 90 This statement by Hanson clearly reflects her religious faith as well as an attempt to understand her captors and represents the cultural and religious overtones in her account. Hanson evaluates the temper of her master and determines that, “when he had success in hinting to take either bears, beavers, bucks, or fowls on which he could fill his belly, he was better humored though he was naturally of a very hot temper…” 91 Hanson’s narrative illustrates her effort to balance her suffering during captivity with an attempt at understanding her captors and explaining their customs and beliefs.

Mary Jemison’s experience illustrates that even at the end of the colonial period conflict existed in the female captivity narrative. The Seneca attacked Jemison’s Pennsylvania home in 1758, 92 and while Puritan theology no longer heavily influenced her story, Jemison’s experience reflects cultural conflict in her account of her captivity, as told to James Seaver. Identifying Jemison’s true voice in the narrative presents a challenge; as Walsh argues, Jemison had told her story numerous times before dictating it to Seaver and she knew how audiences reacted to certain elements. 93 Seaver’s introduction to Jemison’s narrative illustrates racist ideas towards Native Americans. In describing Jemison, he writes, “although her bosom companion was an Indian warrior, and notwithstanding her children and associates were all Indians, yet it was found that she possessed an uncommon share of hospitality, and that her friendship was well worth courting and preserving.” 94 Seaver’s statement demonstrates his disdain for Indians and his belief that Jemison’s hospitality stemmed from her white ethnicity. Jemison’s narratives, however, clearly

90 Hanson, “God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty,” 151.
91 Hanson, “God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty,” 155.
92 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 49.
93 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 51-52.
illustrates her integration into Seneca culture and her adoption of the values of her new community and her detachment from the white community.

Walsh maintains that Jemison’s young age at the time of her capture influenced her ability to integrate into Seneca society and adopt its cultural values and standards, and Jemison’s account demonstrates the influence of Seneca culture in her perspective. Seaver notes that, “from her long residence with the Indians, she has acquired the habit of peeping from under eye-brows as they do with the head inclined downward.” He also shares his concern that while Jemison seemed to enjoy extolling the virtues of her Indian community, “a kind of family pride inclined her to withhold whatever would blot the character of her descendants, and perhaps induced her to keep back many things that would have been interesting.” Seaver’s concern indicates that Jemison may have edited her portrayal of her family members, and Walsh argues that Jemison’s understanding of white etiquette led her careful telling of her story. According to Walsh, Seaver intended his statement about Jemison’s “family pride” to “circumvent serious challenges to a dominant white mythology predicated upon female purity, native savagery, and the manifest destiny of the sons of Boone.” Seaver depicts Jemison’s abduction and journey with her captors in the same mold as earlier captivity narratives; as Jemison’s story progresses, however, her individual voice emerges as a tribute to her adopted Seneca family. Jemison’s narrative reflects the cultural conflict between the white and Indian communities and Jemison knowledge of both communities’ cultural standards affected the manner in which she discussed her Indian family and community.

95 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 56.
96 Seaver, A Narrative of the Life, x-xi.
97 Seaver, A Narrative of the Life, xiii.
98 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 53.
99 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 54.
100 Walsh, “‘With them was my Home,’” 54.
Female captivity narratives serve a broader role than simply recounting the experiences of colonial women captured by Native Americans. Instead, the narratives offer insight into the religious and political contexts of colonial America, particularly New England, and reflect changes in religious thought and perceptions of the American wilderness. The captivity narratives also reflect conflicting white and Indian cultural values. While male editors often attempted to impose their own religious or cultural beliefs in the narratives, they failed to overshadow the female captives’ unique experiences and knowledge, and the narratives therefore convey paradoxical messages.
Sweet Tooth for Empire:  
Sugar and the British Atlantic World

COLIN WALFIELD  
Gettysburg College

With increasing productivity and rising standards of living, a new spirit of consumerism reached Britain. After its entry into the Atlantic World economy, though Scotland never fully benefited until the 1707 Act of Union, all classes eventually gained access to a wide variety and exotic assortment of consumer products. Among them, sugar, valued for its sweetness since the Middle Ages, maintained a special position, dominating all exports from British America. Embraced by the British populace, sugar provided an impetus for colonization and required imported African labor. Sugar and a newfound consumerism at home drove the British Atlantic World.

A fondness for sweetness transcends all cultural boundaries. Even populations lacking a previous fondness for it, offer no resistance to its inclusion in their diets after their first exposure. As one seventeenth century English observer, Richard Ligon noted, “the Sugar-Cane, which though it has but one single taste, yet, that full sweetness has such a benign faculty, as to preserve all the rest from corruption.” When sugar first became available for English upper classes in the twelfth century, they gladly accepted it.

Under this context, sugar became a symbol of prosperity and high status during the English Middle Ages. With more than enough food to satisfy basic nutritional needs, elites could instead focus on relieving their monotonous diets. Sugar, like other exotic additives,

enabled them to distinguish themselves from the rest of English society by creating unique sensual experiences. Sugar’s status as an exclusive luxury good ensured it a prominent position in medieval banquets regardless of its suitability to a particular dish. In addition to taste, sugar also had a visual appeal. Highly refined sugar’s whiteness appealed to their senses of purity. Large eatable centerpieces known as subtleties became the premier method for conspicuous consumption. Formed from marzipan, these took the forms of animals, buildings, or other shapes. Owing to its exclusive appeal, sugar acquired a reputation as the ultimate panacea that outlasted its status as a luxury. As late as 1788, one ad in The Times for “The famous purging sugars” claimed:

It purifies the blood, completely cleanses the stomach, bowels, and glands, and effectually cures rheumatism, agues, intermitting Fevers, Coughs, Colds, Asthmas, and a train of disorders too numerous to insert...[with] only the taste of fine sugar.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries though, witnessed the birth of consumerism among a broader portion of Britain. Defoe in his 1724 work A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, described Britain as “the most flourishing and opulent country in the world” based on constant improvements in farming, manufacture, and trade. Although Scotland lagged behind England and Wales, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed the rise of improved agricultural techniques and subsequently, enhanced crop yields. Defoe in his descriptions of rural Britain emphasized this productivity. At Bedford, for instance, “the soil hereabouts is exceedingly rich and fertile, and particularly produces great quantities of the best

---

3 Mintz, Sweetness and Power, 85-86.
4 Ibid, 76.
5 Ibid, 87-88.
6 Spring Physic. The Famous Purging Sugar, Times (London), July 5, 1788.
wheat in England.”8 This combined with an increase in purchasing power among the laboring classes opened up much of the populace to a larger consumer market as they no longer looked towards food solely for subsistence and acquired excess money to spend.9

Roughly, at the same time, transatlantic commerce brought a wide assortment of new imports into Britain. Just as he had done with the rural landscape, Defoe emphasized economic productivity in the cities and took immeasurable pride in Britain’s growing commerce. London, as the capital, fittingly became a major international center of trade. In the city center, “the center of its commerce and wealth,” major state trading monopolies such as “the South Sea Company, the East India Company, the African Company, &c.” had their headquarters.10 Meanwhile, on the Thames, the docks, no “less an ornament to the city, as they are a testimony to the vast trade carried on in it,” brought in a great deal of profit and shipyards transformed “the whole river” into “one great arsenal.”11

British trade, however, did not entirely center on London. Defoe praised Bristol as “the greatest, the richest, and the best port of trade in Great Britain, London only excepted,” and admired its independence in trade relative to London and ability to carry its business inland via nearby waterways.12 Meanwhile, Liverpool carried out a similar enterprise “not rivalling Bristol…, but is in a fair way to exceed and eclipse it, by encreasing every way in wealth and shipping.”13 Even Scotland, through its 1707 Union with England gained unprecedented access to overseas markets and likewise took part in Britain’s commercial boom. At Glasgow, “the Union open’d the door to the Scots in our American colonies…and they have the greatest

---
8 Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 227.
10 Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 144.
11 Ibid, 148, 151.
13 Ibid, 288.
addition to their trade by it imaginable.”\textsuperscript{14} By the end of the eighteenth century, merchandise from Atlantic trade permeated the whole of Britain. One article in \textit{The Times} from 1790 lamented that as a consequence of a likelihood of war with France, the prices of a variety of American imports, including sugar, “a necessary of life,” rose affecting “almost every rank and description of the people.”\textsuperscript{15}

Sugar dominated colonial growth in the Americas. Failing to emulate Spain’s example in forging an empire based on gold and silver, England during the seventeenth centuries instead focused on a commodity-trade with an emphasis on cash crops. On this, Richard Hakluyt in the late sixteenth century commented that in Virginia:

\begin{quote}
An overplus sufficiently to be yielded...as by way of traffique and exchange with your owne nation of England, will inrich your selves the providers...and greatly profit our owne countreymen, to supply them with most things which heretofore they have bene faine to provide.\textsuperscript{16}.
\end{quote}

Given their longstanding interest in sugar, they hoped to cultivate it in America. After failures at colonizing parts of South America in the sixteenth century, in 1619 and 1622, they tried and failed to plant the crop in Virginia and Bermuda respectively.\textsuperscript{17} The Caribbean’s moist tropical climate though offered a perfect location for it. Starting on the Barbados in the 1640s, Dutch merchants from Brazil offered to assist the English in beginning their own enterprises.\textsuperscript{18} As a result, the island became what a contemporary observer, Ligon, called, “one of the richest Spots

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid}, 331.
\textsuperscript{15} Sugar, \textit{Times} (London), August 30, 1790.
\textsuperscript{17} Mintz, \textit{Sweetness and Power}, 37.
\textsuperscript{18} Phillip D. Curtin, \textit{The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 81-82.
of earth under the Sun.”19 Inspired by Barbados’ success, other possessions in the Caribbean followed suit and developed sugar industries of their own.

Although sugar could not be cultivated in British North America, it influenced their economies. As sugar dominated the Caribbean colonial economy, these colonies still needed basic provisions to remain productive. This in turn created a burgeoning market for North American fish, grain, and lumber. Between 1768 and 1772, 60 percent of New England fish and grain, lumber, and livestock exports from the middle colonies went to provisioning the Caribbean.20 North America likewise created a market for the Caribbean colonies. As transplanted Europeans, they valued sugar as a consumer good, but in addition to this, used it to stimulate a local rum industry. Despite largely failing in their endeavors to turn it into an export (consuming 90 percent of their production), it became highly successful within the continental colonies themselves occupying a substantial portion of their economies and even became a form of currency.21

Sugar dominated British trade with the America. By 1770, these exports totaled 97,000 tons with 90 percent meant solely for domestic markets. Between 1768 and 1772, it alone, at 63 percent of all American exports, more than doubled North American products bound for Britain.22 Sugar’s success abroad also brought a similar growth of commerce within Britain itself. Greater volumes of overseas trade required improvements in harbor and warehousing

19 Ligon, A True and Exact History of the Island of the Barbadoes, 86.
facilities, which meant better road, river, and canal networks to reduce costs in bringing the goods inland.²³

Colonial expansion facilitated sugar’s growth as a consumer good in Britain. Paralleling the evolution of a sugar based economy in the Caribbean, sugar prices fell drastically during the seventeenth century. From 1645 to 1680, prices fell by 70 percent and as expected, a considerable increase in demand followed.²⁴ Relying on monotonous diets dominated by simple starches, they welcomed the changes inexpensive sugar provided. Simply as an additive to a basic grain based diet, it imparted previously dull foods such as oats with new meaning. Lacking sugar, “Even the fruits of this country,” commented Edward Long’s 1774 History of Jamaica, would “become unpalatable to the meanest people.”²⁵ Sugar consumption, however, also had an inflexible bond with tea. While chocolate and coffee also provided hot stimulants, tea emerged as the most economical.²⁶ Taken together with sugar, it provided for a unique warm and stimulating experience open to a great mass of the British public. According to Long, “It is so generally in use, and chiefly by the assistance of tea, that even the poor wretches living in the alms-houses will not be without it.”²⁷

Compared to the ease with which the British acquired it, sugar cultivation required a great deal of labor. Denuded of their native populations, Caribbean sugar plantations required imported labor. While initially relying on white indentured servants, as their supply dropped off, enslaved Africans took their place on the plantations. As the basis for the British Atlantic economy, the sugar colonies in the Caribbean attracted the bulk of the British slave trade. A

²³ Ibid, 56.
²⁴ Mintz, Sweetness and Power, 159-160.
²⁶ Mintz, Sweetness and Power, 112.
high mortality rate and skewed sex ratio with males predominating meant that slave populations on plantations could not be self-sustaining and required more imported slaves from Africa. In addition to this, once enslaved and brought over to the Caribbean, they provided for an easily exploitable workforce. “They,” Ligon wrote, “are held in such awe and slavery, as they are fearful to appear in any daring act; and seeing the mustering of our men, and hearing their Gun-shot...their spirits are subjugated to so low a condition, as they dare not make any bold attempt.” Sugar and African slavery became so intertwined by the end of the eighteenth century that one Abolitionist announcement in *The Times* called it, “an Article of luxury that is polluted with the Blood of innocent Fathers, Mothers and Children.”

Consumerism at home forged the dynamics between Britain, America, and Africa. Sugar, beloved by the British public, drove economic development in British America and spurred the slave trade from Africa. Their sweet tooth forged the British Atlantic World.

---

Since his untimely death in 1837, the nineteenth-century romantic writer Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin has been renowned the world over not only for his literary achievements, but also for being a paradigm of “Russianness.” However, Pushkin himself was by no means a “pure” Russian. Like many of the inhabitants of the Russian empire during his time, he was borne of a veritable hodgepodge of ethnicities. The most surprising of these is his African ancestry; his great-grandfather, Abram Petrovich Gannibal, was an African slave brought to Russia in the early eighteenth century. Remarkably, this same slave became the godson and close confidante of Peter the Great himself. Although the link to Gannibal and his inspiring story was one of Pushkin’s greatest points of personal vanity, it was also a constant, painful reminder of his disconnection from Russian society and the aristocracy into which he was born.

Russia’s relationship to the African subcontinent had not been a long one by the time Gannibal made his way to St. Petersburg, and it was only with the rule of Peter the Great (1682-1725) that Russia began to make even small expeditions into Africa.¹ Although the Russian nobility had, for years, retained a small number of “blackamoors” as personal servants or court pages (as was the fashion in Europe), foreign conquests and a continued reliance on serfdom limited Russia’s interest in the African slave trade.² There were, nonetheless, slave routes to Moscow in the seventeenth century onwards through which some African slaves “were bought

by Russian consuls in Tripoli, baptized on the spot in the Russian Orthodox Church, and sent to
Saint Petersburg where, as new converts, they were freed and engaged for life in the service of
the imperial court.”3 At court, these Africans were met by the prejudices espoused in European
encyclopedias and journals filtered throughout Russia which engraved stark portraits of Africans
and their mannerisms into the minds of educated Russians, one such encyclopedia claiming that
“Negroes [are] closer to animals (monkeys) than the representatives of other races.”4

With such a negative portrayal of Africans being the predominant one in Gannibal’s
lifetime, it would seem impossible for a man such as Gannibal to rise to the status of “the dark
star of the Enlightenment,” as Voltaire once called him.5 After being stolen from his home in
Logone (modern-day Cameroon), Gannibal was taken to Constantinople and from there sold in
1704 to Fedor Golovin, a close associate of Peter the Great.6 Golovin had bought Gannibal and
another African child for the purpose of presenting them as gifts to the tsar.7 Peter quickly grew
fond of the young Gannibal and baptized him as his godson, giving him the patronymic Petrov.8
He even took Gannibal with him in 1716 to France to study at a military school with only three
other young Russian men.9 Gannibal showed great promise in the fields of mathematics and
engineering, and, after he returned from France, Peter “entrusted him with the administration of
his private cabinet and charged him with teaching mathematics to the young Russian nobles
enrolled in the technical schools of Moscow and St. Petersburg.”10

---

3 Czeslaw Jesman, "Early Russian Contacts with Ethiopia," in Proceedings of the Third International Conference of
Ethiopian Studies (Addis Ababa, 1966), 253-267; quoted in Dieudonné Gnammankou, “Pushkin Between Russia
Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchyy, Nicole Svobodny, and Ludmilla A. Trigos (Evanston: Northwestern University
Press, 2006), xi.
7 Binyon, Pushkin, 5.
8 Binyon, Pushkin, 5.
9 Binyon, Pushkin, 5.
10 Gnammankou, “Pushkin Between Russia and Africa,” 211-229.
After Peter’s death in 1725, Gannibal was still treated exceedingly well by Peter’s wife and successor, Catherine. She made him the personal tutor of Peter II, the tsar’s grandson, as well as giving him a large plot of land in Pskov province.\(^\text{11}\) Despite a small period of exile in Siberia due to suspicion and racial hatred on the part of court favorites such as Aleksandr Menshikov in 1724,\(^\text{12}\) Gannibal returned to St. Petersburg. There, he achieved an astounding litany of accomplishments: in 1725, he wrote a widely-read treatise on geometry; in the 1740s, the Empress Elizabeth appointed him with the task of determining the Russian border with Sweden; and in 1759, he became the head of all Russian military engineering operations and oversaw the construction of the Ladoga Canal, among other such projects.\(^\text{13}\) By the time of his death in 1781, Gannibal was renowned not only for being one of the most exceptional Africans of his time, but also for being one of the greatest Russians.

