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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

2013 has been a year marked by the plethora of national celebrations of historical memory, whether it be the sesquicentennial anniversary of the American Civil War, the fiftieth anniversary of many major events in the modern Civil Rights movement, or the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812. Memorial walks, lectures, concerts, films and celebrations have propelled a victorious, nationalistic historical narrative to the forefront of public attention. While this narrative is important, and fun, to celebrate, when the crowds recede and the fanfare fades, we must remember that history is more than a few great men, a smattering of important dates and a handful of inspirational quotes carved into the stone of monuments. History is what happened every day. History is full of grim, crossed purposes, and confused results. History is enigmatic; it defies clear definition and neat narratives.

Gettysburg College history students require no reminder as to the ubiquitous and abstract nature of history. Rather than shy away from the complexity of the past, Gettysburg College students embrace it. They probe primary sources and popularly held opinions to better understand the complexity. In the confusion, they seek the truth.

The work of the five students published in this, the eleventh volume of the Gettysburg Historical Journal, exemplify Gettysburg students’ eager and thorough analysis of the past, never afraid to engage with and/or challenge popularly held arguments. In each work, the author seeks to nuance his or her audience's understanding of a historical event of phenomenon. Rebekah Oakes in "To Think of the Subject Unmans Me" examines the Victorian ideal of a good and noble death when applied to soldier deaths during the Civil War. Discussing American leisure practices in the 1930s in "Escaping in the 'Tender, Blue Haze of Evening," Josh Poorman complicates metanarratives of Great Gatsby-esque lavishness and 1930's Grapes of Wrath-esque depravation. Andrew Ewing seeks to assess the idolization of Lewis and Clark in "Navigating Boundaries." In his paper "Europe's Little Tiger," David Wemer challenges the popularly held narrative of economic "shock therapy" through the example of Slovakia. Gabriella Hornbeck, in
her work, "La Bretagne aux Bretons?" contradicts popularly held opinions and stereotypes of French identity with the unique Breton culture.

Each of these works engages with popular historical narratives, and by delving further, endows the reader with a richer understanding of both subject matter, and the world it helps create. We, the editors of the Gettysburg Historical Journal, encourage you to bring this curiosity to all your historical endeavors, both formal and informal. Now, without further ado, it is with great pride that we present the eleventh volume of the Gettysburg Historical Journal.

-The Editors
Kate Reed
Amelia Grabowski
Navigating Boundaries: The Development of Lewis, Clark and Pike
By Andrew Ewing

Ever since their expeditions returned unscathed nearly two hundred years ago, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and Zebulon Pike have become central figures in the North American historical tradition. Yet while these two respective missions accomplished comparable objectives, and were recorded in similar ways by members of the parties, modern representations and portrayals of them differ greatly. Although the nearly mythical story of William Clark and Meriwether Lewis has been retold continuously through the years, Zebulon Pike instead has been tossed to the wayside. Pike’s exclusion from this mainstream discussion was because of his alleged connection to the failed James Wilkinson-Aaron Burr Southwest Conspiracy of 1805-1806.

As Stephen Aron said, “the history of the American West has, in fact, become much more complicated than it was once.”¹ In fact, an argument for a new historical trope focused on connections of Lewis, Clark and Pike, instead of the previous discourses that solely concentrated on them as two entirely separate entities, acts in concert with Aron’s idea of a new sort of wrinkle in the historical tradition of the West.

Burr sought to gain control of a portion of land located in modern-day Texas, and accordingly to then secede from the United States. Burr then planned to form his own independent nation, supported by his new allies, the Spanish. Meanwhile Wilkinson, as Governor of the Louisiana Territory, was able to help supply and support Burr on the ground level. Burr even formally discussed the financing of such a conspiracy with the English minister, Anthony Merry. Burr reportedly stated that “he could induce the states west of the Appalachian Mountains to withdraw from the Union if $500,000 were

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placed at his disposal and a British fleet of warships stood by the mouth of the Mississippi to help promote his designs.” Since Burr had verbal discussions with other countries, it is clear that he was somewhat serious in his enterprises. Though the scheme was never formally connected to Pike, his personal reputation was ruined forever due to his sponsorship by Wilkinson.

Accordingly, this false linkage has also prevented Pike from achieving the same popularity that Lewis and Clark were been blessed with over the decades. Furthermore both of the expeditions have been incorrectly located by historians, and moved away from their true contexts. They have since been recreated over time either as important stories in the foundation of the mythical and heroic frontier (Lewis and Clark) or as cautionary tales about what could go wrong when too much power was entrusted in the hands of individuals on the frontier (Pike).

These expeditions together contributed extensively to the first public discussions of the American frontier. The newly purchased Louisiana Territory was at the time largely unknown and unexplored. Lewis, Clark and Pike all wrote at length in their journals about the new cultures they observed. The two expeditions also sent back samples of their discoveries, such as bear cubs and other plants and animals, to the East for public display. These physical representations helped to change the formerly unknown West and to create public awareness of a new frontier ethos. The specimens showed the country the strange creatures encountered on the frontier, instead of similar information and observations released for public consumption through books, pictures and other publications. As everyday reminders of an undeveloped land, the samples and

published materials from the expeditions helped to foster thoughts and discussion of the frontier across the nation. Thus, it makes perfect sense that the nineteenth century saw increased migration to the western frontier, in part fomented by America’s awareness and discovery of the western frontier as described by these early explorers.

Before any argument is made however, it is important to note that these expeditions were not the only expeditions of their era. Even though these two expeditions are among the most famous of the period, others also sought to explore western North America during the same time. There were a total of four or so main expeditions: the two aforementioned ones, another led by Sir William Dunbar and George Hunter, and a final one led by Thomas Freeman and Pete Custis. Dunbar and Hunter were the first to explore up the Red River in modern Arkansas. Unfortunately, their journey stalled because the boat they brought had too high of a draft. They basically continued to ground themselves as they traveled further and further upstream. The pair traveled to the Hot Springs area of Arkansas “studying the nearly 150-degree water, geological features, and plant and animal life of the area” before returning back southward towards their original departure point at Catherine’s Landing and arriving there in early 1805.3

In mid-1806, Freeman and Custis were charged to continue the previously mentioned expedition up the Red River from Fort Adams (modern-day Natchez, Mississippi) and they actually accomplished a good deal. At least, until they ran into a force of 212 Spanish dragoons in modern-day Texas on July 29, 1806.4 After escaping what could have been an international incident, Freeman and Custis cautiously made

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4 Ibid., 117.
their way back to their starting point. It is clear based upon these two expeditions that Jeffersonian Era exploration should be thought of as something more than just Lewis, Clark and Pike. Furthermore, the theme of American-Spanish standoffs was not solely limited to Freeman and Custis. This topic will be readdressed later in the paper alongside a discussion of Zebulon Pike.

To go from a larger introduction of period expeditions to a more micro-level requires in depth discussion of the two expeditions this thesis is centered on—Lewis and Clark and Pike. The Lewis and Clark Expedition left Illinois on May 14, 1804 with a sizeable party of about thirty members. During the next two years, the expedition methodically plodded its way westward, across unknown landscapes and eventually reached the Pacific Ocean in mid-November, 1805. The journey home went a bit quicker and the expedition returned to St. Louis on September 23, 1806. Despite untold dangers faced, the party lost only one man, Charles Floyd (who died of disease), during the more than two yearlong trek.

Meanwhile, the Pike Expedition began on July 15, 1806 and lasted until July 1, 1807; less than half the length of the Lewis and Clark led journey. This does not mean however that Pike and his men experienced anything less or that they should be studied at a reduced level. In fact, quite the opposite impression becomes evident. After leaving St. Louis, Pike traveled westward and discovered Pikes Peak (obviously an eponymous title), in late 1806 before he broke up his expedition into two groups. One traveled straight back to St. Louis, while the other carried on with Pike southward towards the headwaters of the Red River. Unfortunately, Pike did not have the navigational prowess needed to effectively navigate the new territory. Instead, he led his group on a long
looping path before eventually stumbling upon the Rio Grande in southern Colorado, which he wrongly assumed to be the Red River.