Gannibal’s incredible rise to fame had a profound influence on Pushkin’s perceptions about his own identity and “Russianness”; this influence can most clearly be seen in Pushkin’s first, unfinished novel, *The Negro of Peter the Great*. In this semi-biographical tale, Pushkin explores the significance of Gannibal’s presence in eighteenth-century Russia by addressing such issues as marriage and social acceptance through the eyes of Ibrahim, the African protagonist. Modeled after his great-grandfather (with some artistic license taken on Pushkin’s part), Ibrahim falls in love with a Frenchwoman, Countess D—, but is too filled with self-doubt to pursue her: “Why should I endeavor to unite the fate of such a tender, beautiful creature to the miserable fate

---

\(^{11}\) Binyon, *Pushkin*, 5-6.


\(^{13}\) Gnammankou, “Pushkin Between Russia and Africa,” 211-229.
of a Negro, of a pitiable creature, scarce worthy of the name of man?”  

This theme of social isolation and its consequences is repeated in an encounter with Ibrahim’s (and Gannibal’s) patron, Peter the Great: “Listen, Ibrahim: you are a man alone in the world, without birth and kindred, a stranger to everybody, except myself [. . .] You must get settled while there is yet time, find support in new ties, become connected by marriage with the Russian nobility.”

Pushkin makes clear in the novel the intimate relationship between Peter the Great and Ibrahim, thus creating a “living link” between himself and the modernizer of all Russia.  

Despite this point of pride, the novel dwells mostly on the issues closest to Pushkin at the time. While writing this novel, Pushkin was thinking about marrying, and had dealt with critiques and comments about his African features his entire life. Consequently, *The Negro of Peter the Great* was cathartic for Pushkin—an exercise in overcoming his own perceived physical faults.

Pushkin’s pride in his ancestry was not, however, shared by all of his contemporaries; rather, some used his lineage to attack him personally. The most famous example of this is a letter to Pushkin written by Faddei Bulgarin, a Polish-Russian journal editor with whom Pushkin often butted heads. In the letter, Bulgarin recounts a false anecdote in which “a Mulatto began to claim that one of his ancestors was a Negro Prince.” He ends the letter by remarking: “Who would have thought then that a poet should claim this Negro. Vanity of vanities.” Pushkin rebutted the letter with one of his own, entitled “My Genealogy,” in which he lambasts Bulgarin but refrains from mentioning his ethnic origins: “[H]e [Bulgarin] cannot be praised for

---

16 Gnammankou, “Pushkin Between Russia and Africa,” 211-229.
17 Gnammankou, “Pushkin Between Russia and Africa,” 211-229.
responding to Russian advances by besmirching the sacred pages of our chronicles, by
denigrating the best of our citizens and, not content to take on his contemporaries, by scoffing at
the tombs of our ancestors.”21 Even Pushkin, proud as he was, chose not to defend the African
roots of Gannibal and himself. Instead, he defended the aristocratic name and legacy that
Gannibal had left behind in Russia, revealing his own hesitancy to fully acknowledge his African
blood in public.

Aside from written skirmishes, Pushkin also experienced racial discrimination on the
basis of his somewhat African appearance. In her diary, Dolly Khitrovo, the daughter of an
Austrian ambassador whom Pushkin met at a party, claimed that Pushkin “is a mixture of the
physiognomy of a monkey and a tiger, he is descended from an African race—there are still
some hints of it in his eye and there is something savage about his look.”22 Pushkin himself
would often draw self-portraits that looked more akin to encyclopedia drawings of orangutans
than to a human being.23 This self- and publicly-perceived savageness was reinforced by
popular literature such as Shakespeare’s famous play Othello, which was widely read among
Pushkin’s contemporaries. In the events leading up to and after his fatal duel with George
d’Anthès, they likened the author’s fate to that of the jealous moor’s of the title.24 He had
become little more than a character cast in a tragic play to his fellow aristocrats: the exotic
African placed in a world to which he did not, and had never, belonged.

Pushkin’s unique and irreplaceable position today as the patron saint of Russian literature
has helped to erase much of the general embarrassment over his African roots following his
death. Such embarrassment was evident under the Soviet Union, where the issue of Pushkin’s

22 Binyon, Pushkin, 298.
“blackness” was almost never addressed. Only in the occasion of African students studying in Russia or during other such politically opportune moments was Pushkin’s status as the only famous “Black Russian” openly displayed. Nevertheless, the unbelievable story of Abram Petrovich Gannibal survives as one of the most fascinating ethnic encounters in Russia’s long history. For an African slave to be taken in and raised by the Russian tsar himself is the rarest kind of luck; for this unlikely interaction to end up producing Russia’s greatest writer is, perhaps, a bit more like fate.

“Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.”¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower’s remarks at a conference on National Defense in 1957 reflected the philosophy behind his national security system: his dedication to preparation and proper planning. One of Eisenhower’s most regularly used, structured tools for proper planning was the National Security Council (NSC). The Council was an organization comprised of high-ranking members of government, chaired by the president, which was designed to provide the president with the information and coordination needed to shape intelligent policy. The Council itself was not created by Eisenhower, but was part of the National Security Act of 1947, along with the Central Intelligence Agency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.² The Council’s stated goal was “to provide for the establishment of integrated policies and procedures for the departments, agencies, and functions of the Government relating to the national security.”³ The National Security Act was flexible; it provided presidents with great discretion in operating the council.⁴ Eisenhower crafted the NSC for his needs. In the words of Eisenhower’s first Special Assistant for National Security, Robert

---

⁴ Section 101(D) states that: “The Council shall, from time to time, make such recommendations, and such other reports to the President as it deems appropriate or as the President may require,” in ibid., 298.
Cutler, “Eisenhower wished the council mechanism made over into a valuable tool for his constant use.”

Beginning with Fred Greenstein’s seminal *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, which studied Eisenhower’s leadership with a more critical eye, Eisenhower and his approach to governance have been reappraised. The NSC is a key example. Prior to the advent of Eisenhower revisionism, Eisenhower’s NSC was often criticized, beginning with a Congressional Commission initiated by Senator Henry Jackson in 1959. This study criticized the NSC for being too complex, a paper mill filled with vast numbers of pages of planning, all of which were, in the Jackson committee’s view, compromised to the point of uselessness by ironing out disagreement. Another major complaint was that the policy papers were useless in emergency situations, as the Planning Board took too long to study and prepare them. The NSC was seen as being far too structured to deal with rapidly developing, changing threats. In his presidential campaign in 1960, John F. Kennedy used this report to attack the “paper mill” of the NSC; he explained in a letter to Jackson that he wanted to “simplify the operations of the national security council.” The NSC’s bureaucratic nature was also attacked for preventing proper communication and cooperation among various departments. It was said that department representatives were isolated in a group where there was no effective back-and-forth but rather “agreement by exhaustion.” Eisenhower was also accused of using the NSC apparatus to deflect

---

6 Greenstein’s *Hidden Hand Presidency* does not deal with the NSC as such, but his work *How Presidents Test Reality*, coauthored with John Burke, goes deeper into National Security decisions. Phillip Henderson’s *Managing the Presidency* provides both background and contextual studies of Eisenhower’s NSC and the use he put it to. Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman’s *Waging Peace* offers a very good account of National Security operating policies. Bowie himself was a representative of the State Department on the Policy Planning Board of the NSC from 1953-1957.
7 Henry M. Jackson, introduction to *The National Security Council*, x.
criticism from himself.\textsuperscript{10} It is important to note, though, that these criticisms mainly came from people outside the system. Those on the inside stress that Eisenhower was the ultimate decider of issues, who demanded the representation of alternate points of view. Cutler explained that the Council was, for Eisenhower, “a vital mechanism to assure that all sides of an issue would be known by him before coming to his decision.”\textsuperscript{11} Cutler stressed that “the Council’s role is advisory. It makes recommendations to its statutory chairman, the President of the United States; it does not decide.”\textsuperscript{12}

The issue raised by these opposing viewpoints on the Council ultimately focused upon this question: was the NSC capable of flexibility, or was it a repressive organization that squashed debate? It appeared upon reappraisal that despite the NSC’s formal structure, it allowed a great deal of flexibility. The NSC provided a forum for multiple voices and multiple options, giving not only advice to the president, but enabling participants to know the president’s and each other’s viewpoints.\textsuperscript{13} Eisenhower did not envision the NSC as his only source of information or advice. Throughout his presidency, Eisenhower would establish such committees or groups as he felt necessary to handle a particular problem. These groups were independent of the NSC, but were capable of acting in cooperation, such as the Solarium Project which led to the “New Look” in national security policy. Eisenhower would also regularly engage in informal meetings with his subordinates, supplementing the formal procedures of his national security mechanisms. He used these informal means to such an extent that some scholars have even suggested that the NSC became essentially a façade during Eisenhower’s time in the White

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Cutler, \textit{No Time For Rest}, 366.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 295.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Henderson, \textit{Managing the Presidency}, 81.
\end{itemize}
House. Amy Zegart, of UCLA, notes that “Eisenhower made organizational choices that gave public preeminence to Cabinet-centered policy making [including forums such as the NSC] but also worked behind the scenes to presidentialize, personalize, and centralize the system,” suggesting that the token use of the NSC that would occur under Kennedy started with Eisenhower. 14 However, these informal means were used in conjunction with the NSC, not at the expense of the NSC. Creating an informal apparatus did not, simply by existing, undercut the importance of the Council to presidential decision-making. The National Security Council of Dwight D. Eisenhower was designed to provide the president with the best advice available, and therefore exercised an influential role in the Eisenhower White House. The discussions in the Council and the recommendations made, however, were part of a larger structure mixing formal and informal processes in determining national security policy.

Perhaps the best way to understand the NSC and Eisenhower’s use of it in conjunction with other avenues of advice is in specific examples. An especially important and relevant one is the decision that faced the Council in March and April of 1954, concerning the besieged French forces at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina. France’s war in Indochina was a situation Eisenhower had inherited from the Truman administration. The ultimate decision not to intervene, but to continue supporting elements in Vietnam and the other Indochinese states, would affect the U.S. for years to come. The decision came at a relatively early period in Eisenhower’s presidency, when the operation of the NSC and its machinery were relatively new since the various members were settling into their roles. Examination of the decisions regarding Dien Bien Phu thus provides insight into the eternal questions of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It also illuminates the early, formative stages of a body which played a key role in policy during the Eisenhower

administration years and how that body acted in concert with other elements of Eisenhower’s leadership.

**Part I**

Before grappling with a specific case, it is best to examine what Eisenhower’s NSC was intended to be, and who had a hand in making it that way. First, how was the Eisenhower NSC impacted by the prior administration? The first suggestions of an organization like the NSC appear in a report in 1945 to the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, from Ferdinand Eberstadt, a policy advisor working in the War Production Board. In the letter Eberstadt discusses, among other things, the need for a coordinating body. This suggestion would eventually gestate into the NSC in 1947. Under the Truman administration, the NSC was used on an occasional basis.15 Truman participated sporadically in the Council after its inception, attending eleven of the almost sixty meetings held before the outbreak of the Korean War. Initially, meetings were held every two weeks, but became more uneven as time went by. The Council also increased in size. Though Truman began to use the Council apparatus more once the Korean War broke out, it retained its role of being an adjutant to proceedings, rather than a place where policy was formulated.16 The NSC at this time lacked its own formal staff, but it did form an ancillary body in the Psychological Coordinating Board, to separate and discuss the large numbers of psychological operations proposed to be carried out against Cold War targets. Proposed in December of 1947, it began producing papers in September of 1948.17 When evaluating the Council, Eisenhower and his subordinates recognized some useful ideas. As

17 Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 51.
Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman noted in their study of Eisenhower’s system, “Eisenhower intended to modify and improve upon Truman’s foundation, not obliterate it.”\(^{18}\)

The Eisenhower National Security Council came from Eisenhower’s respect for the need of reliable intelligence and reliable processing of that intelligence in decision-making. As one NSC member explained, “An integral and in fact basic element in the formation of national security policy is the latest and best intelligence bearing on the substance of the policy to be determined.”\(^{19}\) Once the Eisenhower administration entered the White House, the Council took steps that resulted in the adoption of “uniform and customary procedure,” in which there were two to three hour meetings held most frequently on Thursday, with formal planning papers discussed; each of which had a financial appendices for any policy costs, an opening CIA brief given by CIA Director Allen Dulles, and minimum attendance for vigorous discussion.\(^{20}\) The National Security Act of 1947 put fixed membership at the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense.\(^{21}\) Eisenhower added the Director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, and regularly invited the Secretary of the Treasury and the Budget Director. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the CIA Director were also present as advisors, as were any officials who were needed for a particular order of business, such as the Attorney General or the Chairman of the Atomic energy commission.\(^{22}\) At the heart of this grouping was Eisenhower’s desire for information to be more available; he wanted the

\(^{18}\) Richard H. Immerman and Robert R. Bowie, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73. Bowie, it should be noted, was with the State Department during the time this paper is concerned with. As such, he appears as both an author and participant.


\(^{20}\) Cutler, *No Time For Rest*, 296-299.


information at his disposal and at the disposal of the people most directly related to carrying out national security.

The Eisenhower NSC did away with the Psychological Operations Board, and created two ancillary organizations, the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board. Also new was the position of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. The assistant determined the Council’s agenda, briefed the President, and supervised the operations of the Council and NSC staff, and coordinated the various people and departments involved. All the people involved in the NSC were, by Eisenhower’s logic, expanding their own knowledge and ability, and not just informing him. Eisenhower, “always insisted that government cannot function properly if anybody who’s in an important position is confined merely to his own . . . particular field of interest.” The agenda of the Council was determined by the Special Assistant.

Important for any understanding of Eisenhower’s NSC is his first Special Assistant for National Security, Robert Cutler, a banker from Boston who worked as a staff officer in World War II. According to Cutler’s successor, a Texas lawyer and businessman named Dillon Anderson, “The President’s concept of the National Security Council and the use he wanted to make of it was the work of Robert Cutler.” In an article published during Cutler’s tenure as special assistant, he was described by the qualities most apparently visible about him: an affable good nature and a sense of humor. However, insiders knew that he was, “a key figure in . . . the transforming of the National Security Council into the most important policy-making agency this

---


24 Dillon Anderson, interview with James Luter (Houston, 30-31 December 1969), 16, in Archive of Letters and Papers Relating to Dillon Anderson and his Long-Term Relationship with Eisenhower, Box 4, Folder 14, Special Collections, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA.
country has ever known.” Though erring in regards to the NSC as being a policy making agency, the magazine does properly describe Cutler’s importance in setting the Council’s agenda and his general unobtrusiveness in performing that role and remaining a neutral figure. “[Cutler is] extremely aware that his effectiveness depends upon suppressing any urge for personal power and remaining in the background.” Cutler himself would explain later that, “My job was to administer, to serve, to get things done, to be trusted,” but he had, “no independent status,” as he acted for the president in organizing the NSC and managing the various policymakers’ opinions without betraying his own personal thoughts. Cutler was to provide the essential staff work. Eisenhower, as Cutler noted, “was accustomed to good staff work.” Cutler knew well what his role was, as he had been instrumental in determining how the NSC would run at the beginning of Eisenhower’s administration.

In a meeting at the Commodore Hotel with his transition team on January 12 and 13, 1953, Eisenhower focused on national security as a key issue. At this meeting, Eisenhower announced Cutler as the Special Assistant for National Security and the point man in adjusting the NSC for Eisenhower’s purposes. Cutler had served as Eisenhower’s NSC expert during the campaign, as he had previously worked on the Psychological Study Board as its deputy and had been the assistant to James Forrestal while the latter had been the Secretary of Defense. Cutler began a sweeping look at Council operating procedures, meeting with, among others, George Marshall, Ferdinand Eberhardt, and the NSC Executive Secretary James Lay, who would be

---

26 Ibid., 79.
27 Cutler, No Time For Rest, 315.
28 Ibid., 300.
29 Bowie and Immerman, Waging Peace, 85-86.
asked to stay on. Based on the advice he received, especially from George Marshall, Cutler resolved that policy papers should clearly spell out alternatives and include disagreements among staffers, that the NSC would need a full time senior staff, that there should be a presidential presence whenever possible, and there needed to be a member of the White House to run herd on the various departments, which would be his role as Special Assistant. With these ideas in mind, Cutler would oversee the creation of the Planning Board and the Operations Control Board.

The Planning Board would play a vital role in the operation of the Council, as it was the place of the preparatory work. What would be discussed at Council meetings was determined by the Planning Board. As they drafted policy papers, they were not expected to iron over their disagreements, but rather include dissenting opinions in the paper to the Council. In attendance would be Cutler as chairperson, a CIA deputy director, a representative of the Joint Chiefs, and whatever representatives of whichever department had interest or expertise pertaining to a specific issue. The Joint Chiefs’ representative was in a curious position. Cutler explained that, “The Chiefs . . . are like the College of Cardinals. They are a different body than anything else in the world.” He continued that, as a matter of protocol, “[They] cannot formally give an opinion on a paper until the paper is in final, formal form and has been circulated to the members. We often know very clearly . . . how the Chiefs will react . . . but we do not get it in writing until they see the paper has been sent to the Council members.” Despite any protocol or

30 Rothkopf, Running the World, 66.
31 Bowie and Immerman, Waging Peace, 86-88.
33 Cutler, Intelligence as Foundation for Policy, 67; Henderson, Managing the Presidency 77.
34 Robert Cutler, “Selected Testimony: The National Security under President Eisenhower,” in Jackson, The National Security Council, 115. While Cutler does not explain why this is the case in his testimony, rather presenting it as a fact of life, it would be sensible as a means of obtaining a variety of opinion. If the Joint Chiefs
departmental difficulties, all those who attended were described by Cutler as being “highly qualified” representatives who had direct access to the head of whichever agency or department they represented. This was a change from previous practice, where without the Planning Board, the Council members themselves advocated policies. Eisenhower explained that, “You council members . . . simply do not have enough time to do what needs to be done in thinking out the best decisions regarding the national security . . . Someone must therefore do much of this thinking for you.” In addition to the Planning Board’s effect on the Council members themselves, it also provided interaction for the different department members. Cutler explained that, “More important than what is planned is that the planners become accustomed to working together on hard problems, enabling them . . . to arrive more surely at a reasonable plan of policy.”