Pike then built a fort overlooking the river and set about gathering up the men who, due to hardships such as lack of food and supplies, had been unable to keep up with his expedition over the past few months. Eventually, Pike and his men were captured by the Spanish whose territory they had unknowingly entered and begun to wander across. The capture of Pike and his subsequent detention by the Spanish are two key issues. Generations of historians have argued about the true conditions that involved this specifically whether Pike purposely allowed himself to get detained. After a few months in captivity, during which his personal papers were confiscated, Spanish authorities let Pike and his men go, and escorted them back to Louisiana where their remarkable journey finally ended.

From the time when the first scholarship on the expeditions of Lewis and Clark and Pike appeared, historians have changed their analyses and interpretations of these events, changes that also reflected the larger perceptions of the expeditions sometimes amid wider geopolitical events. At the same time, new analysis was informed by a combination of old inquiry alongside developed historical trends. Despite the development of new ideas alongside advanced interpretative themes, historians have still been unable to effectively compare and contrast the modern popularity of Lewis and Clark in comparison to Pike. In other words, to explain why one has become a historically American trope of sorts, while the other has been seen as negative and almost as naturally un-American in its alleged actions and values (Pike’s purported spying). Problematically, the field of history has been unable to effectively situate these
developments in the appropriate context. Though before this historiographical tradition is analyzed, a more complete picture of the expeditions is needed.

The primary sources of both the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Expedition of Zebulon Pike were preserved through publications shortly after the expeditions’ returned. For each, there are two main sources of information available: letters that discuss all aspects of the expeditions from various points of view and cover decades ranging on both sides of the specific years of the journey’s themselves, and journals written by various expedition leaders and members. Lewis and Clark’s journey, however, did have more surviving sources. In addition to the journals and letters of Lewis and Clark, other soldiers also recorded their impressions. The most richly detailed one was that of Private Joseph Whitehouse. His journal provides another account, from one of the lowest ranking members of the party, to study alongside the generally accepted firsthand historical account of Lewis and Clark. Charles Floyd also recorded his observations; however his death in 1804 ended his journal and left it incomplete. On the other hand, Zebulon Pike’s personal journal is the only one to survive from his expedition. This document has been regularly used by historians interested in Pike because so few other primary sources related to him have survived (his personal papers were even lost in a fire at the end of the nineteenth century).

Meanwhile the objectives of the respective expeditions were clearly articulated by their sponsors, Thomas Jefferson and James Wilkinson. After the United States negotiated the purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, Jefferson chose to have it explored and mapped. Accordingly, he instructed Lewis that the object of “your mission is to explore the Missouri river” and to determine whether “any other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of
commerce.” From an official standpoint, Jefferson wanted to know the extent of the waterways in the newly acquired land, and their possible impact on both the internal and international system of trade of the United States.

Both expeditions were commissioned to accomplish similar if not identical goals that included the entering of positive relations with native populations, looking for important natural resources (animals and minerals), surveying the land, and noting the climate/weather alongside the explorers’ frequent geographical surveys. Jefferson’s instructions, for instance, went on to direct Lewis to make himself “acquainted” with the Native American tribes they were to encounter, and to present a positive view of the U.S. in these interactions. Additionally, Lewis was told to note “the animals of the country” along with the different geographic regions they inhabited, any minerals discovered while trekking, and the climate and weather. Wilkinson’s directive to Pike reads almost like an exact copy of Jefferson’s orders. In a letter to Pike, Wilkinson stated, “in the course of your tour, you are to remark particularly upon the geographical structure, the natural history, and population of the country through which you may pass, taking particular care to collect and preserve specimens of everything curious in the mineral or botanical worlds which can be preserved and are portable.”

All three party leaders recorded their interactions and encounters. Like their objectives, these recordings help bolster the idea that the two expeditions were in fact tangibly connected to one another, and that Pike (with respect to both his journey and himself) should be thought of as an outgrowth of Lewis and Clark instead as a distinctive

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6 Ibid.
and separate entity. For instance, the explorers independently recorded their observations on Native Americans. Joseph Whitehouse described his encounter with the Mandan where they were joined by an “Indian Woman who was employed as interpreter to the Snake Nation of Indians.”

Months before, Lewis had recalled meeting “a camp of Kickapoo Indians” who had left “with a promise of procuring us some provisions.” They later met back up with the Kickapoo and exchanged some whiskey for four deer. Since Lewis and Clark had also been instructed to form positive relations with the Indians, they actively pursued this policy in their interactions. On August 3, 1803, the journal recorded that a speech was made announcing to them (the Native Americans) “the change in government, our (the nation’s) future promises of protection, and advice as to their future conduct.”

The expedition tried to have the Native Americans acknowledge and legitimize American expansion and land purchase. It is quite clear that Lewis and Clark ardently strove to uphold all of Jefferson’s directives.

Although his style was of a more detached and descriptive nature, Pike also frequently wrote about his contact with natives. On August 14, 1806 Pike recalled that they “passed a camp of Sacs, consisting of three men with their families. They were employed in spearing and scaffolding a fish, about three feet in length with a long flat snout.” Pike also distanced himself a bit from the other expeditions in that he personally orchestrated land treaties with tribes. Although historians can reasonably assume that Lewis and Clark would have attempted to accomplish a similar sort of task.

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10 Ibid., 78.
Pike accordingly noted in late September 1806 that the natives “gave me the land required, about 100,000 acres, equal to $200,000” and that he “gave them presents to the amount of about $200.”\textsuperscript{12} Another time, Pike discussed his frustration with how long a council meeting was taking and especially with the effort he had to put in to achieve his desired result, which was most likely an agreement for the Native Americans to part with some of their land.\textsuperscript{13} While Pike was not above taking advantage of the Native Americans he encountered, on the whole he managed to treat them with respect, and even described them as “intelligent” in one journal entry.\textsuperscript{14}

Other daily reflections dealt with the dual nature of surveyal and geographical endeavors of the expeditions. On Thursday, September 13, 1804, Lewis and Clark noted, “We made twelve miles to-day through a number of sandbars, which make it difficult to find the proper channel.” Most journal entries from both parties also included the approximate number of miles traveled by the particular expedition on that given day. Lewis and Clark kept their expedition on rivers and other waterways as long as possible, since the moving water acted in combination with the wind to expedite the distance possible to travel on a daily basis. As they traveled further away from American civilization, they also noted a change in the landscape they moved through—the hills on each side were now higher, “separated from the river by a narrow plain on its borders. In the north, these lowlands are covered in part with timber, and great quantities of grapes, which are now ripe.”\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 121.
\textsuperscript{15} Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, \textit{History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis \\& Clark}, 117.
Pike detailed these sorts of events with the same basic structure and a nearly identical type of language. In one entry, he noted that “we ascended the river about six miles, and encamped on the south wide [sic] behind an island. Distance 6 miles.”\textsuperscript{16} On August 13, 1806, Pike stated that it was late “before we sailed; passed a vast number of islands; left one of our dogs on shore. Rained all day. Distance 27 miles.”\textsuperscript{17} Constant complaints about the rain became a common feature in the journals of both expeditions; it seemed as though the farther west they traveled, the more it rained and the colder the weather that was experienced. Pike, like Lewis and Clark, tried to stay on the rivers for as long as he could although he eventually had to steer his party towards overland travel. With this shift to land based movement came picturesque scenes that were eloquently described by Pike in his journal. He commented simply, stating that it was “one of the most sublime and beautiful inland prospects ever presented to the eyes of man. The prairie lying nearly north and south, was probably 60 miles by 45.”\textsuperscript{18} The Pike expedition had arrived in virgin territory. These sorts of published accounts by the expeditions lead to an increased interest in the frontier by East Coast residents and other possible internal migrants of the United States.

Pike’s journals featured more interesting tidbits of information than those from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and readers can clearly discern Pike’s giddiness at some of the things he encountered. For instance, his entry from Sunday, September 29, 1806 read simply “I killed a remarkably large raccoon.”\textsuperscript{19} This story is almost comedic in its retelling. A few days later, Pike mentioned his experience with a new animal, stating

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{17} Zebulon Montgomery Pike, \textit{The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike}, 5.
\bibitem{18} Zebulon Montgomery Pike, \textit{The Southwestern Journals of Zebulon Pike}, 169.
\bibitem{19} Ibid., 93.
\end{thebibliography}
that he caught “a curious little animal on the prairie, which my Frenchman termed a prairie mole, but it is very different from the mole of the States.”

Another time, Pike remembered seeing “a very beautiful fox, with red back, white tail and breast.” Such noteworthy animals were clear representations that the expedition had entered what was considered to be the American frontier. Nevertheless the expeditions were not all fun and games. The journeys themselves were arduous endeavors.

Lewis and Clark were much better provisioned and received more funding than Pike. This was probably due to the different levels of importance and prestige of each expedition’s sponsor, one a President (Jefferson) and the other a comparatively low-ranking territorial Governor (Wilkinson). Yet the journals are full of descriptions of the hardship endured by both parties. In fact, Whitehouse prefaced his story by stating that he hoped to convince his “readers that Manly fortitude and perseverance was our only guide.”

Lewis and Clark complained that “the mosquitoes and other animals are so troublesome that mosquito biers or nets were distributed to the party,” as an attempt to combat this buzzing menace. At the same time, Pike once recounted that he “had become extremely weak and faint, it being the fourth day since we had received sustenance.”

One night was so cold that some spirits Pike had in a small keg “congealed to the consistency of honey.” His expedition lived day-to-day and meal-to-meal at points, and therefore became much more dependent on hunting and fishing for their very survival than Lewis and Clark ever were. It is apparent that both expeditions experienced great hardships.

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20 Ibid., 97.
21 Ibid., 125.
24 Ibid., 151.
It does not make any sense why Pike was given an expedition and put in charge in the first place; he was ill prepared to lead any expedition (especially one of such magnitude) and should never have been entrusted with such a mission by Governor Wilkinson. Pike could not even complete his objective of measuring the geographic track of the party because he simply did not know how to use the appropriate equipment. When Pike noted that “this day I obtained the angle between sun and moon, which conceived the most correct way I possessed of ascertaining the longitude” he was actually (and proudly) sharing an accomplishment, because he had no formal training in any field related to cartography or in the usage or practice of the observations necessary for longitudinal and latitudinal measurements. Additionally, Pike was sent into the Great Plains without even having an experienced and competent frontiersman as a guide.

The modern view of the expeditions is overly romanticized; they are not the inherent successes history has labeled them as. In reality, these expeditions failed with respect to what they had originally been tasked with accomplishing. While Lewis and Clark were able to travel and map the water routes all the way to the Pacific Ocean, Lewis also noted in a letter to Jefferson that “we view this passage across the Continent as affording imminence advantages to the fur trade, but fear that the advantages which it offers as a communication for the productions of the Eeast (sic) Indies to the United States and thence to Europe will never be found equal on an extensive scale to that by way of the Cape of Good hope.” They realized that any trading venture through the interior of the United States would lose time to a comparable ship sailing around

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26 Meriwether Lewis to Thomas Jefferson, St. Louis, September 23, 1806, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents 1783-1854*, 321.
Africa’s Southern Coast. The shortcut that had been hoped for had been realized as something quite opposite, an even longer route. At the same time Pike basically wandered around the southwestern portion of the continent. At any given moment in time he had little idea where he was going or even what territory he was in.

Both of these journeys similarities need and deserve to be addressed by historians. Based upon their own recollections and entries, the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Expedition of Zebulon Pike should to be judged as extensions of one another, instead of as separate events related to the primary American foray into the West. Their journals were structured in similar ways and the expeditions themselves faced nearly identical charges and challenges during the course of their journeys. Since these expeditions were so similar, it does not make sense why their historical trajectories have been so different.

Before that is explained, it is important to note modern romantic notions that plague the historical conceptions of both expeditions. The Lewis and Clark Expedition has been romanticized to an almost Turnerian degree as its story has been discussed and dissected up through the present day. Most of these misrepresentations relate to Native Americans, especially Sacajawea. Meanwhile Pike’s expedition has been forever intertwined will his alleged connection to spying for James Wilkinson and, therefore, his expedition as an extension of Aaron Burr’s intentions as well.

While Jefferson did instruct the expedition to be friendly to natives, which for the most part did occur, he also asked them to do something else. Even though it was the early nineteenth century, Jefferson was already considering Indian removal as a viable option to expand and develop control over newly acquired U.S. territory. Consequently, he told Lewis and Clark to “induce the Inhabitants of Louisiana to relinquish their
landed possessions in that country, and removing with their families, accept of an
equivalent portion of lands on the East side of the Mississippi.” 27 This was clearly not
the same type of removal program articulated and put into practice nearly three decades
later by Andrew Jackson. Instead, Lewis and Clark were instructed to soften up the
Native Americans in order to determine whether they would willingly move off their
tribal lands. Of course, this was based upon a request made by a foreign power (the
United States) who had not even gained control of their newly claimed territory until a
few years before. Jefferson’s idea was more about removing the Indians to civilization,
than any early rendering of Jacksonian intent. Even though stories such as this would
be thought to induce changes in popular conceptions of the expedition, history has still
refused to include these sorts of examples in its discussion of Lewis and Clark.

One other important subject deserves redress and discussion, that of the now
famous Sacajawea. Her undeserved increase in popularity over the past few generations
has overwhelmed and overshadowed her true contributions to the expedition.
Whitehouse and Lewis and Clark barely mention Sacajawea at all in their journals.
While it is true that she did not join the party until more than a year into its journey, she
was briefly mentioned after her eventual inclusion. Yet this discussion is not to the
same extent as her supposed historical connection to Lewis and Clark. Lewis noted in a
letter to Jefferson, which mentioned the contributions of members of the party, that
there was “a Shoshone Woman and child wife and Infant of Toust. Charbono [sic].” 28 In
other words, no name, and no clarification of any sort of importance to the expedition;
just the situation of Sacajawea as nothing more than the wife of a French-Canadian

27 Meriwether Lewis to Thomas Jefferson, Cahokia, December 28, 1803, in Letters of the Lewis and Clark
Expedition with Related Documents 1783-1854, 148.
28 Meriwether Lewis to Thomas Jefferson, St. Louis, September 21, 1806, in Letters of the Lewis and
Clark Expedition with Related Documents 1783-1854, 317.
trader and party member. Whitehouse did one better, and actually mentioned her position in the party. He stated, “This Indian Woman was employed, as interpreter to the Snake Nation of Indians.” Later on, Whitehouse mentioned her again as “our Interpreters Wife (the Indian woman).” However, even Whitehouse’s characterization does not lend credence to our modern notion of Sacajawea. She was considered at best an interpreter, and at worse, a mother with a child who was only there because she was married to an interpreter. Historians should ask themselves how the fascination with Lewis and Clark has been magnified to include Sacajawea and removed her from the importance she was associated with by members of the expedition itself. If the firsthand accounts do not even mention her by name, then where has this historical love affair come from?