The plans formulated by the Planning Board would go up what would be described as “Policy Hill,” with Eisenhower and the NSC at the top, where the proposals were discussed, modified, or combined. These papers required advanced planning, with typically two or three sessions used to work up a draft. The Planning Board met with greater frequency than did the NSC proper; rather than one meeting a week, they met three times a week during Eisenhower’s first term and two times a week in the second. Cutler explained that for his first three-and-a-half year stint, he was the chair of some 504 Planning Board sessions. This process was geared more toward long-range policy planning. Taking such time to iron out policy statements could be

gave their opinion before the final draft was created, it could impact the ultimate independent conclusions upon which the Chiefs would comment later.

35 Cutler, No Time For Rest, 296
37 Cutler, No Time for Rest, 297.
38 Prados, Keepers of the Keys, 63.
40 Ibid., 312-313.
cumbersome. However, the Planning Board did have the ability to work intensively when needed. According to Cutler, for an unidentified Asian crisis, the Planning Board met three successive days, working a total of twenty-five hours to come up with a new draft.\textsuperscript{41} After chairing the Board and coordinating the process, Cutler would then be charged with the duty of presenting the papers to the council and emphasizing any splits that had occurred during the drafting process.\textsuperscript{42}

With the Planning Board controlling input into the Council, the Operations Control Board handled the results of Council meetings. It was formed September 2, 1953, both to coordinate the activities of the departments involved in NSC decisions and to report on any progress. It replaced the old Psychological Operations Board, to provide coordination for more than just psychological operations.\textsuperscript{43} While a statutory body, it was not officially part of the NSC system until an executive order February 25, 1957. Though it had formal meetings, most of the business was conducted over luncheons with representatives of the various agencies involved. It was a curious mix of formal and informal arrangements. It never quite lived up to what Eisenhower and Cutler hoped it would be, and was continuously adjusted throughout the administration. The Planning Board and OCB were both supplemented by the NSC support staff, was not made up of appointees but rather career individuals who helped preserve what historian Phillip Henderson, in his study of Eisenhower’s leadership, identified as “institutional memory,” the maintenance of continuity among various administrations. In explaining how the council worked, Cutler identified the ideal way in which these bodies interacted to advise the president. For example,

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 312. Unfortunately, Cutler did not disclose many details in his memoir about actual NSC meetings or situations. Identifying the situation he referred to as being in Southeast Asia sometime during the Eisenhower administration is as specific as he ever is. It is possible that he refers to Dien Bien Phu, as it was the most significant South Asian event during his first term as Special Assistant. However, there is no way to say for certain.
\textsuperscript{42} Bowie and Immerman, \textit{Waging Peace}, 93.
\textsuperscript{43} Henderson, \textit{Managing the Presidency}, 86-88. Prados notes that the lunches saw the most secret business, as no minutes or formal records were kept of the proceedings, \textit{Keepers of the Keys}, 73.
discussions in regards to circumstances in a theoretical country Cutler called “Ruritania” would be scheduled months in advance of the NSC meeting addressing the problem. There would be three to five sessions devoted to that item, with factual and analytical statements prepared. A draft would be written, torn apart, and continuously rewritten. Cutler explained that they sought agreement on the correctness of facts, while there would be divergent opinions in analysis. The Council members would receive the Planning Board document ten days ahead of time, and the Joint Chiefs would be asked their opinions.44 This process reinforced the fact that the NSC machinery worked best in terms of long-range planning on situations that would be fairly static; it was not a perfect system. Cutler himself acknowledged this: “it is certainly true that human beings are fallible and that the instruments which they create are always susceptible of improvement. The mechanism which I have described, and is in operation, can and will be improved as time goes on.”45

While Robert Cutler reformed and refined the machinery of the National Security Council, it was accepted and implemented because it reflected how Eisenhower felt about proper advisory systems. “There was no doubt,” Dillon Anderson explained, “who was running the show.”46 Eisenhower’s influence could be seen in the orderly, formal structures of the system. “No American president believed more strongly in an orderly system for strategic planning and policy making, and that a well-conceived organization was essential for such a system.”47 Many noted that no president came into the White House with more experience in efficiently running large bureaucratic bodies than Dwight D. Eisenhower. “Eisenhower knew how to run a staff and

make it work to his liking.”48 Phillip Henderson, however, made a key distinction that the National Security Council was not organized along precisely military lines.49 The key was that Eisenhower learned the value of organization and how to work with subordinates during his years with the military, but this did not translate directly to the civilian world. He recognized that his cabinet and staff were mostly civilians. He set up clear lines of authority on staff matters to be sure, but was not rigid in methods of receiving advice. Thomas Preston, in his study of presidential leadership methods, noted that “although characterized by elaborate formal structures, Eisenhower’s advisory system incorporated an unusual mix of formal and informal channels of advice.”50 From his experience with the politics of high command, he was more than able to use his informal channels with statesmen as well as soldiers.

The person he most communicated with in both formal and informal settings was John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State. The President’s Staff Secretary, General Andy Goodpaster, reported that Eisenhower told him that, “[he] knew the inside of Foster Dulles’ mind the way he knew the inside of his own mind.”51 Eisenhower himself reported that he would sometimes talk to Dulles as many as eight to ten times a day on the phone, depending upon what was happening in the world, and at the end of the day Eisenhower and Dulles would occasionally meet for drinks and discuss business and personal subjects.52 However, it was not only Dulles who had the ability to communicate so directly with the President. Eisenhower’s Chief of Staff, Sherman Adams, reported that Eisenhower had a policy of being open to any “reasonable” member of the

48 Rothkopf, Running the World, 65.
49 Henderson, Managing the Presidency, 17-21.
50 Preston, The President and His Inner Circle, 67.
52 Eisenhower, Princeton interview, 28. Unfortunately, no memos or records of these meetings were regularly kept, though Dulles or Eisenhower would occasionally mention in the diaries what was said.
executive as long as he was not currently occupied, though Adams did acknowledge that only Dulles regularly took Eisenhower up on the offer.\textsuperscript{53} This personal communication was aided by Eisenhower’s interpersonal skills. He was very approachable, helping inspire great loyalty in his staffers. George Kennan would note that, “Eisenhower was . . . charming and disarming . . . he was a very good talker,” who could, “put you off[guard] with his charm.”\textsuperscript{54} Dillon Anderson reported that Eisenhower was, “without trying to do so” an extremely charismatic person.\textsuperscript{55} He placed a great deal of trust in his individual staff members to do their jobs. The only frustrations that he reportedly had with major cabinet officials occurred when an official did not act with the independence he expected, notably in the case of the Secretary of Defense, Charles Wilson. Arthur Radford, the Joint Chiefs Chairman, explained, “the president was annoyed with Mr. Wilson’s approach to some things . . . He would give you the impression he was beating around the bush. The President was used to men who made a very direct answer.” Adams observed that that, “Mr. Wilson . . . discombobulated the President by his detailed discussions about his Department [issues] . . . [That Eisenhower] thought he ought to have taken a stand on himself-[and] not bothered him about it.”\textsuperscript{56} This structure that Eisenhower built up, mixing the formal and the informal, was in its early days in January of 1954. At this time, the crisis at Dien Bien Phu began to develop a long-simmering situation in Indochina into a new hot spot in the Cold War.

\textbf{Part II}

\textsuperscript{55} Anderson, Luter interview, 5.
In January of 1954, France had been fighting for over eight years in Indochina, having reentered the nation following World War II in late October of 1945. The French fought the communist Vietminh. By 1950, President Truman and his policy advisors agreed that Indochina was the key to holding Southeast Asia. From 1950-52, the U.S. spent fifty million dollars in aid to the French, and in the fiscal year of 1953, one third of France’s war costs were paid for by the United States. Relations were strained as the United States demanded that the French decolonize. The French insisted that Indochina at least be kept in the French Union, and they kept delaying independence for the Associated States of Indochina, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The military support to the French continued under Eisenhower, and in mid-1953, Henri Navarre was appointed to the command of French forces in Vietnam. His plan was to enlist broader support among the indigenous population while marshalling French forces for a 1955 assault. On November 20, 1953, Navarre launched Operation Castor and took control of the air strip of an administrative area called Dien Bien Phu, located in a valley in northern Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Eisenhower had put together a group to adjust U.S. Security Policy. Called the Solarium Project, its members produced what would be known as NSC 162/2, a plan which became known as the New Look. It reduced conventional forces in favor of massive retaliatory capabilities. NSC 162/2 would contain an interesting note on Indochina: “certain other countries, such as Indo-China . . . are of such strategic importance to the United States that an attack on

---

them probably would compel the United States to react with military force either locally at the
point of attack or generally against the military power of the aggressor.”60 There were U.S.
advisors in Indochina at this time. Lt. General John W. O’Daniel and his staff had returned to
Vietnam after a visit the previous summer. His conclusion, reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
was that “real military progress in implementation of the ‘Navarre Plan’ is evident . . . prospects
for victory appear increasingly encouraging.”61 Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff, declared in an address given December 2, 1953 that there was hope for victory in
Indochina.62 Not all readers were happy with O’Daniel’s report. Army Chief of Staff Matthew
Ridgway, while not concerned about Dien Bien Phu at the time, found O’Daniel to be overly-
optimistic.63 Eisenhower himself was disgusted with the situation at Dien Bien Phu. “As a
soldier,” he would explain, “I was horror stricken. I just said, ‘my goodness, you don’t pen
troops in a fortress, and all history shows that they are just going to be cut to pieces.’”64 By
January of 1954, the French were in Dien Bien Phu, their opponents, the Vietminh, around them,
and the United States had invested a substantial amount of money to save the “key” in Southeast
Asia.

Early in January, the 179th meeting of the National Security Council was held, which
discussed a policy paper prepared on Indochina, NSC 177 and its Special Annex, which
concerned intervention possibilities. At the time, the military situation remained steady. The
French were only “somewhat disturbed” about Dien Bien Phu. Allen Dulles, director of the CIA,
put forth the proposition that the loss of Dien Bien Phu would not be a large military victory for

---

62 Ibid., 141
63 Ibid., 150
64 Eisenhower, Princeton interview, 25.
the Vietminh, but a political one.\textsuperscript{65} Richard Nixon’s contribution to the meeting were mainly political, as he warned that the French intended to keep the Vietnamese in the French Union, while the Vietnamese desired independence, noting that, “the essence of the problem is political.”\textsuperscript{66} Radford established his position early, warning that all that could be done to prevent defeat at Dien Bien Phu should be done, noting that as commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet he had drawn up plans to aid the French with air power.\textsuperscript{67} When talk began drifting over to combat operations, Cutler broke in with the note that nothing in NSC 177 addressed combat unless the Chinese became involved.

The meeting demonstrated three significant characteristics of the NSC. First, Cutler steered the conversation to specifically refer to papers discussed, and not expand beyond them. Eisenhower, however, desired to continue discussion. He floated the idea of giving the French a group of airmen without U.S. insignia. This shows both how the formal structure of the NSC could focus on a particular subject while Eisenhower could work beyond that structure on a point he felt particularly important.\textsuperscript{68} A second characteristic revealed in the 179\textsuperscript{th} meeting was Eisenhower’s active contribution. While he would later discuss airmen, he first stated that, in regards to intervention with ground troops, “I can not tell you . . . how bitterly opposed I am to such a course of action. This war in Indochina would absorb our troops by divisions!”\textsuperscript{69} In making this statement after preliminary remarks by Radford, Eisenhower demonstrated what

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item[65] Memorandum of Discussion of the 179\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the NSC, Friday, 8 January 1954, \textit{FRUS, 1952-1954}, vol. 13, pt.1, 947-948
  \item[67] Ibid., 953.
  \item[68] Ibid., 952-53.
  \item[69] Ibid., 949. Anderson claims that Eisenhower’s discussions of airmen later with this statement demonstrate ambivalence, in \textit{Trapped by Success}, 24, yet Eisenhower as a commander would and did very clearly distinguish between Ground and Air forces.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Greenstein and Burke call his, “persistent impulse to think in terms of consequences.” Finally, the meeting demonstrated the long-term process of the Council, as no decisions were ultimately reached on NSC-177. The Special Annex, considered very sensitive, was ordered destroyed.

The next week, discussion continued in regards to the French in Indochina and Dien Bien Phu. In discussing NSC-177, the council discussed its language; Dulles objected to a point in the paper positing that the loss of Indochina would severely damage France’s world position. He stressed that the NSC should only be concerned with the U.S world position. Cutler agreed to make the change, and NSC 177 became NSC 5405 and was officially promulgated to the OCB. The planning paper opened with a clear premise: “communist domination, by whatever means, of all of Southeast Asia would seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the long term, United States security interests,” noting that the primary threat came from internal subversion. It called for aggressive military, political, and psychological operations to be carried out against the Vietminh, and for the further development of indigenous armed forces that would eventually be capable of maintaining internal security. It also suggested “reiterating” to the French that, “in the absence of marked improvement in the military situation there is no basis for negotiation with any prospect for acceptable terms.” This referred to fears the France would accept a cease-fire. In the event of Chinese intervention, the paper suggested use of naval and air forces, with land forces to be considered when a crisis occurred, providing an official NSC view on action for Indochina. The paper was not, however, without some

---

72 Memorandum of Discussion at the 180th Meeting of the NSC, Thursday, 14 January 1954, ibid., 962-963.
73 Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary: NSC 5405, 16 January 1954, ibid., 971.
74 Ibid., 974.
75 Ibid., 975.
76 Ibid., 975-976.
problems. NSC 5405 had not made provisions for the possibility of the French and Indochinese forces failing to provide infantry. It advised unilateral action against targets in China if China intervened, but had no recommendations or options in terms of the ground conflict in which the United States might need to engage.

NSC 5405 included advice to continue attempts to encourage the French to follow U.S. advice, while the French asked for more supplies. The U.S. position, despite its supplier-status, was weak, “because of the overriding importance given by Washington to holding the Communist line in Indochina, the French, in being able to threaten to withdraw, possessed an important instrument of blackmail.”77 As long as the United States saw both a vital need to hold Indochina and a need to keep U.S. troops out of that area, the French could ask for a great deal of material aid. While mulling over the situation, Eisenhower on January 18 privately met with a group of men who would become his special committee for Indochina. He had been unhappy with the Planning Board’s effort, for to him it lacked clear action and alternatives.78 The creation of ad hoc groups for a specific topic was a means Eisenhower had used before, such as when the New Look was formulated. Cutler, after Eisenhower left office, explained that ad hoc groups were valuable “for the introduction of fresh ideas and points of view other than those generated within the government.”79 The group selected (Radford, Allen Dulles, Undersecretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roger Keyes, and C.D. Jackson, a White House advisor) was able to meet outside the NSC apparatus to bring in fresh ideas. They met first to discuss strategy and the additional aid the French requested: twenty-two B-26 bombers

78 Greenstein and Burke, How President’s Test Reality, 36-37.
and 400 airmen. When Keyes questioned if mechanics would be tantamount to ground forces, Smith and Radford agreed that it would not be. Both affirmed that they did not support ground forces. Radford felt only air intervention would be needed.

The Indochina Committee recommended to the president that twenty-two B-26s be given, along with 200 U.S. Air Mechanics through the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). Part of their instructions was that they did not have to use the OCB to carry out their recommendations, which amounted to telling them not to use the OCB. The OCB as this point, was, after all, relatively new, only having been formed in September and not yet incorporated in the NSC structure. Radford’s recommendations were made despite his lack of faith in the French. He would later explain that, “most of [The French Commanders] . . . did not impress me. . . . I had no confidence in French military planning or military execution.” While that statement was made years after Dien Bien Phu, Radford was worried early on about a French defeat, indicating at least a partial worry about French reliability. Yet, large amounts of aid continued to flow into Indochina. Eisenhower agreed with the recommendations, with the only changes being that the 200 MAAG mechanics be rotated out by June 15, 1954 at the latest. This committee encapsulated Eisenhower’s ability to supplement the National Security Council if he felt it had not given him the number of options he wanted. The Special Committee grappled directly with keeping the French in Vietnam and strengthening them. When dissatisfied with his machinery,

---

81 Memorandum for the Record, Meeting of President’s Special Committee on Indochina by C.H. Bonesteel, 29 January 1954, 30 January 1954, in Gravel, ed., Pentagon Papers, p.444
82 Ibid., 446.
83 Radford, Princeton interview, 47.
he “expanded the advisory process by ordering the creation of a new means of study and deliberation.”