The Pike Expedition has also experienced historical revisionism but unlike Lewis and Clark, the reconstruction done unto Pike has not been of a positive nature. Even though Governor Wilkinson sent Pike to explore the Southwest, it has been alleged that Pike’s job detailed more than just recording his experiences. Ever since his expedition returned from its captivity by Spanish officials in modern-day New Mexico, historians and citizens alike have been debating whether Pike spied for Wilkinson, and whether his implication as a member of the Southwest Conspiracy is a valid one.

As Elliott Coues argued, Pike was a man of ambition, but this yearning was for prestige and not power. Unlike Meriwether Lewis who sought to publish his journals for profit, Pike “seems to have written about them for glory more than profit.” His

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30 Ibid., 237.
characteristics do not fit a man accused of spying with anti-American intentions. His country meant more to him than nearly anything else in the world. Prior to his death fighting for the U.S. during the War of 1812, Pike told his son two things: to “first, preserve your honor free from blemish” and secondly to “be always ready to die for your country.” These maxims hardly seem like those of a man who had turned against his nation.

Yet one of Pike’s own entries puts even more doubt into this debate. On December 23, 1806, Pike wrote during a particularly tough day that “Never did I undergo more fatigue, performing the duties of hunter, spy, guide, commanding officer, etc.” While Pike’s characterization of himself as a spy may be nothing more than a word choice, it still bears looking into. In fact, Pike may have actually thought of himself as a spy for America. In a national sense, Pike would be justified in assuming this role because of the issues that the Spanish, especially those located on the southern border, presented for the United States.

On the other hand, it seems clear that Wilkinson did take advantage of Pike in selecting him to travel west. Before this selection, Pike had not “been distinguished from any other meritorious and zealous subaltern.” He had engaged in a smaller expedition the year before to explore the lower regions of the Arkansas River, so it appears as though Wilkinson’s decision was partially based upon Pike’s previous successes. At the same time however, it has already been proven how ill prepared and inexperienced Zebulon Pike actually was. Therefore, it seems plausible that Wilkinson noticed an up-and-coming young officer, and took him under his wing for his own

33 Ibid., 17.
34 Zebulon Montgomery Pike, The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, 129.
35 Ibid., xxii.
purposes. Unfortunately, there seems to be few accurate characterizations of Pike in the historical record so any evaluation as such would be pure conjecture. Whether or not Pike was actually a spy should not be a focus of the historical community.

Up until now, no historian has been able to effectively explain why Pike was tossed aside in the American consciousness when his story was so alike that of Lewis and Clark. There had not even been historical analysis done comparing the expeditions; scholars had either concentrated on one or the other, and overlooked the necessary questions that should have been answered long ago. Namely, how such similar circumstances took such divergent paths in the long historical tradition of the past two hundred years. Furthermore, there has been no connection made between the watershed moment that changed Pike’s public perception, his connection with the Southwest Conspiracy, and the different modern-day representations of Lewis, Clark and Pike.

The first look into these expeditions was nothing more than a passing reference in Frederick Jackson Turner’s famous *Frontier Thesis* which was published in 1896. Turner articulated his idea of the closed frontier as a metaphor for the nationalizing character of the West itself. For Turner, the frontier created an individuality and ruggedness that became an inherent part in the destruction of the immigrant and the recreation of a distinctly American idea in the form of the pioneer. In terms of early exploration, Turner barely mentioned Lewis, Clark or Pike and instead appeared content to simply state that “each expedition was an epitome of the previous factors in western advance.”36 Turner’s depiction of the frontier was an extremely romanticized

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concept—he called for man to “Stand at the Cumberland Gap and watch the procession of civilization, marching single-file—the buffalo, following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle-raiseer, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by.” This statement exemplified Turner’s idea of the closed and dead Western frontier...one created by settlement and ironically not exploration. Perhaps this explains why such important expeditions, necessary to the expansion of American sovereignty and ideals, were so ignored by Turner is his thesis.

In the decades immediately following Turner’s presentation, other historians began to take a distinctly Turnerian approach to the study of the West. In 1906, G. Mercer Adam discussed Lewis and Clark through a romantic lens as makers of American history. His view of the expedition was the classically heroic representation frequently found in historical works written in the early twentieth century. For example, Adam said “well did its members earn the glory which was theirs, on the return of the party to civilization.” Adam also described Lewis and Clark as “two men, singularly loyal to each other and to the task...assigned to them.” This is a positive view on the expedition that concentrated on the key emotional attachments between its members—Adam tended to ignore the progress of the journey in its own context, and described it in a larger sense alongside the development of US history itself.

Since Adam concentrated on the expedition through a national perspective, he also made sure to note the impact of President Jefferson on Lewis and Clark’s quest, and his instructions to the men to develop positive and friendly relations with the Native Americans. Adam could have just as easily compared Pike on these same lines to Lewis

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37 Ibid., 4.
39 Ibid., 13.
and Clark—Pike was not awarded any money by Congress (unlike the Lewis and Clark Expedition’s member) and experienced relatively little of the glory that he yearned for. To avoid what seems to be such a clear comparison seems to indict Adam as a historian, as does his romantic notion of Lewis and Clark. Though the time period in which he worked probably contributed to the latter notion.

At the same time, F.G. Young wrote an article on the “The Higher Significance in the Lewis and Clark Exploration” that also looked at Lewis and Clark through a national lens. Young’s work seems like almost a companion piece to Adam’s; Young also emphasized the “purposed step toward securing this continent for the home of freedom and good-will.”40 In other words, Young described the extension of the nation, in all of its auspices, westward. Additionally, during this time the United States pursued an isolationist foreign policy. This view can be seen in Young’s reinterpretation, his repeated rehashing of Jefferson’s desire to set up the American nation as a country free from foreign entanglements. Although, if Young was intent on discussing Jeffersonian expansion, he should have at least mentioned Pike in his analysis.

Since Zebulon Pike’s expedition occurred from 1806 to 1807, its centennial was celebrated from 1906 through 1907. Therefore it makes sense that out of this timely rediscovered popularity, historians began to seriously pay attention to the topic for the first time. Perhaps the first article to appear was Herbert Bolton’s “Papers of Zebulon M. Pike, 1806-1807.” Unfortunately, Bolton ignored the expedition itself and instead concentrated on an analysis of Pike’s papers. He specifically looked into whether or not Pike purposely allowed himself to be captured by Spanish authorities on the orders of

General Wilkinson as one part of his ill-fated alliance with Aaron Burr to siphon off part of the Western United States in order to create an independent republic and did not reach any real conclusion on this matter.

Forty years passed before another historian wrote anything substantive about Pike—in the late 1940s, W.E. Hollon came out with a series of articles looking at the expedition. His first was the 1947 article “Zebulon Montgomery Pike’s Lost Papers,” which detailed the difficulties in rediscovering Pike’s papers after they had been lost during his capture and later imprisonment by Spanish authorities. According to Hollon, the renewed interest in the relocation of his papers during the first part of the twentieth century occurred because they were wanted as part of a centennial exhibit on Pike.

Hollon’s other piece, one of the first articles to look specifically into Pike’s Expedition, came out two years later; although it does concentrate on Pike’s Mississippi Expedition of 1805-1806 and not his more famous Southwestern one from a year later. This research described the scientific and geographical aspects of Pike’s first expedition, and stated “it is not an understatement to say that little additional knowledge in this respect was gained.” The articles by Hollon are an important breakthrough, because of their critical analysis of Pike. They depict him as a human instead of continuing the previous heroically mythical depictions of the explorers seen in earlier historical analysis.