The situation at Dien Bien Phu itself remained fairly stable going into February. John Foster Dulles was preparing to go to Berlin to take part in a conference that would, among other things, determine if Indochina would be on the agenda for the Geneva Conference scheduled to begin at the end of April. Discussion in February focused on Indochina as a whole, and ways to increase the growth of indigenous forces. Eisenhower noted that a religious issue could unite people, with a Buddhist leader providing an anti-communist rallying point. Discussion continued, with Nixon noting the Bao Dai, the emperor of Vietnam, did not fit the bill for an inspirational leader. Dulles noted that there were 1.5 million Roman Catholics in Vietnam who might be enlisted in the struggle. In the end, it was decided that more, and hopefully better, officers of the United States Information Service be sent to Vietnam. Eisenhower was, in the context of discussion in the NSC, more than willing to suggest new and unconventional ideas in the Council, ideas which often did not lead to a specific action. Nixon noted that, “[Eisenhower] could be very enthusiastic about half-baked ideas in the discussion stage, but when it came to making a final decision, he was the coldest, most unemotional man in the world.” While still keeping in mind the spiritual side of the conflict, noting in a later meeting that, “the mood of discouragement [in Vietnam] came from the evident lack of a spiritual force among the French

---

85 Greenstein and Burke, *How President’s Test Reality*, 62.
86 It was pointed out to Eisenhower that, unfortunately, Buddha was a pacifist.
and the Vietnamese, Eisenhower kept his decisions realistic, sending more propaganda officers rather than trying to start a spiritual revolution.\textsuperscript{89}

In February, the main focus of the Eisenhower administration in foreign affairs was not chiefly Indochina, but rather Berlin. The administration was worried that the conference would put Indochina on the agenda, and was also concerned any attempt to prevent placing Indochina on the agenda would result in a French backlash which would threaten the proposed European Defense Community Treaty; the U.S. greatly desired support for this treaty. After having invested so much into Indochina, the U.S felt betrayed when Indochina was placed on the agenda.\textsuperscript{90} With a developing situation depending upon adaptable diplomacy, Eisenhower coordinated with John Foster Dulles abroad. Dulles warned that Indochina was interwoven with the EDC. He opined that, “this political exertion on our part against [the] conference carries moral obligation to continue to sustain military effort,” because if the talks were not held and the U.S. did not provide aid, the negative effect on Franco-American relations would sink the EDC.\textsuperscript{91} Upon returning from Europe and reporting to the NSC, Dulles explained that the French would not press hard at the Conference Table unless there was a “substantial military disaster.”\textsuperscript{92}

The Special Committee for Indochina made another report at the beginning of March., which urged the continued strengthening of indigenous forces, the recruitment of aid from foreign countries, the strengthening the French Foreign Legion, the augmentation of the MAAG,

\textsuperscript{89} Memorandum of Discussion at the 184\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the NSC, Thursday, 11 February 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol. 13, pt. 1, 1038.


\textsuperscript{92} Memorandum of Discussion at the 186\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council, Friday, 26 February 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol.13, pt.1, 1080-81.
and psychological warfare operations. If that plan failed, the committee recommended considering direct military intervention.\textsuperscript{93} While Eisenhower would have been considering this advice, the NSC was also focused on Indochina, with Dien Bien Phu relatively secure. Harold Stassen, director of the Foreign Operations Administration, reported at the 187\textsuperscript{th} NSC meeting that, after visiting Vietnam, he “had a strong feeling that the military situation was a great deal better than we had imagined,” and that the French position was so strong they hoped to be attacked.\textsuperscript{94} While not mentioning any reservations in the Council meeting, Eisenhower’s record with regards to Indochina action would suggest that he was not particularly optimistic. He had made his general position clear in January, with his warning that forces would be swallowed in the Vietnamese jungles. After his presidency, Eisenhower explained that he felt from the beginning that the French plan was “just silly.”\textsuperscript{95} To this point, the NSC had not played a decisive role in determining policy in regards to Indochina. Radford and the committee, along with Dulles in Europe, counseled Eisenhower independent of the Council. The situation had not been an emergency one yet, either. That would change, as on the afternoon of March 13, the assault on Dien Bien Phu finally began.

Part III

Initially, the role of the NSC remained limited. On March 18 it was reported that the situation at Dien Bien Phu was relatively steady, with intelligence estimates giving the French a 50-50 chance of holding Dien Bien Phu. No action was ultimately decided, and the Planning Board was not tasked with drawing up any plans for the situation.\textsuperscript{96} The next meeting, however,

\textsuperscript{93} Report by the President’s Special Committee on Indochina, 2 March 1954, ibid., 1110-1116.
\textsuperscript{94} Memorandum of Discussion at the 187\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the NSC, Thursday, March 4, 1954, ibid., 1093.
\textsuperscript{95} Eisenhower, Princeton interview, 26.
\textsuperscript{96} Memorandum of Discussion at the 189\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, March 18, 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol.13, pt.1, 1132-33.
carried greater significance. The JCS had urged the council to examine the question of U.S. commitment in a report to the Council, which prompted Eisenhower to order Cutler to examine the situation with the Planning Board; Eisenhower stated explicitly that he wanted options including ground forces. Allen Dulles noted that the situation had improved for the French somewhat, though noting that the French could not support Dien Bien Phu because they did not control the roads in the surrounding countryside, or anywhere near the area. This led Eisenhower to comment, “if the point had been reached when the French forces could be moved only by air, it seemed sufficient indication that the population of Vietnam did not wish to be free from Communist domination.”97 However, he later observed that, “The collapse of Indochina would produce a chain reaction which would result in the fall of Southeast Asia to the communists,”98 indicating his belief in the domino effect of one country’s fall to communism taking others with it. With these two frames of action in mind, the Planning Board was directed to look also at both unilateral and multilateral reaction. Another worry was the reaction of China to intervention. When Charles Wilson raised the question, Cutler turned the Council’s attention back to NSC 5405, and its recommendation of U.S. strikes against China in the event of Chinese intervention. The NSC calm observance during the March 18th meeting had been replaced in the March 25th meeting with an actively probing group. The change between the two meetings had not been the result of any change in the battle at Dien Bien Phu, however. The Council was deeply affected in the time between the two meetings by the arrival of the French Chief of Staff, Paul Ely, who accented the graveness of the situation.

Ely arrived in Washington in late March, and on the night of the 20th he dined at Radford’s home, along with General Jean Etienne Valluy, the head of the French Mission to the

97 Memorandum of Discussion at the 190th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, March 25, 1954, ibid., 1164.
98 Ibid., 1167-1168
United States. Also present were Richard Nixon, Allen Dulles, Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway, and Douglas MacArthur II. They discussed the situation at Dien Bien Phu, during which time Ely confessed that the loss of Dien Bien Phu, while not a military disaster, would wreck French morale. He indicated that the major French problem was lack of combat aircraft. Ely requested forty more B-26s, along with 800 G-12 Type parachutes to deliver supplies to the isolated fortress. 

Radford later expressed some frustration at the French desire for more parachutes, believing that the way the French employed them was part of a “terribly inefficient military operation.” The memo which was drawn up by Radford’s secretary reported that the meeting ended after a short discussion following the French request of supplies. One of the participants, however, recorded events slightly differently. General Ridgway drafted a memo in which, at the end of the meeting, Radford wanted to confirm with Ely that, “what you really need them for success is more air power.” Ridgway recorded that he responded immediately, stating, “the experience of Korea, where we had complete domination of the air and a far more powerful air force afforded no basis for thinking that some additional air power was going to bring decisive results on the ground.”

Lacking other accounts of the meeting, it is impossible to know with any certainty how the actual meeting ended. The fact that Radford’s secretary did not record this could simply indicate that it was considered immaterial. Whatever was actually said, the fact that Ridgway deemed it important enough to record indicates the early disagreement that would emerge among the Joint Chiefs and their Chairman. The incident also indicates that Radford desired intervention and that the French may have been aware of it. In a meeting of the Joint Chiefs on March 26,

---

99 Memorandum for the Record by Captain G.W Anderson, USN, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford): Conversations with General Paul Ely, 21 March 1954, ibid., 1138-40.
100 Radford, Princeton interview, 52.
101 Memorandum of Conversation at Home of Adm. Radford, evening of 20 March, 22 March 1954, Matthew Ridgway Papers, Box 78, Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.
Radford noted that Ely’s report had made him pessimistic and increased his urgency for intervention. In hindsight at least, he also realized it would not mean one quick strike, but a more committed U.S. position, explaining that, “we would have been in the war, and it would have been the beginning of a series of actions.”

Ely’s visit, in addition to strengthening Radford’s view that United States intervention was required to save the situation in Indochina, became the root of a misunderstanding that would deeply affect the situation. In later years, Radford was careful to note that there had been a miscommunication between him and Ely, one which he stressed was not his fault. “I had discussed with Ely, and I’m sure I told him that I thought we could do a certain thing. When I talked to him he understood, or should have understood - and I think he did - that this was a discussion of possibilities.” Ely came out of their meetings with a surer feeling for U.S. aid. Some versions even have Radford offering the French the use of nuclear weapons as part of a conventional arsenal. Radford had in the past urged the use of atomic weapons against China. Radford himself denied recommending any specific action, but noted, “If we had used atomic weapons we probably would have been successful. We had atomic weapons we could have used.” MacArthur informed Dulles in April that Radford learned from a Pentagon study group that three tactical nuclear weapons could smash the Vietminh effort at Dien Bien Phu. Radford apparently wished to ask for French permission to use nuclear ordinance in Indochina if

---

103 Ibid.
104 Billings-Yun, Decision Against War, 35.
the U.S. intervened. MacArthur judged this as very dangerous.\textsuperscript{107} The matter was dropped. In a March 22, Ely, Nixon, and Radford discussed the details of a possible operation, wherein hundreds of American aircraft would attack Vietminh positions. Ely later claimed that Radford was enthusiastic about the plan and, “intimated that he had Eisenhower’s support.”\textsuperscript{108} Radford claimed that he emphasized that there would need to be governmental approval. It is possible that neither man was being disingenuous; misunderstandings may have arisen due to language difficulties as they had no interpreter.\textsuperscript{109} Whatever the case, there was no agreement. The French were confident, however, that if they asked, the Americans would respond favorably. They called the Operation \textit{Vatour} (Vulture) and included it in their planning.\textsuperscript{110}

The rest of the Joint Chiefs, meanwhile, did not agree with Radford in regards to intervention and, in the case of Ridgway, the nature of the JCS apparatus itself. Some of the disagreement was relatively minor. For example, Radford suggested in a meeting with Ely that C-119 Cargo Planes be used to drop napalm on enemy positions.\textsuperscript{111} However, the Commander of the Far East Air Force (COMFEAF), recommended earlier that they not be used for that purpose, stating that “aircraft loaned to the French . . . are primarily for airlift purposes. The use of these same aircraft for combat purposes might well generate a requirement for additional aircraft which FEAF would like to avoid if possible.”\textsuperscript{112} Radford called the Chiefs together to ask whether they should recommend to the President and the NSC that the United States should

\textsuperscript{107} Memorandum by the Counselor (MacArthur) to the Secretary of State, 7 April 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol.13, pt.1, 1271.
\textsuperscript{108} Immerman and Herring, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” 236.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 236.
\textsuperscript{112} COMFEAF, Tokyo, to Chief MAAG, Saigon, 19 March 1954. Nathan Twinning Papers, Box 99, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Excerpts of files are courtesy of Daun Van Ee.
intervene through an airstrike. Radford himself recommended this action, but the rest of the Joint Chiefs did not.\footnote{Radford to Wilson, 31 March 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol.13, pt.1, 1198-1199.} All sent back reactions that were essentially negative. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Robert Carney, was the most ambiguous, stating that Indochina should be saved if possible, but he was not prepared to say the strike would be decisive. Nathan Twining, the Air Force Chief, gave his answer as a qualified “yes,” dependent on whether or not the French allowed for a U.S. command of Air Forces under a French Theater Commander, a greater role in training the indigenous forces for the U.S, and true Vietnamese sovereignty first. Given that Twining’s conditions were extremely unlikely to have been met, he was essentially a “no.”\footnote{Memorandum by the Chief of Naval Operations (Carney), 2 April 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-1954}, vol.13, pt.1 1222; Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force (Twining) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford), 2 April 1954, ibid., 1222} Lemuel Shepherd, commandant of the Marine Corps, was a clear “no,” stating that “Air intervention in the current fighting in Indochina would be an unprofitable adventure,” that would not turn the tide of the battle, nor would it contribute to French victory in Indochina elsewhere, nor would it deter communists. The United States would be in a situation where it would have to admit failure or use ground forces, both of which were, to Shepherd, unacceptable.\footnote{Memorandum by the Commandant of the United States marine Corps (Shepherd), 2 April 1954, ibid., 1223} Ridgway was the most strident “no.” He questioned whether it was even proper for Radford to put the question to them. The Joint Chiefs were, after all, not even supposed to comment on policy to the NSC until formal drafts went through the Planning Board. To go to the president preemptively to create policy was questionable. Ridgway noted that the issue “was clearly outside the proper scope of authority of the JCS. This body was neither charged with formulating foreign policy, nor of advocating it, unless its advice was specifically sought by the president, or the Secretary
of Defense. To do otherwise,” Ridgway warned, “would be to involve the JCS inevitably in politics.”

Possibly as a result of his regular interaction with the NCS, Radford had no difficulty recommending what he believed was an urgently needed course of action. He felt that Ridgway was a good field commander, but depended too much on his staff, later claiming that, “he wasn’t an independent thinker.” Ridgway, beyond his problems with the propriety of the request, was deeply opposed to a strike at Dien Bien Phu on military grounds. He made his feelings known in his memoranda. The disagreement would leave a strong enough impression on Ridgway that when he retired, his letter to Wilson clearly referenced Dien Bien Phu and Radford’s request for support in advising intervention. With regard to recommending action to the president and NSC when unsolicited, Ridgway said that “I have not been convinced that this is a proper role for a military leader.” He continued that, strategically speaking:

I am opposed to the overemphasis of any military force where dependence on that force exceeds its capabilities. . . . The army has no wish to scrap its previous experience in favor of unproven doctrine, or in order to accommodate enthusiastic theorists having little or no responsibility for the consequences of following the courses of action they advocate . . . Nothing currently available . . . reduces the essentiality of mobile, powerful ground forces, the only forces which can seize the enemies’ land and the people living thereon, and exercise control over both.

The Joint Chiefs were not the only military men who made their views known. Other military officers expressed clear views against intervention. For example, Admiral A.C Davis, Director of the Office of Military Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, explained that, “The U.S

---

116 Memorandum by Chief of Staff, United States Army (Ridgway), 2 April 1954, ibid., 1220.
119 Ibid., p. 10
should not be self-duped into believing the possibility of partial involvement such as ‘naval and air units only.’ One cannot go over Niagara falls in a barrel only slightly. . . . It is difficult to understand how involvement of ground forces could be avoided.”\(^{120}\) Radford continued to advocate intervention.

Dulles was much more ambivalent about intervention, and less willing to express his opinion to foreign representatives than Radford was. He met with Radford and Ely in his office on March 23, the main topic of conversation was U.S. reaction to potential Chinese intervention. In his memorandum of the meeting for the President, Dulles proffered the view that “if the United States sent its flag and its own military establishment-land, sea, or air- into the Indochina war, then the prestige of the United States would be engaged to the point where we would want to have a success.”\(^{121}\) With such a complicated question, Dulles put off answering Ely until he could consult with the President, demonstrating a difference between him and Radford; Radford’s desire to intervene was apparently communicated to Ely.

Dulles would also utilize NSC resources. The same day he met with Ely, he received a report from Robert Bowie on the extent of Chinese intervention, who were providing supplies of ammunition and cannon, and 2,000 Chinese soldiers manning artillery and anti-aircraft pieces.\(^{122}\) Enclosed with Bowie’s letter was a letter from Charles Stelle, also of the Policy Planning Board, warning that if the Tonkin Delta fell, Communist forces would have a clear way into Southern Indochina and Thailand, warning that, “countries in the Far East, South Asia, and elsewhere in the world would be encouraged to adopt policies of accommodation to communist pressures and

---

\(^{120}\) Quoted in Gravel, ed., *The Pentagon Papers*, vol. I, p. 89.
\(^{121}\) Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President, 23 March 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol.13, pt.1, 1143.
\(^{122}\) Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 23 March 1954, ibid., 1145-1146.
Dulles would use these materials in a speech for the Press Club, warning of the 2,000 communist Chinese Bowie mentioned and the danger to the “entire Western Pacific area,” echoing Stelle’s sentiments. Dulles, like Eisenhower, was in the loop of the NSC. He discussed with Eisenhower the situation the day after receiving the reports from Bowie and Stelle. At this meeting between him and Dulles, Eisenhower expressed his own opinion on the situation. Dulles reported that

The President said that he agreed basically that we should not get involved in fighting in Indochina unless there were political preconditions necessary for a successful outcome. He did not, however, wholly exclude the possibility of a single strike, if it were almost certain this would produce decisive results.

In consultation with Dulles, but after receiving NSC information, Eisenhower had decided that wholesale intervention would probably not go forward unilaterally. This was in keeping with his desire to avoid combat troops in the jungles of Vietnam. The NSC was used as it was supposed to be used: a tool for gathering options and information, along with consultation with men like Dulles. Nixon would note later that, in meetings with the NSC, the Cabinet, or congressional leaders, Eisenhower would “always go back to his office to reflect on what he had heard before deciding.”

During this time, the Planning Board demonstrated both its ability to react quickly in a crisis and its institutional memory. A Special Annex was prepared detailing contingencies for U.S. action. This was the Annex that had been prepared for NSC 177, and ordered destroyed. It

---

123 Memorandum by Charles C. Stelle of the Policy Planning Staff, 23 March 1954, ibid., 1147.
124 Press Club Speech, John Foster Dulles, 29 March 1954, 2-3, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 82, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
would appear that at least one copy was preserved, as it was quickly taken and readjusted for
current circumstances. The first contingency covered the possibility that without U.S. aid, France
would be forced to withdraw from Indochina. It said that if direct U.S. aid was judged to be
meaningful, intervention would be further studied, but would focus on full independence for the
Associated States, a continuing policy of arming indigenous forces, and seeking U.N. aid. The
second contingency, if the United States offered to intervene but the French withdrew regardless
of such an offer, meant that the United States could either accept the loss of Indochina or choose
one of four options. Option A would be to urge the French to stage a coordinated withdrawal as
the U.S. utilized ground forces, Option B called for using ground forces to only hold French hard
points while training indigenous forces, Option C would be the use of naval and air power alone
while training the indigenous forces, and Option D was to provide no direct support, only
training. The Planning Board noted that these contingencies were valid under certain
circumstances only: no renewal of the Korean War, no intervention by the Soviets or Chinese,
and no expansion of the combat theater outside Indochina.127 It also warned that Option A, and
to a lesser extent B, would force “major alterations in fiscal and budgetary programs . . . and a
reversal of policy planning to reduce the size of the U.S. Armed Forces.”128 Option A had a
further drawback, as it was estimated that seven divisions would be necessary to successfully
conduct operations, while only five were available under current deployments.129 With these
options in mind, the NSC met April 1. Radford argued for immediate intervention, or the
situation would be untenable.130 Eisenhower told Radford that he understood the rest of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff did not support air intervention. When Radford brought up his urge for action

---

128 Ibid., 1186
129 Ibid.
130 Memorandum of Discussion at the 191st Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, April 1,
1954, ibid., 1200-1201.
later, Eisenhower let the matter drop, but said that he wanted to meet with certain members of
the NSC afterward. No official action was adopted other than further review. 131 Radford and
Dulles were to meet with Congress a few days after this meeting to brief them on the situation
and request authority for unilateral aid if Eisenhower deemed it necessary. In a conversation with
Eisenhower, Wilson, and Radford Eisenhower, Dulles told Eisenhower that he believed that
Radford wanted Congressional approval to actually intervene, whereas he, Dulles, wanted to use
the possibility of intervention as a deterrent. 132

At a meeting with Congress to secure the ability to intervene, Dulles and Radford found
that the feeling was unanimous among the senators that “we want no more Koreas with the
United States furnishing 90% of the manpower.” He added that, while only air intervention was
currently being considered, “once the flag was committed the use of land forces would inevitably
follow.” 133 Radford, when asked if a direct air attack would change the situation, said that it
would have three weeks before, but not at the moment. This would have placed the best time for
air intervention, according to Radford, about four days before Ely had even arrived in
Washington. 134 That same day, Bowie expressed to Dulles that the NSC needed to reach a
decision as to whether or not intervention was even desired, and if so, how the U.S. would go
about planning such intervention and securing Congressional support, and an invitation from
France and the Associated States to intervene. 135 Bowie’s comments represented part of the
frustrations that the NSC was not as quick to respond as desired, though in fact the decisions
regarding ground forces appear, from Eisenhower’s personal meetings and comments, to have

---

131 Ibid., 1202 Unfortunately, no formal records exist of the meeting that occurred afterward, but given the
kinds of discussion going on in the Council, it is at least probable that Air Intervention is what was discussed.
132 Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 2 April 1954, ibid., 1211.
133 Memorandum for the Files of the Secretary of State, 5 April 1954, ibid., 1225.
134 Ibid., 1226.
135 Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State, 5 April
1954, ibid. 1246.
already been decided in the negative. A single air strike remained a possibility. Eisenhower apparently kept that decision to himself and Dulles, and continued to receive counsel as to intervention and kept that possibility publicly on the table.

Eisenhower would soon have to face the consequences of that fact, as the French concluded that only Vulture could save the situation. Valluy had requested that the United States carry out Operation Vulture on April 4.\textsuperscript{136} Eisenhower was annoyed that Radford had told the French during Ely’s visit he would do his best to see that the U.S. carried out the operation. He told Dulles that, “[Radford] should never have told [a] foreign country he would do his best because they then start putting pressure on us.”\textsuperscript{137} As a man who prized his own counsel, Eisenhower clearly did not like the idea of one of his subordinates discussing their counsel outside the U.S. government. Radford may have known Eisenhower’s displeasure, as he wrote to Dulles after the U.S. decided not to intervene that there was some kind of mix up and that he, “suspect[ed] the French of political machinations later to justify their actions,” possibly to deflect any condemnation of his own actions.\textsuperscript{138}

All these factors led to the April 6 meeting of the National Security Council, which was held earlier than usual, on a Tuesday, in view of the deteriorating situation in Indochina. This meeting proved the most important meeting regarding Dien Bien Phu. After the initial discussion of the situation, Cutler pointed out that the Planning Board paper promulgated March 29, in addition to spelling out contingency actions, noted that regardless of Dien Bien Phu, the contest in Indochina had yet to be decided. Wilson, Radford, and Allen Dulles all disagreed, feeling the

\textsuperscript{136} Immerman and Herring, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” 242.
\textsuperscript{138} Memorandum by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford) to the Secretary of State, 10 April 1954, ibid., 1304.
Planning Board report was too optimistic. Eisenhower expressed his belief that the fall of Dien Bien Phu could not be considered a military defeat, as the French had already inflicted 10,000 to 20,000 casualties upon the Vietminh. He did not understand why the French did not send a relief column in force to the besieged area, echoing his continuing frustration with the French command performance. Following Congress’s recent reaction, Eisenhower pointed out that, “there was no possibility whatever of U.S. unilateral intervention in Indochina, and we had best face that fact.”\textsuperscript{139}

Dulles agreed that unilateral action support would be impossible. From the discussions emerged the desire to seek British involvement and prepare an organization similar to NATO in the region to prevent its total fall to Communism, a policy Dulles called “United Action.” While not directly stated, Eisenhower made it clear that unilateral intervention was unlikely:

The President expressed his hostility to the notion that because we might lose Indochina we would necessarily lose all the rest of Southeast Asia . . . the President expressed warm approval for the idea of a political organization which would have for its purpose the defense of South-east Asia even if Indochina should be lost.\textsuperscript{140}

Though a deviation from the Domino theory, the argument justified the lack of U.S. commitment in the region Eisenhower desired.\textsuperscript{141} Stassen recommended a midway course between intervention and allowing Indochina to fall. He suggested establishing a South Vietnamese nation with a regional defense treaty built around it. Radford, still wholly supporting the Domino theory, objected that it would cause a negative chain reaction. The Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, noted that if elections were held, South Vietnam could well go Communist,

\textsuperscript{139} Memorandum of Discussion at the 192\textsuperscript{nd} Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, April 6, 1954, ibid., 1253.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 1257.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 1253-1255.
though Eisenhower rebuked him, stating, “no free government had yet gone communist by its own choice.” Eisenhower concluded his discussion with Humphrey with the decision that, “we are not prepared now to take action with respect to Dien Bien Phu . . . but the coalition program for Southeast Asia must go forward as a matter of the greatest urgency.” Responding to Treasury Secretary George Humphrey’s concerns that the U.S. was embarking on a policy of trying to intervene wherever there were communist governments, Eisenhower explained that “in certain areas at least we cannot afford to let Moscow gain another bit of territory.” Eisenhower expressed his feeling that Indochina was not a place the U.S. should take action in at the moment, but noted that if a regional defense group went forward, “the battle is two-thirds won.” While agreeing that external and internal communist subversion was unacceptable, Nixon also pointed out that the U.S. had to avoid the political weight of appearing to be imperialists in the mold of the French and the British. The decision was reached to focus on creating an organization with the French, British, and local countries for regional defense. This was to be done in conjunction with an accelerated plan for Associated State independence.

The April 6 meeting of the NSC was vital because it was there that Eisenhower made clear to the NSC his decision that the United States would not engage in unilateral intervention in Indochina, but rather would seek to create an alliance system in Southeast Asia to compensate for the possible fall of Indochina in the wake of Dien Bien Phu. Multilateral intervention remained a possibility, but only if the British were involved. This proposal offered several advantages. It required much less U.S. manpower on the ground. It would insure that if the U.S. intervened it would not appear colonialist. It might have rendered intervention unnecessary. Immerman and Herring note that, in policy considerations was the fact that, “the mere

---

142 Ibid., 1261.
143 Ibid., 1264-65.
establishment of such a coalition accompanied by stern warnings to the Communists might be
sufficient to bolster the French will to resist,” though ultimately United Action would provide the
best conditions for the U.S to intervene if necessary.\footnote{Immerman and Herring, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” 238.} This ultimate decision had resulted from
both the NSC machinery and Eisenhower’s informal discussions. He had, in his talks with
Dulles, established beforehand that he believed unilateral intervention would never be accepted.
Even Dulles only wished to obtain its possibility as a threat. The Special Index of NSC 177/5405
warned that intervention would play havoc with U.S. forces and their ability to act around the
globe, a disruption Eisenhower was not prepared to cause if Indochina’s fall did not mean the fall
of all of Southeast Asia. After all, if he had invested in unilateral intervention, the U.S. would
have been forced to shift divisions to leave two more open and lack a strategic reserve, or the fill
the extra divisions by recruitment or a draft.

In the meeting, Eisenhower demonstrated his habit of introducing and discussing
apparently unplanned ideas, like a regional defense pact, which gained traction and became U.S.
policy. However, it would appear that Eisenhower had part of the United Action idea in mind, as
prior to the meeting; Eisenhower had written Churchill to gather support for the French. He told
Churchill that if Indochina fell, in his view, Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia would be hard “to
keep out of Communist hands,” quite at odds with the conclusions Eisenhower had reached
privately.\footnote{Eisenhower to Churchill, 4 April 1954, in Peter G. Boyle, ed., The Churchill-Eisenhower
Correspondence, 1953-1955 (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 136.}
He told Churchill that the best way to aid the French would be the establishment of
an “ad hoc grouping or coalition composed of nations which have vital concern in the checking
of Communist expansion in the area.”\footnote{Ibid., 127-38.} This correspondence revealed that Eisenhower was
being discreet, both with the Council, in not telling them how far along his thinking was in
regards to action with allies, and to his allies, with whom he did not share his own conclusions. Despite this, the Council does not seem to have been irrelevant. Eisenhower actively engaged the Council members regarding policy and suggested that he was testing out his own thinking using the Council process. In the meeting he found support for his ideas and a chance to discuss them in greater detail.

At this point, policy had been essentially decided, and further workings and re-workings would be of a more informal nature. As Greenstein and Burke explain,

The shift to informal deliberation occurred because the problems confronting the administration in Southeast Asia in this period [following the April 6 meeting] were largely operational. The NSC as a policy planning body was not an appropriate instrument for supervising negotiations with Congress or allied nations.\(^{147}\)

After this meeting, Dulles and then Radford would depart for Europe to try and iron out the policy decided upon in the April 6\(^{th}\) session. Dulles reported that the British were hesitant to act before Geneva as they were fearful of a ground war and did not believe Indochina’s fall would lead to the fall of all of Southeast Asia.\(^{148}\) This was, of course, also Eisenhower’s private view. Dulles remained Eisenhower’s chief personal advisor, while Radford was clearly still too interventionist for Eisenhower’s taste.\(^{149}\) Dulles had departed for Europe on April 10, and would remain there for three weeks. He managed to secure from Eden an agreement to participate in a conference of powers before Geneva to discuss positions going into the talks. In Paris, his next destination, Dulles tried to convince the French to support United Action and not give in at Geneva. These plans were dropped, however, when the British pulled out of the conference of

\(^{147}\) Greenstein and Burke, *How President’s Test Reality*, 101.
\(^{148}\) The Secretary of State to the President, Telegram 13 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol.13, pt.1, 1322-23. Dulles also mentioned that, according to the leftist British paper *The Daily Worker*, he was the most unwelcome visitor to England since 1066.
\(^{149}\) Greenstein and Burke, *How Presidents Test Reality*, 101.
allied powers before Geneva. The French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, would later claim that in his desperation for action, Dulles offered him the use of three atomic bombs. This is unsubstadiated by any other sources and seems quite unlikely given how far outside Dulles’ authority such an offer would have been; furthermore Dulles’ previous behavior does not hint that he would take such a step.

Meanwhile, Radford arrived in England, where he met with England’s Foreign Minister Anthony Eden and Ely. Ely stressed that Operation Vulture had to be carried out. Radford reported that, “[Ely] was surprised that I had not heard about [Operation Vulture] before. He went on further to say that this indicated a lack of close contact between the Americans and the military in Indochina which distressed him.” Ely had not caught the drift that only multilateral intervention was an option. After the British pulled out of the Pre-Geneva meeting, Radford recounted that “[Eisenhower] indicated that I had frightened the British by my hard words or something - I don’t know what they could have been. For my part I think Eden was a rather weak sister. He gave us the impression in Paris . . . that he was going to work with us.” Also during this time, possibly adding to English fear, was the fact that Richard Nixon had answered hypothetical press questions in regards to Indochina and mentioned that the U.S. might have to intervene, which disturbed both the American public and possibly the British.

It was eventually made clear to the U.S. representatives in England that the British would not support United Action. On April 23 and 24, Dulles continued to try and obtain Eden’s agreement with United Action while turning down another French request for U.S. air

---

150 Immerman and Herring, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” 243-44.
151 Ibid., 245.
152 Memorandum for the File by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford), 24 April 1954, FRUS 1952-1954, vol.13, pt.1, 1397.
153 Radford, Princeton interview, 45.
154 Immerman and Herring, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu,” 243-44.
intervention. At a dinner Radford had with Winston Churchill, Radford gained the impression that “Sir Winston was presently unprepared to participate in collective action.” This Radford reported at the next NSC meeting upon his return to the United States, April 29. According to Radford’s later accounts, Churchill made it clear that the United Kingdom would not help the French maintain their empire at the risk of nuclear war, after having lost so much of the British Empire already. Churchill had made his worries about the bomb known earlier, writing to Eisenhower in March, writing, “There is widespread anxiety here about the H-bomb.” Radford, who had in the past expressed a desire to use nuclear weaponry in Indochina, suggested that his presence was perhaps not beneficial. Eden, for his part, was suspicious of U.S. motives. During the Geneva Conference, he commented that, “all the Americans want to do is to replace the French and run Indochina themselves. They want to replace us in Egypt too. They want to run the world.”

With the British out of the picture, the NSC briefly looked at unilateral intervention again. Stassen declared that some final decision reaching Indochina had to be reached, and he urged that the U.S. “go to the limits.” Stassen and Eisenhower then engaged in one of the most extensive back-and-forths on record concerning Indochina. Eisenhower expressed his doubt and argued that if the United States went in after the French, it would appear as though the U.S. were colonizers. Stassen argued that the United States had to act like a world leader. “Without allies and associates,” Eisenhower explained, “the leader is just an adventurer like Genghis Khan.”

---

155 Ibid., 246.
158 Churchill to Eisenhower, 29 March 1954, in Boyle, Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 131.
Stassen countered that the U.S. could depend upon Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Eisenhower expressed his belief that intervention in Indochina would result in a Chinese attack in Korea, and that investing in places like Vietnam would be “playing the enemy’s game—getting ourselves involved in brushfire wars in Burma, Afghanistan, and God knows where.” Stassen replied that brushfire wars in the future could be avoided by making it clear that general war would result from any Communist intrusion into any part of the world not currently under their control. For Stassen, the only war would then be in Indochina, where, as it already had communists in it, such a policy would be inapplicable. Eisenhower had already laid out his thinking on this subject outside the Council. On April 26 he had written to his friend (and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe) Al Gruenther, in which Eisenhower observed that the loss of Dien Bien Phu was not necessarily the end of the war in Indochina, and that a concert of nations in the area, such as NATO, would be best, as then, “we possibly wouldn’t have to fight.” With his thinking already laid out, Eisenhower was unlikely to change his mind unless he heard a convincing argument against those points. While Eisenhower listened to Stassen and allowed him to have his say, in the end he told the council that intervention with ground forces would not be deployed unilaterally, and that the United States policy without the British would be to continue to organize regional defense and await the return and report of Dulles on the diplomatic situation.