The next spate of articles on these two expeditions occurred nearly two decades later, and commenced with T.M. Pearce’s discussion of the ‘Other’ frontiers in the American West. Pearce’s article from 1962 read like a post-modern critique of Turner

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which, given the time it was written (in the 1960s), would make sense. Pearce concentrated on addressing what Turner ignored, and ended up with a harsh indictment of Turner’s failings. Accordingly, the “American frontier as described by Turner and explored by his many disciples has its intellectual limits.” Pearce argued instead that both historians and students alike need to look at the frontier and its development from the other side of the spectrum for “only as one begins to understand the pattern in reverse can the Anglo-American frontier become clear in its...substance.” That is, from facing back east instead of looking toward the west. For some reason though, Pearce did not think it was necessary to include any discussion of borderlands as other frontiers in his work; if he had, perhaps he would have been able to locate Pike in this larger contextual discussion.

During this decade (the 1960s) however other historians returned to the Turnerian approach. In his book Tales of the Frontier—From Lewis and Clark to the Last Roundup, Everett Dick called the Turner Thesis a classic America document. Dick neglected to situate the Lewis and Clark expedition in relation to his perspective, and instead emphasized the contact between settlers and both Native Americans and their (the settlers’) environment. When discussing Lewis and Clark, Dick emphasized their interactions with Native Americans by stating that they were laying the groundwork for the Americans who would soon follow. He said, “Unless the American traders were able to supply the Indians, the government would lose its influence over the tribes and the Northwest frontier would be in serious jeopardy.” Interestingly, Dick moved away from the critical analysis evident in Pearce’s work of the same decade. He also missed

43 Ibid., 112.
44 Everett Dick, Tales of the Frontier—From Lewis and Clark to the Last Roundup (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 17.
out on an inclusion of Pike in his analysis; since his title intimated that his discussion would encompass the entire scope of frontier history, it would have made perfect sense to include Pike because Pike clearly had the same sorts of dealing with Native Americans as Lewis and Clark.45

One year later in 1964, Dale Van Every continued the trend of frontier writing in his The Final Challenge: The American Frontier 1804-1845. This book returned to the nationalist perspective of the Expedition of Lewis and Clark first articulated by G. Mercer Adam nearly sixty years before. Van Every also concentrated on situating Lewis and Clark in a battle versus the wild and uncharted mysteriousness of the west. Accordingly, their survival of this endeavor was a herculean task based upon monumental effort. When they finally returned, Van Every described Lewis and Clark as erecting “a great arch of American sovereignty extending over the plains and mountains from the headwaters of the Mississippi to the shores of the Pacific.”46 For Van Every, the expedition’s goal was to map out the Louisiana Purchase, but it also accomplished something else entirely—Lewis and Clark were able to successfully lay the groundwork for the westward surge of pioneers during the next half-century. What started out as an expedition of frontiersmen became an inherently American journey, where the frontier ideals of these first explorers were recast in the Americans who later ventured west themselves. Yet Van Every took the popular route and only mentioned Lewis and Clark, instead of any of the other expeditions that also sought to chart the frontier. Notably, Pike faced even greater hardships and challenges than Lewis and

45 Zebulon Montgomery Pike, The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, 83.
Clark, and thus could easily have been included as a companion expedition to Lewis and Clark in Van Every’s critical lens.

During the 1960s, the topical analysis shifted to cover the original purposes of early nineteenth century expeditions. While these analyses do not directly reference Lewis, Clark and Pike, they provide an important historical context for the events of the expeditions that were previously detailed. The article in question by Herman Friis, delivered, just as its title insinuates, “A Brief Review of the Development and Status of Geographical and Cartographical Activities of the United States Government” from 1776 to 1818. While Friis does not mention Lewis and Clark, he did discuss the original intents and purposes of Pike’s Expedition by stating that it was “one of the most significant of several of these western exploring expeditions” (under Thomas Jefferson) and that Pike’s maps are landmarks “in the history of exploration.”47 It is noteworthy that Friis purposefully left out the story of Lewis and Clark even though they were equally as important in the mapping of the United States. This may be because of the fact that Friis only mentions explorers/cartographers who ventured into what was considered the United States at the point when they were doing their travels. Accordingly, this would then leave out Lewis and Clark because their journeys took them outside what was legitimately considered to be the United States at the time. If this was the case however, Freeman, Dunbar, Hunter and Custis all deserved equal mention since the routes they journeyed on were clearly located inside the boundaries of the nation. These two expeditions were also both directly sponsored by Jefferson, and therefore should have been discussed by Friis since his title specifically referenced

government sponsored activities. Yet Friis certainly did not fulfill the promises his title set forth.

By 1966, Helen B. West wrote her “Lewis and Clark Expedition: Our National Epic” in the same nationalistic language that Van Every had used two years earlier. Importantly, West set the story up in a contemporary context, and stayed away from identifying the expedition as key to the creation of a national character and identity. West instead wrote about Lewis and Clark in a modern sense, and described how they were seen popularly at the time she was writing her article and how this popular conception slowly overshadowed the historical intents and purposes of the expedition itself. This attraction to popular, and not academic, writing may be because the magazine she was published in, *The Magazine of Western History*, featured popular topics that were easy enough for most Americans to understand. This popular magazine however does not preclude the published papers from being scholarly in nature. West said that most essentially, “one finds in the Expedition the westering impulse, indispensable to the epic of the nation.”48 In this one sentence, she is able to clearly articulate how what was once an individual spirit had been expanded and embraced by the national populace as a whole, until Lewis and Clark were forever connected with what she so eloquently described as the ‘national epic.’ Yet West never explained why this epic applied only to Lewis and Clark and not to their contemporaneous explorers. Her limited analysis is seen in her inability to situate other expeditions in a similar context, or at least to propose why Lewis and Clark were so embraced while the other expeditions were gradually lost to the proverbial pages of history.

Around the same time, John McDermott attempted an intense reimagining of the frontier itself. In his 1967 book, McDermott tried to pull away from the Turnerian approach of the colonist being overmatched by the wilderness. Although McDermott did acknowledge that Pike faced insurmountable difficulties, he argued that this is not because of the factors of the frontier itself but instead a result of the poor preparation of the party. On the contrary, McDermott successfully placed Lewis, Clark and Pike in context (Lewis and Clark were well supplied, while Pike was not) and used them as a counter-narrative to his discussion of the Spanish governmental system already in place in the South and Southwest. McDermott actually compared one aspect of the two respective expeditions instead of just concentrating on one or the other. Unfortunately though, he strictly compared them instead of looking into their immense similarities.

Nearly thirty years passed before more articles were written on the topic. Yet although time passed, the thematic analysis remained basically the same. James Ronda’s 1994 article, for instance, discussed a distinct moment in place and time, the year 1806 in the American West. Ronda’s account provided a perfect characterization of Lewis and Clark’s role in the formation of a national identity. Ronda described it as a “Roman legion, an imperial guard sent to scout the fringes of an expanding American imperium.”

Meanwhile, Ronda also addressed the successes (or in his view, the failings) of this expedition. Their mission was to find the most direct water route across the continent. Needless to say, Lewis and Clark failed miserably. Ronda further stated that “in the geography of American myth, Lewis and Clark loom as great western heroes.

The shadow of failure has been replaced by the radiance of bright reputation.”\textsuperscript{51}

Regrettably, Ronda does not attempt to interpret why this shift, this national myth making epic, has occurred. Additionally while Ronda does mention Pike, he does so through the classic context of the Wilkinson-Burr scheme and does not compare the two expeditions directly. In turn, Pike has been characterized as undertaking his expeditions in hopes of national recognition. He had, in Ronda’s words, “dreams of honor, advancement and a rising American empire” dancing in his head.\textsuperscript{52} Yet while Pike did desire individual success and recognition, Ronda’s assertion that Pike sold out his country because of his dreams of ‘advancement’ is incorrect. Ronda’s beliefs are completely disproven through Pike’s own words when he told his son to always be prepared to die for your country.\textsuperscript{53} Despite what Ronda tried to argue, Pike was clearly a patriot and not a traitor.