After the decisions of April 6 and April 29 in the Council, there was little to do but to wait for Dien Bien Phu to fall and try to minimize the damage. Cutler sent Smith a letter, discussing the general situation and the possible use of “new weapons,” i.e. nuclear weapons, but

---

161 Ibid., 1441
163 194th NSC Meeting, ibid., 1445
nothing would ever come of it.¹⁶⁴ Dulles returned to the White House May 5 and, after
discussing the situation at length, agreed that the “conditions [in Indochina] do not justify U.S
entry into Indochina as a belligerent at this time.”¹⁶⁵ At the next day’s NSC meeting, Dulles
shared that assessment with the Council members. They agreed to accept a British proposal of
organizing a five power staff agency consisting of the U.S., Britain, France, Australia, and New
Zealand, to see to the defense of Southeast Asia. This would be supplementary to continued
efforts to form a regional grouping. Allen Dulles’s intelligence report made it clear that Dien
Bien Phu was in its death throes.¹⁶⁶ The next day, Dien Bien Phu surrendered, after suffering
immensely since the beginning of March. Thousands of French soldiers had perished, and
thousands more would die in enemy captivity. The Vietminh had accepted staggering casualties
to win their political victory. The next day, the NSC would focus on the defense of the Tonkin
delta at the 19⁶th NSC meeting, while also focusing on preserving the EDC, which would
eventually fail, and convincing France into internationalizing the conflict.¹⁶⁷ The next battle that
was shaping up would be a diplomatic one at Geneva, where the State Department would take a
lead on trying salvage the situation. Eisenhower ordered further study for Indochinese
intervention, looking at economic warfare plans, U.N intervention, and independence for the
Associated States, but ultimately concluded, with Dulles, that the U.S. simply could not do it
alone.¹⁶⁸

Part IV

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum by the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Cutler) to the Under Secretary of
State (Smith), ibid., 1445-1448.
¹⁶⁵ Memorandum of a Conference at the White House, 5 May 1954, ibid., 1469.
¹⁶⁶ Memorandum of Discussion at the 195th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, May 6,
1954, ibid., 1492.
¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Discussion at the 196th Meeting of the National Security Council, Saturday, May 8,
1954, ibid., 1505-1511.
¹⁶⁸ Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay) to the Secretary of
State, ibid., 1581-1582; Memorandum of Conversation by the Secretary of State, 19 May 1954, ibid., 1583.
In the first five weeks after Dien Bien Phu, intervention appeared on the surface to be an option, with Eisenhower and Dulles even going so far as to draft a Congressional resolution for intervention. However, as negotiations dragged on, a final agreement was reached in July of 1954 which partitioned the country into North and South Vietnam, provided for the withdrawal of the French, and set elections for 1956 to reunify the country. While denounced at home for being a concession, it was in some ways pleasing to the Eisenhower administration. South Vietnam could be built into a bulwark against communism, while French colonialism would hopefully no longer be the troublesome issue that it had been.\(^{169}\) The Eisenhower administration found a leader in Ngo Dinh Diem, though its man on location, Joe Collins, reported that he doubted Diem’s capacity to lead the country. Nevertheless, Diem remained in power, and Collins focused on trying to address Vietnam’s modernization needs.\(^{170}\) Dillon Anderson, who became Eisenhower’s second Special Assistant for National Security in 1955, explained that the decision was made to insure stability. “[Eisenhower] was the one who made the decision to recognize and back Diem. . . . I knew how he felt about getting into a land war out there . . . he wasn’t going to do it there or anywhere else on the continent of Asia.”\(^{171}\) Anderson would leave his position after a year, but would be a member of a commission sent to evaluate the Mutual Aid programs the U.S. established in Southeast Asia, thereby fulfilling Cutler’s idea of having outside groups conduct the study of operations to provide fresh perspective. While suggesting some personal misgivings about economic aid, Dillon’s report on Vietnam was upbeat. South Vietnam was, “a nation acknowledged to be the Free World’s strong anchor on the Southeast Asia Mainland,” and that the process of equipping and training indigenous forces continued, and that aid would be

\(^{169}\) Herring, America’s Longest War, 37-41.
\(^{170}\) Anderson, Trapped By Success, 95.
\(^{171}\) Anderson, Luter interview, 31.
required for Vietnam to be fully independent.\textsuperscript{172} The United States was preparing to be in Vietnam as long as it needed to be in a supporting role.

During the crisis at Dien Bien Phu, Eisenhower’s National Security Council played an important part in Eisenhower deliberations, but was augmented by the ad hoc and informal means of advice that Eisenhower created or sought out. After the April 6\textsuperscript{th} meeting of the NSC, unilateral intervention was taken off the table due a combination of factors. The Special Annex, with its warnings on the effect that committing ground forces would have on the U.S. defense posture reinforced Eisenhower’s own fears of ground troops in Vietnam being absorbed “by divisions.” His discussions with Dulles indicated that both men were at least wary of Indochina. By the time of the April 1 NSC meeting, Eisenhower knew when Radford urged air intervention that the rest of the Joint Chiefs were not in agreement. With unilateral intervention discarded, the focus turned to multilateral efforts. After those failed to find support, there was no real attempt to organize unilateral intervention again except for Harold Stassen’s vehement arguments. It has been suggested that Eisenhower never intended for multilateral intervention to work, but he wanted the British to take the blame for non-intervention. Nixon noted in his memoirs that, “[Eisenhower] seemed resigned to doing nothing at all unless we could get allies . . . and he did not seem inclined to put much pressure on to get them to come along.”\textsuperscript{173} The British certainly felt that blame was being shifted onto them.\textsuperscript{174} Some Eisenhower revisionists, such as Melanie Billings-Yun, conclude that, “[Eisenhower] succeeded in laying the blame on America’s allies,

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. 25; Reports of the Effect of Mutual Aid Treaties on Burma, the Phillipines, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, 7 February 1959, Box 2, Folder 2, 1 (Each country numbered separately); Ibid., 5-6.
\textsuperscript{173} Nixon, \textit{Memoirs}, 151.
\textsuperscript{174} Greenstein and Burke, \textit{How President’s Test Reality}, 81.
particularly Britain, for his decision not to intervene in Indochina prior to the Geneva conference.\footnote{Billings-Yun, 148. For alternate view, see Greenstein and Burke, 109-112, for an analysis of the political circumstances and why multilateral intervention failed.}

It appears that Dulles desired the option of multilateral intervention. His sister recounted that, after having thought he had worked out some negotiation with the British, Dulles claimed that “Eden had double-crossed me. He lied to me . . . about our intervening in Indochina,” once that option fell through.\footnote{Eleanor Lansing Dulles, interview with Philip A. Crowl (McLean, VA and Washington D.C, 26 March 1965-22 April 1965-19 October 1965), in \textit{John Foster Dulles Oral History Project} (Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ: Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994), microfilm reel 3, 133-134. This statement must be taken with grain of salt, as the timeline is a bit confused. Mrs. Dulles seemed to think John F. Dulles said this in the beginning of April, at which point there would have been no talk with the British at all about United Action and no rejection by Eden. It would suggest, however, that Dulles had some kind of disappointment in Eden.} Like Dulles, Eisenhower may have wanted to retain the possibility of multilateral intervention, at least to stave off Indochina’s fall, ideally without any direct action. Eisenhower liked to have options, and if it came down to an emergency, he would have preferred, no doubt, to have the British-U.S. intervention as an option. As he made clear to Gruenther, Eisenhower thought the very possibility of multilateral intervention might prevent its necessity. He and Dulles, in their discussions, did seem personally frustrated with the French and the British lack of cooperation.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation with the President, 5 May 1954, \textit{FRUS 1952-54}, vol.13, pt.2, 1466-1470.} Eisenhower’s openness to various possibilities, the continued efforts at international cooperation, his agreement to the five power staff for Indochina, and his rebuke of Radford for scaring the British off would indicate that he did want the option of intervention with the British. If not, than he was certainly keeping his cards close to his chest. As Greenstein and Burke note, however, Eisenhower’s innermost thoughts “are bound to be elusive.”\footnote{Greenstein and Burke, \textit{How Presidents Test Reality}, 105.}
With the greater revisionism accompanying Eisenhower, his decision to avoid involvement in Vietnam has drawn much applause in light of later U.S. difficulties there. Some scholars, however, consider Eisenhower’s administration the father of the Vietnam War. Summarizing the latter view, Robert McMahon explains that,

The Eisenhower administration grievously misunderstood and underestimated the most significant historical development of the mid-twentieth century—the Force of Third-World Nationalism. This failure of perception . . . constituted a major setback for American diplomacy.\(^{179}\)

George Herring clearly falls into a less appreciative camp, noting that in the case of South Vietnam, “had it looked all over the world, the United States could not have chosen a less likely place for an experiment in nation building.”\(^{180}\) Herring further argues that, “lacking an acute knowledge of Vietnamese culture and history . . . the Americans seriously underestimated the difficulties of nation-building in an area without any real basis for nationhood.”\(^{181}\) The Eisenhower administration entered the White House, “confident that new methods or the more persistent application of old ones could turn a deteriorating situation around.”\(^{182}\) When the United States allowed Diem to cancel the election to reunite Vietnam in 1956, the Eisenhower administration, according to Richard Immerman, “signaled that diplomacy- and international law- were not substitutes for force. Soon it would find itself trapped by its own logic in summoning that force.”\(^{183}\) Edward Cuddy argues that Eisenhower played, “arguably the most

---


\(^{180}\) Herring, *The Longest War*, 47.

\(^{181}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{182}\) Ibid., 24.

crucial role of all presidents,” in U.S. involvement in Vietnam, arguing that SEATO was a “toxic blend of cold war ideology and distorted history.”\textsuperscript{184}

These scholars present strong cases, especially regarding the misunderstanding of third world nationalism. Eisenhower’s whole policy apparatus supported a continuation of arming indigenous forces and fostering Vietnamese nationalism, convinced that the strategy that had been tried since the Truman administration would succeed as long as it was done right, ignoring the reality that the nationalists were fighting for the Vietminh. Even recognizing that there was no strong, unifying figure as was found in Korea, Eisenhower hoped that a policy of what would be known as Vietnamization would succeed in preventing the necessity of direct U.S. intervention. However, even if he clearly misunderstood third world nationalism, he was resolutely anti-colonial. He and the whole NSC were frustrated by French Colonialism. Eisenhower did not want to engage in a war in Vietnam. While he tried to build an indigenous force, he never committed U.S. ground troops in actual combat that would tie the U.S. to Vietnam irrevocably and require outright victory. He had come to the conclusion in the National Security Council, based on the advice he received and his own observations that Indochina could fall without taking all of Southeast Asia with it. Dillon Anderson would note that

\begin{quote}
Eisenhower never let one of those things [like Vietnam] get to the point where we had ourselves committed to an outright confrontation . . . he never let our national commitments get to a point where we couldn’t distance it. . . . He tempered our action with what we could do successfully.\textsuperscript{185}
\end{quote}

Whether or not he created a situation in which future presidents could become entangled in the maw of Vietnam will be always be a debatable point. Eisenhower, however, avoided committing

\textsuperscript{185} Anderson, Luter interview, 37.
the U.S. to Vietnam and it seems unlikely that he would have deployed actual combat forces, due to his thoughts dating back to the beginning of the Indochinese crisis.

The example of Dien Bien Phu provides a look into the National Security Council in its early days. It was still finding its exact tone. Eisenhower was occasionally unhappy with the Planning Board. The OCB was not used in any meaningful way, and would not even be part of the NSC for another four years. It did not lead to immediately decisive solutions. Frequently during Dien Bien Phu, matters were tabled until the next session. Eisenhower in general was, “not characterized by the rapid, decisive decision-making style of less complex leaders like Truman and Lyndon Johnson.” Immerman and Herring argue that the NSC was of peripheral importance to the decisions at Dien Bien Phu and “lagged behind the unfolding events in Indochina.” Eisenhower, after all, made his important decisions outside the Council, such as reaching the determination that ground forces would not be needed and that the British would have to support any intervention. However, those decisions themselves were made in the context of informal advice, previous NSC meetings, and NSC policy papers spelling out his alternatives, such as the Special Annex warning of the effect intervention would have on America’s manpower reserves. Eisenhower was able to use what he needed from the NSC, and he set up other methods of gathering advice and information, either from ad hoc groups or his personal communications, when he felt he needed it. In particular, private meetings with Dulles had a great individual effect on policy.

In the end, the NSC, despite some of its difficulties, would prove a vital forum in which Eisenhower would make decisions; even when ideas were already formulated, he tested them with the Council, not letting them know his own thoughts. His desire to have the meetings so

---

186 Preston, *The President and his Inner Circle*, 77.
regularly in the first place and his continuation of those meetings indicated that he placed great value on the Council’s uncolored opinions. The Planning Board provided plans that were the basis of discussion both in and out of Council. It was ultimately a formal mechanism that Eisenhower used that could be allowed adaptability and did not restrict debate or information. It was also not a rule by committee. Eisenhower decided matters for himself, but did so after receiving the best advice he could from the relevant members of the Council. Even if he disagreed with a Council member, as was the case with Stassen, he engaged in vigorous debate, defended his position and listened carefully to others. The NSC was helpful in anticipating consequences and acting for the best benefit of the United States. Robert Cutler, testifying before the Jackson Subcommittee after Eisenhower left office, told the Congress, “to give a President a tool he can use for his own use is the reason why the National Security Act seems to me a major triumph of our national legislature.” For Cutler, it could be called a triumph because he felt that Eisenhower’s NSC had in its eight years contributed greatly to Eisenhower’s efforts to form intelligent national security policy to challenges like those posed in Vietnam. In the end, while heavily invested in Vietnam, before and after Dien Bien Phu, Eisenhower’s formal and informal channels of communication convinced him both that commitment to Dien Bien Phu would negatively impact the United States, and that Indochina was not an area which the U.S. absolutely had to defend to prevent Southeast Asia’s fall to communism. As such, he decided to avoid coming to a point in which the U.S. would be committed to war. While not perfect, and not the exclusive foundation of advice by any means, Dwight D. Eisenhower’s National Security Council played a vital role in providing well thought out policy for the United States during Eisenhower’s administration.

---

Life on the South Side of Chambersburg Street, 1910

RACHEL A. SANTOSE and SIERRA GREEN
Gettysburg College

The people of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania heralded in the year of 1911 and reflected on their accomplishments throughout the past year. With “pealing bells, tooting whistles and noisy revolvers … in a more vigorous way than has been witnessed here for many years,” this New Year’s Eve celebration recognized the past year as it welcomed the new year to come.¹ The entire town took part and its faculties were utilized in the festivities of the night, including “the Court House bell and those of the St. James and College Lutheran churches … engines added their quota of noise and all over town men brought into use guns and revolvers.”² The year of 1910 was a noteworthy year for the town and larger county. The citizens “witnessed the erection of a large number of handsome homes, a sure sign of prosperity.”³ Business firms developed and the county saw an outstanding apple crop and tourist season.⁴ In general, the year of 1910 was proudly characterized and recorded by Gettysburg’s constituents as a great place to call home.

All aspects of life in Gettysburg saw growth and change throughout 1910. The Town Council concerned itself with solving town controversies as they arose. The coasting and curb market, more commonly known as street vendors, asked the Town Council for assistance in the maintenance of an official marketplace. The Burgess of the Council, James Allen Holtzworth,

---

¹ “Noisy Greeting New Year’s Eve: Ringing Bells, Tooting Whistles and Other Forms of Noise Used to Send out the Old Year and to Welcome the New,” Adams County News, 7 January 1911, p.3.
² Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
vetoed their request, “for the reason that coasting lasts only a few weeks in the year … I rather think they should be given police protection.” 5 Eventually passing over Burgess Holtzworth’s veto, the coasting and curbing market received legitimacy and another town matter was put to rest. 6

Other problems that arose in the town included a mad dog scare that lasted throughout the year, but, more importantly, the town was invaded by “hobos.” This “invasion” occupied much of the town’s attention and was discussed continuously in the 1910 newspapers. Many terms were used to identify the “hobos” including “tramps,” “knights of the road,” “the traveling fraternity,” and “the road tourists.” The problem escalated in November 1910, as identified in this statement: “Gettysburg people, especially those living on the outskirts of town, are complaining vigorously of a large number of tramps who have been visiting them and begging food and clothing during the past week or two.” 7 The town took many measures to uphold its reputation as a respectable metropolis by policing and informing the homeless population that the town would only offer bread and water as a diet for those passing through. 8 The preceding example illustrates that the citizens of Gettysburg were concerned with the well being of their town and actively took steps to preserve the town’s reputation.

Not only did Gettysburg citizens concern themselves with perceptions about the town’s good name, they were also interested in the inner workings of their local government. The 1910 election was extremely important to the town, as “Over eight hundred votes were polled in Gettysburg at Tuesday’s election, showing the unusual amount of interest which the contest for

6 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
the various borough offices had aroused” (see Appendix A).9 The election of candidates was especially interesting throughout this particular winter because the victorious contenders captured a slim majority of the town’s votes. So slim was this majority that the outcomes awarded victory to many candidates by solely three or four votes.10 Due to an amendment of the state constitution, the 1910 winter election was the first in 100 years where no county officials were elected. The amendment was adopted in 1909 and provided for “the election of state officers in even numbered years and judges and county officers in numbered [odd] years.”11 Politics were seen as a proactive way for ensuring the town’s prosperous growth and development.

The community’s concern for development extended from the state ballot box to the local office of the president of Pennsylvania College, the town’s institution for higher education. In the early summer of 1910, the current president of the College, Samuel G. Hefelbower, stepped down after six years of service. Dr. William A. Granville was chosen as his successor and assumed his role as the seventh College president, being the first non-ordained Lutheran minister to hold this office, in October of 1910.12 The inauguration ceremony held in honor of President Granville’s election “eclipsed all other functions of that institution covering its entire history.”13 In addition, numerous celebratory functions took place. A concert was held on October 20th in Brua Chapel on the campus of Pennsylvania College “by the College Glee Club, assisted by the Harrisburg Orchestra. The program of music was enjoyed by a large audience of about 500

10 Ibid.  
11 “First Time in Hundred Years: Tuesday’s Election the First in a Century at which no County Officials were Elected. Due to Constitutional Amendments,” Gettysburg Times, 9 November 1910, p.1.  
13 “Great Day for College – Induction WM. A. Granville, Ph.D. into Office: Arrangements were Perfect and the Entire Ceremony Struck a Great Note,” Gettysburg Compiler, 26 October 1910, p.1.
people.” A large crowd gathered the following morning to participate in a parade continuing the celebration of the election. The parade featured faculty dressed in their traditional academic attire and “Fully six hundred persons were in the procession and from twelve to fifteen hundred people gathered in the huge tent to witness the interesting event.” At this moment, Dr. Granville decided to address the issue concerning the naming of the academic institution. He made the executive decision to maintain the official title of Pennsylvania College, noting that “a great battle does not justify tampering with name” and that “the battle wrought nothing for this institution, it did not bring to every other institution in the land.” Granville believed in honoring the traditional name while also proclaiming Gettysburg the institution’s home. Citizens of Gettysburg were hopeful that the new leader would further contribute to the development of the ties between the town and college, and believed celebration would strengthen their bond of friendship in their joint venture to continue the town’s dedication to intelligence and prosperity. The town’s avid interest in embracing the new Pennsylvania College president was evident through publication of the schedule of events, gracing the entire front page of the Gettysburg Compiler, in order to welcome the new leader of academia.