Historians have continued to engage with Lewis, Clark and Pike. By the dawning of the twenty-first century, as the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition drew near, Mark Spence published “The Unnatural History of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.” This article attacked the public representations and remembrances of Lewis and Clark, and was therefore not strictly grounded in historical scholarship. Spence believed that “one hundred years after their journey, Lewis and Clark had become prophets for a new century’s faith in material progress and overseas empire.”\textsuperscript{54} Spence created a new spin on Lewis and Clark; his pessimistic revisionism relabeled the expedition from one of exploration to one of conquest, with pioneers playing their own

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{53} Zebulon Montgomery Pike, \textit{The Southwestern Journals of Zebulon Pike}, 17.
role as developers who moved in not far after the first wave of explorers. Fortunately, Spence is grounded by his own views and did not unleash his fury at historians for their misconception of the expedition. Furthermore, he is never able to fully articulate what caused his extreme views, nor how the field of history can rectify its drastically conflicted positions. It should be noted that despite Spence’s extremely negative take on the expedition, he was slightly correct in his assertion that it consisted of conquest as well as exploration. Although if he wanted to seriously strengthen his point, Spence would probably have included a direct reference to Pike since Pike physically bought land from some of the natives he encountered and therefore would have acted as a perfect example to support Spence’s argument.

At the same time, Peter Kastor looked into the early western expeditions through the lens of a long-term expansion into the “Far West”; not as the sole work of the Jefferson administration. Kastor situated the literature and cartographic publications of the expeditions as indicative of “broader movements in national self-description that shaped U.S. aesthetics and identity.” This approach allowed for Kastor to analyze Lewis, Clark and Pike alongside Jefferson’s goals for expansion. In other words, the United States was concerned with the long historical effects of gradually consolidating their power in the Far West, while at the same time emphasizing their daily attempts to strengthen the country's power in the newly acquired Mississippi River area. Despite the positive things Kastor accomplished, he still neglected to locate the expeditions as extensions of one another. He also only concentrated on the two most popular

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55 Peter Kastor, “‘What Are the Advantages of the Acquisition?’: Inventing Expansion in the Early American Republic,” *American Quarterly* 60 (2008), 1013.
56 Ibid., 1017.
expeditions, and like many historians before him, avoided inclusion of the lesser known ones.

Some recent scholars have also written biographies of these figures. Landon Jones book on William Clark connected Clark’s prowess later in his life (in terms of his success with dealing with Western matters, and his ability to govern, etc.), to his “earlier experiences on the culturally porous borderlands and to the larger agendas of international empire building.” For Jones, Clark was inextricably suited to the job of the so-called guardian-of-the-west; his brother was George Rogers Clark, who had been extremely successful in his campaigns versus the Native Americans during the Revolutionary War. It is almost as if the Clark family was involved in a lifelong struggle of war versus the Indian. Later in life, William Clark helped craft the U.S. policy towards Native Americans in the West while he was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1822 until his death in 1838. The Jones book is a balanced approach to the topic; however, he did fall into the trap of writing a popular biography. Or, at least, one that catered to popular readers and not academics historians. Therefore, his assertion that William Clark was one of the most important keys and/or individuals to the shaping of the West may have been stretched a bit to push the appeal of the book.

Two main biographies of Meriwether Lewis were also published during the last decade or so: Thomas Danisi and John Jackson’s Meriwether Lewis in 2009, and Clay Jenkinson’s The Character of Meriwether Lewis-Explorer in the Wilderness in 2011. While these books have similar subjects, they deal with completely different aspects of Lewis and his life. Danisi and Jackson concentrated on a new interpretation of his death—that Lewis had a severe enough mental illness to commit suicide. Nevertheless,

the book also discussed his belief in helping Native Americans in the West. He believed that “by imposing the economic system, Indian policies, and land laws favored by the United States, he would enlighten the inhabitants and better their lives by bringing democracy and order to the frontier.”58 According to the authors, Lewis believed in lifting up the Indians by bringing inherently American ideas to the frontier. However, this book is a popular historical biography and, as such (per the authors’ own admittance), presented Lewis with “few…warts or blemishes.”59

Clay Jenkinson’s more recent book also features the problems of popular writing. The author is primarily a literary historian. He thought of Lewis as the key to the whole journey—“I (Jenkinson) believe that if you took Lewis out of the picture and launched the expedition into the wilderness under the sole command of William Clark, there would have been no bicentennial.”60 This narrow view can be attributed to the author’s attraction, almost to the point of hero worship, to Meriwether Lewis. For Jenkinson, his Lewis was “a man of genius and a man of destiny, a gifted explorer and a marvelous writer.”61 Problematically, this book also presents Lewis without flaws, and even goes as far as to attack the failings of William Clark while praising his partner. Additionally, whenever a historian uses the term ‘destiny’ in their work, it raises some proverbial red flags. Therefore this view is rather deterministic in nature, and portrays Lewis life as a one-way street of sorts; that events happened because of Lewis, and nothing else could have necessarily changed what had occurred.

59 Ibid., 12.
61 Ibid.
There has even been one recent publication that on the surface appears to argue for the interconnectedness of the expeditions; in early 2012, Matthew L. Harris and Jay H. Buckley published an edited volume on Pike and his relationship to Jeffersonian expansionism. In fact the book does argue that Pike should be referenced and discussed much more in both the history of the American West, and frontier history in general. It does, however, only situate Pike and other contemporary explorers through the lens of Jeffersonian imperialism. The editors argue that Pike deserves to be seen as an extension of Jefferson’s westward quest, and that the other explorers of the day should be viewed in this same mindset.

After looking at many of the same sources, the interpretation of the editors present in their book is questionable. For instance, Buckley alleges “had the Spanish not arrested Pike, he would be remembered in popular memory for his considerable exploratory efforts and not for getting lost or spying.” While this assertion may be true, it is simply conjecture with no tangible support. Moreover, as has already been discussed, Pike’s so-called ‘considerable exploratory efforts’ were, at least in terms of his second expedition, the result of a remarkable attempt on his part and an equally remarkable failure. Simply put, Pike’s Expedition stumbled rather than navigated their way through the modern Southwest.

During the over one hundred years of scholarship on the two expeditions and the three main individuals involved, a few trends have emerged. Some historians still insisted on looking at these expeditions through the Turnerian view. Many others portray Lewis, Clark and Pike in a national story where they were able to spread

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American influence and have been, in turn, recognized as a national ‘epic’ of sorts. At the same time, there is one key point that has been overlooked in the historiography; a historical work that would look into these early expeditions as not only contemporary, but also connected in both motive and means. Scholarship that would treat the expeditions as an outgrowth of not only each other, but also of the period in which they occurred is necessary.

Recent popular works and events have supported these incorrect views and assumptions. For example, the U.S. Government decided at the end of the last century to mint a coin that featured Sacajawea’s likeness on its head. In addition, books have continued to crop up that romanticize in the public consciousness not only Sacajawea, but the entirety of the Lewis and Clark Expedition itself. One of the most intriguing examples is a recent children’s picture book by Patricia Reeder Eubank, Seaman’s Journal: On the Trail with Lewis and Clark. This book reimagines the journey through the eyes of a Newfoundland dog, named Seaman, who purportedly traveled with Lewis as his companion during the duration of the expedition. Yet Eubank presents blatantly incorrect facts that continue to inform of the unfortunate misinterpretations of Lewis and Clark.

The book does include correct historical events, such as the interaction with the group of Kickapoo during the expedition’s earliest stage. However, Seaman went on to record the party’s first interaction with Sacajawea. In his mind, “A French Canadian fur trader named Toussaint Charbonneau came into camp, and Lewis hired him as interpreter and cook. His Shoshone wife, Sacajawea, is about fourteen.” As has been

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noted before, this was not how Sacajawea came to be hired nor does the book reflect the true nature of the expedition’s view of her. Another example of Seaman’s romantic depiction of Sacajawea was when a boat capsized. He noted that she “scooped out all that she could reach” from the water.\(^{64}\)

Primary sources date this incident to October 14, 1805 on the Columbia River. Needless to say, Eubank’s assertion was horribly inaccurate. In reality, the party helped to save as many supplies as they could without Sacajawea’s help. Lewis and Clark mentioned the capsizing in their own journals but followed this up by stating that “the canoe itself, and nearly all that had been washed overboard was recovered.”\(^{65}\) Whitehouse even recorded the exact articles that had been swept overboard in his journal entry for the date; he recalled that “a considerable quantity of baggage & bedding washed out.”\(^{66}\) It is clear that authors have begun to take liberty with not only the story of Lewis and Clark but also of the larger expedition as well. In turn, the recreation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition into an American mythic journey, befit with legendary characters, in the both the public and historic consciousness over the past few decades has ultimately resulted in a shift. This moved from a detailed discussion of the early frontier that featured all the expeditions involved in exploration, to a focus on the most popular expedition, that of Lewis and Clark. The ignorance of other parties, therefore, is decidedly problematic.

Yet one fascinating book on Pike does exist—\textit{Zebulon Pike: Explorer of the Southwest} by William Sanford and Carl Green. The authors have tried to give an

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 17.
an accurate retelling of Pike’s life and experiences. Unfortunately, they fell into the same trap as many academic historians and romantically labeled Pike a spy. While the hardships of the journey are briefly discussed, Sanford and Green argue that Pike “had no intention of giving up” because “his spy mission drove him on.” Pierre’s famous papers, which historians in the early twentieth century were so intent on rediscovering, are alleged to have convinced the Spanish Colonial Governor during Pike’s captivity that Pike was in fact a spy. In fact, the authors even argue that Pike, or Zeb as they informally called him, acted surprised upon his arrest by Spanish soldiers. On seeing them, he exclaimed, “What, is not this the Red River?” While this was in fact Pike’s reaction, his journal provided a larger context. Pike immediately realized the problems he had entered into—he “immediately ordered (his) flag to be taken down and rolled up and was conscious that they must have positive orders to take me in.” Instead of risking an international incident without definitive proof, the Spanish sent a protest to Washington, D.C. Retelling Pike’s story is not the problem; instead, the issue is that Sanford and Green insisted on locating Pike’s story alongside the larger arc of the Southwestern Conspiracy. This example serves as an apt metaphor for the larger issues that have continued to plague the modern historical and popular interpretations of the Pike Expedition.

It is evident that the concentration in Pike’s scholarship about whether or not he was a spy has outshone his true achievements. Nevertheless, allegations of spying should not matter at all and even though his expedition was largely a failure, Pike

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deserves to be discussed in the same sentence as Lewis and Clark instead of being loosely ignored. Sure, Pike did exhibit some errors in judgment that allowed him to be used by Governor Wilkinson, but these lapses are not sufficient enough to warrant the treatment Pike has received over the decades.

At the same time these characterizations of all parties involved do not lend much credibility to the modern-day depictions of their major characters in the public consciousness. In fact, even though there has been significant historical interest in the expeditions of the early nineteenth century, no consensus has been reached as to why there was such a divergent path in the inextricably linked story of Lewis, Clark and Pike. Some historians have attacked and even vilified Zebulon for one simple act, his purported connection to the aforementioned Southwest Conspiracy of Burr and Wilkinson. Nonetheless, there is no evidence that this charge was ever even remotely valid. Unfortunately, Pike, Lewis and Clark have all experienced revisions in the public eye.

What is needed is a reevaluation of these individuals and their actions. This would return the stories to their primary documents, so that the expeditions are seen and situated in their true lights—as events inherently connected with one another, actions that were led by everyday men who were in a quest to explore the west, instead of as romantically idealized depictions of an ever-expanding American frontier. As such, historians should at least acknowledge their bias towards Pike, and concentrate on what can be tangibly discussed and proven, instead of continuing a tradition of pure unadulterated speculation and guesswork. Furthermore it is clear that these two expeditions should forever be located together in the historical consciousness, instead of
being pulled apart again and again by comparative histories insistent upon continuing the unfortunate historic trope of separating Lewis and Clark from Pike.

Appendix

Illustration #2—Map showing western expeditions, such as Fremont, Pike and Lewis and Clark. Illustration courtesy of: http://www1.dcsdk12.org/secondary/hrhs/teachers/sedivy/mr_sedivy/colo/c_pikemap-lg.jpg.
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“To Think of the Subject Unmans Me:” An Exploration of Grief and Soldiering Through the Letters of Henry Livermore Abbott
By Rebekah Oakes

On August 9, 1862, twenty year old Henry Livermore Abbott suffered a great personal tragedy; the death of his beloved older brother, Ned. This was not only the death of a sibling, but the loss of a comrade killed in battle. Abbott was trapped between his upper class New England world in which gentleman were to operate within an ideal of emotional control and sentimentality, and his new existence on the ground level of the Army of the Potomac. He was conflicted over how to properly grieve for his brother within the confines of the Victorian culture of death, while still presenting the “coolness” and manliness expected of an officer and a gentleman. This tension initially caused him to suppress his grief for fear of being “unmanned” in front of his fellow soldiers.¹ Eventually, Abbott found a different and more acceptable way to display emotion through mourning the deaths of fellow soldiers in his regiment as surrogates for his brother’s death. Over time, Abbott’s comrades became much more than stand-ins for his family. He truly began to conceive of the men he fought and suffered with from the beginning of the war in brotherly terms, and this allowed him to create a space in which he was comfortable openly grieving.²

With the death of his brother, Abbott faced major challenges the Civil War presented to northern Victorian society in the realms of both grieving and masculinity. The first of these was how Union soldiers, particularly officers such as Abbott, were to represent the complicated and deeply engrained antebellum ideals of manliness.

² For significant secondary literature concerning the use of comrades as substitutes for family during war, see James McPherson’s *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* and Reid Mitchell’s *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home*. 

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Although many different expressions of manhood existed, society at this time dictated that men display both emotional control and some level of sentimentality. Also emphasized in the Victorian cult of masculinity were the concepts of honor, duty to family and community, and personal courage. The horrors of war both challenged these ideals and at times made them difficult to uphold. Even harder to maintain were the strict rules surrounding death and grieving integral to Victorian culture. Northerners at this time observed a deeply engrained culture surrounding death, which emphasized the importance of preparation for death, familial witnesses to death, and last rites and rituals. Collectively, this was known as the “Good Death.” Carnage on a massive and anonymous scale made the practices surrounding ‘ideal’ death impossible without adaptation.

The attempt to uphold these two ideals, which at times contradicted one another, weighed heavily on the minds of soldiers like Henry Abbott. The letters Abbott wrote to his family, fellow soldiers, and families of soldiers killed in battle until his own death in 1864 demonstrated how one young, elite officer from New England shifted his deeply ingrained cultural standards to fit the reality of his everyday situations during war. As Abbott progressed on his personal journey from new recruit to experienced veteran, he was able grieve more openly while still maintaining his manhood. Abbott’s correspondence revealed that although the ideals of manliness and grief remained

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3 For a more extensive treatment of the expectations of men in Victorian society, see Amy S. Greenberg’s Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire and E. Anthony Rotundo’s American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era. For more on the tensions between Northern soldiers’ duty to home and duty to country, see Reid Mitchell’s The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home. Secondary literature citing the importance of emotional control and personal courage for Civil War soldiers includes Gerald F. Linderman’s Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War and Lorien Foote’s The Gentleman and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army.