While history was being created as Dr. Granville assumed his role as the first lay president of Pennsylvania College, history was also being honored in a very concrete way through the construction and dedication of the Pennsylvania monument on the Gettysburg battlefield. Due to the fact that the monument’s dedication was planned for the twenty-seventh of September, its construction was rushed to ensure the scheduled unveiling. Veterans of the battle were invited to attend the dedication ceremony, and the town even offered free transportation to further convey their respect for the sacrifices of the men in blue, knowing the

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
importance of keeping the memory of the turning point of the Civil War alive in the nation’s memory. The Gettysburg Compiler noted that “over three thousand applications for transportation have been received for the Commission. It is believed that nearly every survivor will be accompanied by a member of his family . . . It is said that the transportation arrangements will permit several days stay here and the crowds are expected to begin to arrive as early as Saturday, Sept. 24 and will be here until after the dedication on Sept. 27.”17 Citizens of Gettysburg looked forward to this dedication. They understood that the nation would be watching and would value the town’s continuous commitment to the preservation of history.18

Among these notable events were also a few smaller occurrences of no less significance chronicled in 1910 Gettysburg newspapers. A minor labor law passed by the 1909 Pennsylvania legislature went into effect in January of 1910 and prohibited “the employment of anyone under 14 years in industrial establishments or coal mines in the States, and provide that persons between 14 and 16 may be employed only when they are provided with certificates setting forth their age and the fact that they can read and write English intelligently.”19 The civilians of Gettysburg were concerned with the well-being of their youth and wanted to make sure their labor was not exploited.

Participating as a member of a club or organization was a common aspect of Gettysburg life, and newspapers frequently noted their important meetings. The town formed various fraternal orders, including the Elks and the Odd Fellows, and women also had opportunities to take part in their own societies, including the Daughters of the American Revolution.20 There was an “annual supper given by the Gettysburg Chapter Daughters of the American

18 Ibid.
Revolution.”21 This was held on February 22nd, serving as another reminder of the town’s affectionate affiliation with the past.

The College clubs often provided entertainment for the town. The numerous clubs of musical talent joined on the 16th of March and gave a concert in Brua Chapel on the Pennsylvania College campus. Their passion for music was so rich that they felt the need to share it throughout the state, “they were absent about ten days and gave concerts at Mechanicsburg, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Reading, Ambler, Philadelphia, Columbia and York.”22 The college was establishing a reputation throughout the state of Pennsylvania and bringing honor to the town of Gettysburg through their tours.

Three days later, the newspapers reported an altercation between two College organizations. The peaceful music that reverberated off the walls of Pennsylvania College’s Brua Chapel failed to penetrate the disgruntled hearts of the college’s male population. On the eve of the freshman feast, sophomores kidnapped a good portion of the freshman class and kept them from enjoying the coming festivities. From that day forward, the freshman and sophomore classes despised one another and the freshman sought retaliation and vindication. The first-year men organized and formulated a scheme, and their night of revenge finally came. “Word spread that the second year men were preparing for their banquet and at once the Freshmen gathered in front of the Hotel Gettysburg where it was found the dinner was to be served.”23 What resulted was a fight to the finish, and “Blood flowed freely, noses were battered, one man knocked unconscious and many others were badly bruised . . . on Chambersburg street shortly after nine o’clock Monday night.”24 The sophomores battled through the ranks of freshmen to reach the

24 Ibid.
fortified walls of the Hotel Gettysburg on Chambersburg Street. Seventeen of these second-year students were captured by the younger enemy corps, and “were either lying in the middle of the road, held to the dusty street by several excited opponents or fighting in vain to regain their freedom.”25 Again, a battle was witnessed by the town of Gettysburg; however, this skirmish was deemed an interesting and entertaining occurrence for those who observed, and resulted in only minor casualties.

This bloody brawl was witnessed on Chambersburg Street, but such behavior in this part of town was uncommon, and life here typically reflected the standard morals of Gettysburg as a whole. The town was committed to the promotion of an excellent reputation and Chambersburg Street was a symbolic representation of this sentiment to citizens and tourists alike. Businesses along the south side of Chambersburg Street helped to further develop and expand this flourishing atmosphere. Complimenting smaller businesses such as the grocer D. J. Swartz and dry cleaner Rufus H. Bushman that were no less dedicated to serving the people of Gettysburg, were a number of long-established familial businesses that catered to various desires and needs at the Borough’s request.26

Serving as the epicenter of financial activity in the town, the First National Bank of Gettysburg has evolved throughout local history into a profitable organization. It first provided for the community under the name Farmers’ and Mechanics’ Savings Institution of Adams County, until the influence of George Throne. Throne was president of this institution and was responsible for its transition into the First National Bank of Gettysburg in 1857.27 Throne died in 1901, at the age of 91 years, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, David G. Minter. Minter

27 “The First National Bank of Gettysburg,” Subject File Index Card, ACHS.
held the Bank’s presidency until 1911 and it was under his office that the present First National Bank building was constructed.\(^{28}\) On July 22nd, 1908, the First National Bank of Gettysburg was relocated to its new building on the Gettysburg Square, nestled on the southern side of Chambersburg Street.\(^{29}\) Made of “granite and terra cotta,” the new Bank building, constructed under the guidance of architect Herman Miller, “will be a handsome one and a credit to Gettysburg.”\(^{30}\) As illustrated on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the building was “constructed of steel and brick and is of fire proof construction, except for minor defects.”\(^{31}\)

Although there were a few notable flaws in the fire-proofing of the Bank, there were no signs of flawed policy concerning the Bank’s business transactions. As described in an advertisement published in the Gettysburg Compiler, the First National Bank of Gettysburg on the Center Square was growing rapidly. The total business in the spring of 1899 reached $838,303.27 and in 1909, climbed to $1,268,925.47. This is a reflection of not only the Bank’s surplus wealth, but also of the town’s overall economic growth.\(^{32}\) Due to these impressively increasing figures, another advertisement appeared towards the close of 1910 that proclaimed, “Here’s a record for you of the hundreds of National Banks in the country . . . The First National Bank of Gettysburg stands 79th in this State on this roll of honor . . . [with] Profits of $146,874.59.”\(^{33}\) The Bank was interested in providing for the economic well-being of the populace and also allowed them to enrich their lives accordingly by providing a place for them to hold meetings or establish business. Fraternal organizations, as well as businesses, such as a


\(^{31}\) Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1912, ACHS.


\(^{33}\) “Here’s A Record For You,” Gettysburg Compiler, 6 December 1910, p.3.
tailor shop owned by a town entrepreneur by the name of J. W. Brehm and Culp’s Restaurant, “The place to get a lunch in a hurry,” were permitted to utilize specific spaces on the second story and basement of the First National Bank building. This Bank served as a hub of economic and social activity and it would go on to become the present Adams County National Bank.

The First National Bank of Gettysburg was a beacon of ambition for success in business and just down the street, a fellow by the name of William H. Tipton continuously fueled his own drive for artistic and financial fulfillment. From boyhood, Tipton was apprenticed to the Tyson brothers, who had a photo shop on York Street. The highlight of his successful apprenticeship culminated with his 1863 photograph of President Abraham Lincoln, taken on the weekend of the President’s dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. In 1902, 39 years later, this treasured glass plated photograph was accidentally shattered on Chambersburg Street while moving the studio’s location. “Its loss grieved Mr. Tipton deeply, as very few pictures of the martyred president were taken upon the occasion of his visit to Gettysburg.” Despite this unfortunate occurrence, Tipton excelled in the visual documentation of the past and contributed to Gettysburg’s ongoing task of preserving history. Tipton was aware of his talents in the field of photography and was characterized as “a shrewd businessman and took advantage of the growing commercialization of the battlefield.” One of Tipton’s main business endeavors was the capturing on film of tourists posing at Devil’s Den (see Appendix B). For over 40 years, he was employed by Pennsylvania College as their yearbook photographer. “When the first

Spectrum was published in 1892 it carried group pictures by Tipton, and his work can be identified in succeeding editions until his death in 1929. Tipton not only had a professional connection to the Spectrum, but also familial ties. His daughter Beulah became the first female student to matriculate at Pennsylvania College in 1888.

He not only made his living by photographing the Pennsylvania College students but he also utilized the Spectrum to promote his business through advertisements. According to one of them, “Boss” Tipton declared himself as “The Leader in Photo Fashions,” having “The Latest and Swellest Styles” and offering “Artistic Framing, Any Size Made to Order” at his “Modern Studio,” occupying “20 and 22 Chambersburg Street.” Newspapers featured numerous advertisements for Tipton’s business in 1910, one of which appealed to the public of Gettysburg that his store on the southern side of Chambersburg Street would cater to consumers’ preferences. Tipton was aware that “Some people prefer one style of photo, some another. We aim to please . . . for your approval all the popular style of photos in vogue in the largest cities to-day.” William H. Tipton’s passion for photography brought to the town of Gettysburg not only a business on the southern side of Chambersburg Street, but also another outlet to preserve a nation and its inhabitants for posterity’s sake, and this passion contributed to the further development of the town (see Appendix C).

Tipton was dedicated to capturing individuals as they experienced life, but none of his photographs show the twinkle of a toothy smile. Their teeth, however, were not neglected a few storefronts away at Dr. James M. Hill’s dentist office on 42 Chambersburg Street. Growing up witnessing his father’s choice of profession, James “followed in his father’s footsteps, graduating

38 Moyer, p.31.
40 “Tipton: The Leader in Photo Fashions,” 1910 Spectrum, p. VII, ACHS.
41 “Some People Prefer. . .,” Gettysburg Times, 4 April 1910, p.2.
from the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery, and shared office space in the family home with his father.\footnote{42}{“Dr. James McC[lean] Hill, 70, Dies Suddenly at His Home, Monday Evening,” Gettysburg Compiler, 22 April 1922, found in “Hill, James Dr. (Son of Dr. J. L. Hill)” Vertical File, ACHS.} Continuing the family business after his father’s 1903 death, Dr. Hill practiced his dentistry from the comfort of home and took pride in comforting his patients. In an advertisement featured in the “Professional Cards” section of Gettysburg’s \textit{Star and Sentinel}, Dr. Hill, while characterizing himself as the “Successor to J. L. Hill & Son Dentists,” also advertised his generous offering of the most up to date dental procedures at convenient prices. He offered “$15.00 sets of Teeth at $8.00 cash. Every one guaranteed. Positively no more of that kind at the price when these are gone.”\footnote{43}{“Jas. M. Hill, D. D. S.,” \textit{Star and Sentinel}, 23 November 1910, p.1.} Upon reviewing Dr. Hill’s dental diary, one can infer that he was either not very busy or simply not diligent in his recording of patients. It is possible that the practice of dentistry was a longer process than today and this determined the number of patients he could see in the course of a day.\footnote{44}{Dentist’s Diary, (New York: Lehn and Fink, 1917), as used by Dr. James M. Hill.} More than just a book to keep records, this diary also referenced the treatment of various dental ailments, such as “Time for Anesthetics” and “Approximate Periods of Dentition. First Teeth.”\footnote{45}{Ibid.} Finally, the diary included commentaries describing the honorable profession of dentistry. One such commentary reflected that “Dentistry is a profession; it is a business. When your rent comes due, or you want a new set of antiseptic furniture, so as to better impress your clientele, you have to draw the check yourself. Live your life, do your work, be true to your patients, and you will have the self-respect that makes you a factor for good in the Dental Society.”\footnote{46}{A quote by Elbert Hubbard in Dentist’s Diary, (New York: Lehn and Fink, 1917), as used by Dr. James M. Hill.}

The same levels of commitment that were present in these two long-established businesses permeated through the businesses located on the south side of Chambersburg Street. Landau’s Drug Store was one of these locally owned businesses that prided itself in providing

\footnote{42}{“Dr. James McC[lean] Hill, 70, Dies Suddenly at His Home, Monday Evening,” Gettysburg Compiler, 22 April 1922, found in “Hill, James Dr. (Son of Dr. J. L. Hill)” Vertical File, ACHS.} \footnote{43}{“Jas. M. Hill, D. D. S.,” \textit{Star and Sentinel}, 23 November 1910, p.1.} \footnote{44}{Dentist’s Diary, (New York: Lehn and Fink, 1917), as used by Dr. James M. Hill.} \footnote{45}{Ibid.} \footnote{46}{A quote by Elbert Hubbard in Dentist’s Diary, (New York: Lehn and Fink, 1917), as used by Dr. James M. Hill.}
solutions to the town’s problems. Landau’s specialized in supplying citizens of Chambersburg Street with modern remedies for their varying ailments (see Appendix D). An advertisement in the Gettysburg Times proclaimed that the establishment, “Opposite the Eagle Hotel,” would be offering a “Special Sale” of “All Leading Brands of 25c[ents] Cough Syrup at 18c[ents].”47 Also found on the shelves of drug stores throughout the town was the herbal remedy “Root Juice” that captured the town’s attention for its curative qualities. Newspapers explained that “Root Juice makes so many remar[k]able cures by removing a few causes and giving nature a chance. It tones and heals the stomach bowels, liver and kidneys; it creates a healthy appetite, and . . . is made to nourish every weak part of the body.”48 Although the conclusion of each newspaper article directed Gettysburg constituents to the People’s Drug Store in order to obtain this juice, it is safe to assume that H. C. Landau would have the desire to provide this cure-all because of its widespread popularity and his concern for the town’s well-being.

Right next door, on the corner of the south side of Chambersburg Street and South Washington Street, was situated another business that provided citizens with an indulgent product. Samuel Faber, an 84 year old manufacturer of cigars, served as the patron of the family’s cigar store, and paved the way for his sons, George and Edgar, to sustain the family craft. This family custom is evident not only in Samuel Faber’s sons and their interests, but also spans another generation. It was noted in the 1915 College Spectrum that Fred Faber, son of Edgar Faber, utilized a good portion of his time in class “selling cigars to his dad’s patrons.” 49 Although still actively involved in manufacturing, Samuel was in the process of turning over his business to the younger generations of his family in 1910.50 The cigar business all over

48 “Good Results and Good Work Continues Root Juice Has Proved Its Great Merit to Many,” Gettysburg Times, 3 January 1910, p.4.
49 1915 Spectrum, p.74.
Pennsylvania at this time was a developing and expanding practice that became competitive with other cigar manufacturers. Pennsylvania cigars proved to be “in front and next to Key West cigars,” considered “the best in the world.” In the content of this article it was also noted that more manufacturers would be needed and valued due to the increased popularity of this indulgence. The 1910 newspapers observed that “Never before in the history of the cigar business in this locality has there been a more urgent demand for hands than at the present time.” To meet this demand, the Fabers diligently continued in their tradition of wrapping “their cigars in Havana leaves and binders (the tobacco that filled the Havana tube), from wholesalers in York and Hanover.” This cigar store was devoted to consumer product excellence and also offered the men of the town a place to meet and socialize.

While the businesses on the south side of Chambersburg Street supplied their various services to fulfill the town’s material needs, Christ Lutheran Church devoted itself to the spiritual upkeep of the community. Founded in 1836, Christ Lutheran Church was organized as an English Evangelical Lutheran congregation. Early in the Church’s history, its management had a difficult time finding a reliable pastor. As a solution to this struggle, the congregation decided that the professors of the College and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg should carry on the work of preaching. “In the early years, the church was known simply as the College Church because of its close ties with that institution.” Although Henry Anstadt was serving as pastor in 1910 to Christ Lutheran Church, the College still frequently addressed the church-goers. In December, the president of Pennsylvania College, Dr. Granville, gave an

---

52 “Glimpses,” 1 August 1981, “Faber” Vertical File, ACHS.
53 “A Bit of History about Your Own Adams County,” Gettysburg Times, 20 August 1952, “Christ Lutheran Church” Vertical File, ACHS.
54 Janet M. Williams, Christ Lutheran Church Part of Town Fabric for Past 150 Years (1986), “Christ Lutheran Church” Vertical File, ACHS.
55 Heather King, telephone interview by authors, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, December 7, 2008.
impromptu address at the church’s annual Christmas Choral Concert. He spoke generally of college education and asked the congregation “Did you ever hear the boy say it didn’t do him any good? Did you ever hear the parents say it didn’t do the boy any good?” Immediately following these rhetorical questions, a tiny two year old girl by the name of Maryland Couse, fired up with the anticipation of the mystery surrounding Christmas night, “piped out ‘No’ and the little one’s reply brought down the house.” Christ Lutheran Church, located on the south side of Chambersburg Street, continues today as a center of faith in the Borough of Gettysburg (see Appendix E). The influence of the church continues as strong today as it did in 1910. Although the congregation has undoubtedly expanded, its members continue to use the original building. Since 1836, Christ Lutheran Church has dedicated itself to the expansion of the Lutheran religion and continues to serve as an example in the “lives of our neighbors, so that they too might be refreshed and renewed.”

Businesses were established throughout the streets of Gettysburg and undoubtedly contributed to the character of the place, but the vivacity of the town is really attributed to the families who occupied and inhabited Gettysburg. The residents on the south side of Chambersburg Street reflected the general sentiment of the community: working together and promoting the ideals of neighborly love and concerned connectivity. Twenty-six families cohabited in this area of Gettysburg, most living common lives and going about their business respectfully as conscientious neighbors. Interestingly, there is very little information about the lives of these citizens documented in the 1910 newspaper chronicles, no doubt because the citizens achieved their goals regarding neighborly respect. This situation in no way reflects their

quality of life or the importance of their existence, but rather suggests that the citizens faithfully upheld the moral standards of their hometown.

In contrast, the Garlachs, living in the wooden and brick constructed building at 56 Chambersburg Street, represented one family that did not escape the pages of the 1910 Gettysburg newspapers. The head of household, William J. Garlach, earned his living as a funeral director and the owner of a funeral home.\textsuperscript{58} Throughout his career, William felt compassion for the dead while also concerning himself with the living and “was held in high esteem by a wide circle of friends in Gettysburg and the county, whose admiration he won with his kindly bearing, his gentlemanly character and congenial traits.”\textsuperscript{59} The women of the family concerned themselves with serving the public. Sarah Garlach, William’s wife, was the proprietor of her own bakery and their daughter Elsie was a public school teacher.\textsuperscript{60} In the midst of teaching Gettysburg’s youth, Elsie also continued to pursue her own higher education. “Miss Elsie Garlach was given the degree of AM [Master of Arts] by Gettysburg College at the recent commencement.”\textsuperscript{61} Unfortunately for Miss Garlach, this ceremony did not fully honor her efforts in academia, “Her name being in some unaccountable way omitted from the list of those receiving this degree.”\textsuperscript{62} Elsie’s elder brother Henry also claimed his space in the town’s newspapers. Contrasting Elsie’s success and matriculation, Henry, a substitute mail carrier for the city and an undertaker for his father, committed deeds deemed less than morally sound.\textsuperscript{63} Almost every family, at some point in time, must endure an irresponsible family member who tends to partake in poor life decisions. Henry was one such individual, for he, in the case of

\textsuperscript{60} 1910 United States Federal Census, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Ward 2.
\textsuperscript{61} “Personally Conducted Along the Time of Individual Happenings; Comings and Goings, Social Events and Other Items of Interests,” \textit{Gettysburg Compiler}, 20 July 1910, p.1.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
“Com. [Commonwealth] vs. Henry Garlach,” was “charged with fornication and bastardy [sic] on information of Blanch Dick.”64 Despite this setback, the Garlach family maintained a close relationship with the town and they did their best to uphold the standards of Gettysburg.

The brick building owned by the Hill family on the south side of Chambersburg Street housed not only their dental practice, but also their dwelling place. Sarah Hill served as the head of household because her husband John Hill passed away in 1903.65 Sarah was described in her obituary as “a devoted wife and mother,” as well as “a blessing to her loved ones.”66 One can infer that Sarah served as disciplinarian in the Hill household and continued to scold her children after they moved away. In a letter to her daughter Lillie, Sarah was “so anxious to know what is wrong again, why in the world don’t you try to take care of your self do not stamp around in your bare feet.”67 Sarah’s discipline shaped her children into well behaved adults.

As previously mentioned, James McClean Hill became a successful dentist and John Lawrence Hill, James’s elder brother, also soared to respectable heights in the community. He “studied law with Robert McCreary and was admitted to the Adams County Bar in 1876,” eventually playing “an active role in Republican politics.”68 His talent in law led to his commission as Justice of the Peace in 1881. Justice Hill “became known to thousands of persons, and established an enviable reputation for fairness in handling cases brought before him.”69

---

65 1910 United States Federal Census, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Ward 2; “Hill Family” Vertical File, ACHS.
66 “Miss Sarah Margaretta Hill,” Gettysburg Compiler, 9 April 1913, “Hill Family” Vertical File, ACHS.
67 Sarah Hill, letter to daughter Lillie, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, October 13, 1895, “Hill Family” Vertical File, ACHS.
68 Found in “Hill, John Lawrence, son of Dr. J. L. Hill” Vertical File, ACHS.
69 “J. L. Hill, 77, Veteran, Member of the County Bar, Dies at Local Hospital,” Gettysburg Compiler, 23 March 1929, “Hill, John Lawrence, son of Dr. J. L. Hill” Vertical File, ACHS.
The third and final Hill son, Harry H. Hill, better known to people of Gettysburg in 1910 as “Hal,” was employed at the “old Fahnstock store on Baltimore and Middle streets for many years.” Outside of work, Hal often indulged in his hobby of sketching and drawing. His book of sketches has found a new home at the Adams County Historical Society where people today can still enjoy his artwork. Being only a year apart, Hal was very close to his younger sister, Mary Louise, to whom the family often referred to as “Lulu.” Though Hal and Lulu were both single, they attended various social functions together and were invited to charity balls and galas. The Hill family of Chambersburg Street was one of the most prosperous of the town, and felt such a deep connection to history that they dedicated an entire room filled with their belongings to the Adams County Historical Society, which can be viewed upon appointment.

The Hill household was a bustling place and the Mickley residence was no less exciting. John A. Mickley, the head of the family, was a worker and commercial salesman at a dry goods store in town. John and his wife Clara were very popular and were invited to surprise birthday parties, including one thrown for J. Calvin Lady’s 37th birthday. Although this family often took part in celebrations of life such as these, a terrible event struck this brick-faced household in August of 1910. Myrtle Mickley, wife of the 28 year old Guy Mickley, died tragically on August 24, 1910. Myrtle, aged 29 years, died as a result of childbirth complications in the evening at the Mickley home on Chambersburg Street. Although her death was very unexpected and undoubtedly a sorrowful event, especially for her two young boys, John and William, the

70 “Harry H. Hill,” Gettysburg Compiler, 1 August 1925, “Hill, Harry, Son of Dr. J. L. Hill” Vertical File, ACHS.
71 “Hill, Harry, Son of Dr. J. L. Hill” Vertical File, ACHS; Harry H. Hill, Personal Compilation of Sketches, Hill Room, ACHS.
familial atmosphere provided a solid foundation of support and her two boys continued to have a strong and loving family to lean upon while growing up.

The Weisers of the wooden dwelling at 146 Chambersburg Street were another family that contributed to the activity on the south side of the street. Samuel Weiser was the patriarch of this family and was involved in different aspects of town life. Samuel’s career often kept him apart from his family, for he was employed as a “passenger conductor on the Reading [rail lines].” Despite his time away, Samuel was a devoted father and husband, and made sure he spent time with his family and contributed to the betterment of the town in various ways. Samuel belonged to the Gettysburg Elks, which was a fraternal organization that provided for the town and also staged activities for the male population. When the Elks scheduled a baseball game against a rival Elks organization from Harrisburg, Samuel Weiser participated along with other members of the town and he took his position “Lower in the field [outfield position].” In addition to his active Elks club membership, Mr. Wiser was also a lifelong supporter of the Republican Party, eventually serving on the county GOP executive committee, as well as a member of the Adams County Historical Society. Just like her husband, Nettie Weiser became involved with the Corporal Skelly Post Relief Corps and even rose to a leadership position along with her friend and neighbor Mrs. Mary Tipton. While his parents served the town, 8 year old Donald Weiser concerned himself with his third grade education. Attending the Meade School, Donald was a pupil of Miss Rosa Scott and attended class with Maybelle Weaver, another young girl living on the south side of Chambersburg Street. Donald’s schooling supplemented the

77 “Former Conductor,” p.6.
education he received from his parents, which emphasized the importance of family and the use of God-given talents for the betterment of society.

Families on the south side of Chambersburg Street were not only dedicated to enhancing the quality of Gettysburg life. The Shealers, inhabiting the stone house at 118 Chambersburg Street, are an example of a local family interested in serving the town as well as enforcing its laws and policies. George, the authority figure of the Shealer family, ran his own livery stable to provide for his family. The livery profession in 1910 was responsible for the wagon transportation associated with battlefield tours. Townspeople could also use livery services if they were in need of larger means of transportation. For example, the Shealer livery stables offered their services to the annual McLhenny-King family reunion, transporting them from Gettysburg to Hunterstown, Pennsylvania. George’s eldest son John also supported his family through his butchering business located conveniently on the south side of Chambersburg Street. Unfortunately, in late April of 1910, a nighttime fire consumed Tawney’s, a fellow neighbor’s, plot of land where John rented property to house his butcher shop. As noted in the Gettysburg Compiler, “The spread of flames was so rapid, however, that nothing could be done to save the building or its contents.” John’s butchering business was completely destroyed and his losses amounted to “$500 with $250 insurance.” Even though John was set back monetarily by the loss of his trade, he kept busy with his appointment as a town constable. The duties of this law enforcement position gave John the opportunity to work with Justice J. L. Hill, and enabled his assistance and testimony in many cases including the “Commonwealth against John Woodward charged . . . with assault and battery,” and his involvement in the arrest of John Cromer, charged

82 Ibid.
with thievery after he stole goods belonging to George Stover of Cumberland township.\textsuperscript{83} The Shealer family’s commitment to town service and security enabled the citizens of Gettysburg to sleep soundly knowing that their streets were active during the day and safe throughout the night.

In 1910, the Holtzworth family of 124 Chambersburg Street was known as one of the oldest families of Gettysburg. Included in this household, led by Mr. Charles Holtzworth, was a youthful resident by the name of Virginia Ramer. Niece of Mr. and Mrs. Holtzworth, four year old Virginia was an integral member of the family.\textsuperscript{84} The reason for Virginia’s stay at her aunt and uncle’s residence was primarily due to the untimely death of her mother in 1905. Her mother, Annie Ramer, “fell while at work in the kitchen and attending complications led up to death.”\textsuperscript{85} Virginia’s six year old brother Paul was also displaced at his mother’s death, and in 1910, lived next door at the Eckenrode residence.\textsuperscript{86} Their father entrusted the rearing of his children to the Holtzworths and the Eckenrodes because he did not have the facilities to take care of his children at that time.\textsuperscript{87}

Similar to George Shealer, Charles Holtzworth was also a liveryman who owned and operated his own stable. Not only did he excel at his profession, but he also became heavily involved in The Gettysburg Branch of the Pennsylvania Sportsmen. The organizational meetings were held across the street at the Eagle Hotel, and Charles was elected president of this organization. Examples of matters discussed at Sportsmen meetings included, “The question of rebuilding Bream’s Dam on Marsh Creek,” and the “preservation of good fishing grounds.”\textsuperscript{88}

Mr. Holtzworth also participated in other activities connected to the Eagle Hotel. Serving as a

\textsuperscript{84} 1910 United States Federal Census, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Ward 2.
\textsuperscript{85} “Sad Death of Young Mother,” Gettyburg Compiler, 25 August 1905, p.10.
\textsuperscript{87} “Death Claims Andrew Ramer,” Gettyburg Compiler, 29 July 1939, p.3.
\textsuperscript{88} “Gettysburg’s Sportsmen Meet,” Gettyburg Compiler, 30 March 1910, p.5.
proprietor of the Ziegler and Holtzworth Livery, Charles and his brother J. H. Holtzworth provided “Carriages furnished for Weddings, Receptions &c,” as well as tourist transportation to the Gettysburg Battlefields (see Appendix F).\(^{89}\) Strategically located in the rear of the Eagle Hotel as well as across the street from a local train station, the Holtzworth brothers capitalized on the tourism associated with Gettysburg (See Appendix G). Holtzworth’s company offered “the largest transportation establishment in Southern Pennsylvania, equipped with the most comfortable carriages.”\(^{90}\) The Holtzworth family succeeded in all their business endeavors, while also providing a loving and encouraging household that extended its care to a child in need.

An accurate portrayal of life lived on the south side of Chambersburg Street would not be complete without an adequate narrative to bring together all aspects of Gettysburg in 1910. Businesses, residences, and community sentiment all shared the same ideals and worked together to promote town expansion and prosperity. More than just a small street in a tiny town nestled in south-central Pennsylvania, Chambersburg Street of the town of Gettysburg offers a small glimpse into the common American’s life in 1910. Problems arose, solutions were offered, money was made, and daily life continued without interruption. A typical day might have witnessed Gettysburg constituents, including Mrs. Sarah Garlach, running errands and contributing to the hustle and bustle of this growing urban center.

Mrs. Garlach might have strolled to the Town Square and into the First National Bank of Gettysburg to take care of some financial business concerning her bakery, while also picking up her husband’s suit at Brehm’s Tailor Shop. On her way back from the bank, Mrs. Garlach easily


could have been stopped by Mrs. Nettie Weiser in front of Tipton’s Photo Studio, where Nettie might have cautiously asked Sarah about the result of her son Henry’s court case. Slightly flustered, Mrs. Garlach could have responded politely that her Henry was, by the grace of the Lord Himself, released from the confines of prison on a technicality, and would have continued on her way.\footnote{“Regular August Court: One Case for Trial Goes Over by Mistake of Jurors. The Long Criminal Calendar Disposed of by Flees of Guilty, Not Prosses and Continuations,” \textit{Gettysburg Compiler}, 24 August 1910, p.8.}

Mrs. Garlach’s house was conveniently located on the way to the local Chambersburg Street grocery store, so it would be safe to assume that she dropped off her husband’s suit and set out to accomplish the next task on her to-do list. While passing Faber’s Cigar Store, Sarah easily could have spontaneously decided to stop in and purchase a little tobacco indulgence for her husband. Delighted with her purchase, Sarah might have crossed South Washington Street and proceeded to the grocery store owned by D. J. Swartz, where she could have purchased the goods she utilized to craft and create her confections, which she would later sell at her bakery.\footnote{“Swartz the Grocer,” 1910 \textit{Spectrum}, p.XIX; “Store Purchased,” \textit{Adams County News}, 11 March 1911, p.2.}

This day in the life of Mrs. Sarah Garlach, although fictional, accurately describes town life in 1910 Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Neighbors interacted, photographs were taken, Root Juice was purchased, and cigars were smoked along the south side of Chambersburg Street. The year of 1910 was monumental in the town’s history with the creation of the Pennsylvania Monument, further establishing Gettysburg’s connection with the past. Just as this monument was erected in 1910 to honor Pennsylvania’s Civil War combatants, this paper serves as a memorial to the dedication felt by both the businesses and the families that defined the south side of Chambersburg Street as a welcoming place that helped develop Gettysburg into the prosperous town it is today.
Example of the ballot that the constituents of Gettysburg used to elect their political leaders in the winter of 1910. Used with the permission of the Adams County Historical Society.
Photograph by William H. Tipton of tourists posing at Devil’s Den. Used with the permission of the Adams County Historical Society.
Mr. William Tipton working alongside his employees in his photo studio at 20 and 22 Chambersburg Street. Used with the permission of the Adams County Historical Society.
Men gathered outside of Landau’s Drug Store on Farmer’s Day, October 26, 1912. Used with the permission of the Adams County Historical Society.
ABOUT THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Lisa Ungemach ’11, from Wayne, New Jersey, is a sophomore History major and Civil War Era Studies minor who spent the fall semester of 2008 in Cuernavaca, Mexico, studying Spanish and Mexican literature.

Sierra Green ’11, a native of Adamsville, Pennsylvania, is a sophomore History major and an Italian Studies minor. She is an active member of the Newman Association, as well as the Disciplemakers Christian Fellowship organization.

Miriam Grinberg ’11 is a sophomore at Gettysburg College from Holland, Pennsylvania. She is a double major in Political Science and International Affairs with a minor in History. A member of the Gettysburg Model United Nations, she plans on studying abroad next year in Bath, England, and Osaka, Japan.

David Putnam Hadley ’09 is a senior History major at Gettysburg College from Yardley, Pennsylvania. This fall, he will be attending Ohio State University to pursue a graduate degree in United States Diplomatic History.

Brian Matthew Jordan ’09, a native of Tallmadge, Ohio, is a senior History major and Civil War Era Studies minor. The author of several encyclopedia entries, scholarly articles, and a book, he will be pursuing his Ph.D. in U.S. History this fall at Yale University under the supervision of David Blight.

Kathryn O’Hara ’10 is pursuing a History degree with an elementary education minor. She is active on campus in Alpha Phi Omega, College Community Leaders, and serves as a tour guide. Kathryn studied abroad during the fall semester of 2008 at Lancaster University in England.

Evan Rothera ’10 is a junior History and Spanish double major and a Civil War Era Studies minor. Evan and Professor Magdalena Sánchez were the recipients of a 2009 Mellon Grant, which will allow them to study the correspondence between King Phillip II of Spain and his son-in-law, Carlo Emmanuele.

Savannah Ruth ’09 is a senior History major and a resident of New Oxford, Pennsylvania who concentrates on African American history.

Rachel Santose ’11 is a sophomore History major and Civil War Era Studies minor from Broadview Heights, Ohio. An active member of Phi Alpha Theta, Rachel also functions as the Special Events Chair for the Campus Activities Board.

Colin Walfield ’10, who hails from Long Island, is a junior History major and Classical Studies minor at Gettysburg College.