4 For extensive treatment of the “Good Death” and the challenges to Victorian grieving culture presented by the Civil War, see Drew Gilpin Faust’s This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War.
surprisingly consistent throughout the war, the way soldiers were able to apply those ideals changed significantly.

Henry Abbott, the third of eleven children, was born to a wealthy, politically active family on July 21, 1842 in Lowell, Massachusetts. His father, Josiah Gardner Abbott, was a successful lawyer and influential member of the Northern Democratic Party, and the family belonged to a segment of Massachusetts society known as the “Boston Aristocracy.” At the age of fourteen, young Henry began his career at Harvard, an institution which at this time was just as concerned with teaching boys how to be gentlemen as it was with providing them with an education. Harvard in the mid-19th century was described as being “a world dominated by traditions of oppressive stuffiness and organized with the authoritarian energy suitable for a reform school for the young, but already morally delinquent gentleman.” The administration was known to be formal, overbearing, and even puritanical, and Henry, like many of the other students, rebelled. In a letter to his aunt, he explained that he found Harvard life, with its required chapel attendance and micromanaged schedules, to be “irksome.” He was consistently rebuked for vices such as “indecorum at prayers” and “tardiness at recitations,” and was twice suspended. However, he managed to keep up with his studies enough to graduate near the middle of his class in 1860. A brief stint studying law under his father’s tutelage was interrupted with the onset of war and the subsequent call for troops in April of 1861.

From the outset of the war, Abbott began his struggle with the perceived ideals of manliness. Two of his brothers, one older and one younger, almost immediately

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accepted officer positions with the 2nd Massachusetts, swept up with the patriotic fervor seizing the imaginations of many young men at the time. Abbott, however, was less enthusiastic, admitting in a letter to his father in May of 1861 that his “tastes are not warlike like Ned & Fletcher’s, but literary & domestic.” Despite this view, the 1860s was a time when many varying and sometimes contradictory views on manliness existed, none of which would allow Abbott to remain passive while other men were offering their service to the nation. In *Manifest Manhood*, Amy Greenberg explained that the middle of the nineteenth century was a time of conflict between two extremely influential ideals of manhood; the *restrained man* and the *martial man*. Restrained manhood emphasized familial ties, the practice of a strong Protestant faith, expertise, and success in business. The word “restrained,” was not synonymous with weak or feminine; in contrast, “restrained men” valued bravery just as much as other characteristics such as moral fortitude and reliability. Martial manhood, in contrast, valued physical strength, aggression, and the ability to dominate others. Although most men exhibited characteristics of both categories, the influence of restrained manhood can be seen clearly in Henry Abbott. He admitted to not having a great enthusiasm for war, and even described himself in a letter to his father as being “constitutionally timid.” However, he then goes on to defend this seeming flaw by writing, “But history shows a great many men who have conquered that kind of thing, & when I look back I don’t see any instance where I have displayed a want of physical courage where it was absolutely

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8 Abbott, 3.
9 Abbott, 32.
This idea of restrained manhood was one factor that drove Abbott to enlist, despite his overall lack of zeal for war and violence.

Other factors influencing Abbott’s decision to go to war were inextricably tied into the rise of the Northern middle class. The first, older influence was the idea of “communal manhood,” which was a concept developed in colonial New England and passed down through the generations. This model dictated that manhood was connected to duties to the community, and the fulfillment of these duties was through public service. For boys coming of age in the antebellum era, the ideas of being a man, a soldier, and a citizen were linked. At times, the demands placed on men to defend their homes and families through military action were contradictory to the emotional ties they felt toward their family. Abbott expressed this tension in a letter to his father; while describing his distress at having to part from his mother, he went on to write, “But of course painful as such things are, they are not consideration enough to keep a man from doing what he has made up his mind to do his duty.” This sense of duty was not only to the nation, but to his family and community as well, and Abbott was typical of the time period in that he believed he was best able to serve the interests of his family by serving the nation.

Another concept which swayed Abbott’s decision to enlist was that of the “self-made man.” Proponents of this idea, which emerged in the nineteenth century alongside a republican form of government, the market economy, and the growth of the middle class, believed that manhood was based on individual interests, personal achievements,

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and that the key to this was not to limit passions but channel them appropriately. This idea complimented the search of many young men to become “heroic individuals” during the antebellum era.\textsuperscript{14} Abbott expressed some concerns over the idea of personal achievement when he wrote to his mother that he “felt that I had never done any thing or amounted to any thing in the whole course of my existence...And what is more, that seemed to be the opinion of every body else.” He went on to admit his disgust with himself over this matter, and “resolved if I couldn’t do much, to do what so many other young men were doing...”\textsuperscript{15} What other young men were “doing” was enlisting in the army to fulfill their duty to community and nation. Abbott’s desire to prove himself as an individual was clear from this admission, and his commitment to this concept of personal success only deepened throughout the course of the war.

Initially, Abbott enlisted not with his brothers in the army, but with the Fourth Battalion of Infantry, a citizen’s militia assigned to Fort Independence and tasked with defending Boston Harbor from a possible attack. George Gordon, the Fourth Battalion’s West Point-trained commander, believed the purpose of the fort was to produce a “small body of well-instructed gentlemen” that would be able to lead the “undisciplined mobs of raw militia.” The men themselves, however, were concerned that their choice to remain at the fort would “be constructed as indicative of their desire to play the gentleman soldier and an unwillingness to be called into the field.”\textsuperscript{16} Although life in the fort could be enjoyable, and provided the young men with a sense of personal responsibility they did not have at Harvard, Abbott quickly grew dissatisfied. As many of his fellow gentlemen left the fort for active duty, among them Abbott’s close friend

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Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., his determination to find a commission in the army grew. Abbott’s father, already having two sons in the army, expressed concern with sending a third, feeling that “two are enough to be shot out of one family.” Josiah Abbott also seemed to doubt his second eldest son’s capabilities when he described him as a “mamma’s boy,” and indicated that he might be better off on garrisoning duty than in active service. His father’s derision, combined with Abbott’s ingrained sense of duty, only strengthened his resolve to find a commission. That commission came on July 10, 1861, when Henry Abbott became a second lieutenant in Company I of the 20th Massachusetts.17

The 20th Massachusetts eventually became known by the moniker the “Harvard Regiment” because of the high number of the unit’s officers that had graduated from that particular institution. This name was not reflective of the regiment as a whole. In 1861, forty-nine percent of the privates and non-commissioned officers in the 20th Massachusetts were immigrants, which was almost twice the percentage of the army as a whole. Of the thirty-nine officers, however, thirty-two were born in the United States, with twenty-eight of those born in Massachusetts. Not only were the officers leading men from diverse backgrounds that were incredibly different from their own, they were by and large drawn from white-collar professions and college students, and thus very inexperienced in matters of the military and war.18 This further strengthened the convictions of Abbott and his fellow officers to prove themselves as capable soldiers. According to officer handbooks such as August Kautz’s Customs of Service for Officers of the Army, the most important quality for a young, inexperienced officer to possess

17 Miller, 18-19; Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 2-3.
18 Abbott, 3-4; Miller, 9, 34-35.
was courage. This guide implicitly stated that a man “cannot have his courage questioned and expect to succeed as an officer.”¹⁹ The truest test of courage was considered to be bravery in battle, and soon after joining the regiment, Abbott began to express in his letters the desire to prove himself in combat.²⁰

The first time a soldier saw battle was often marked by fear, not necessarily of death or bodily harm, but of being revealed as a coward.²¹ Abbott expressed this view in a letter to his father after his first experience in combat, during the battle of Ball’s Bluff on October 21, 1861, when he wrote “You know I told you that I didn’t believe I was physically brave. In fact, I was pretty sure I should be frightened on the field of battle, though I hoped my feelings of duty, pride & honor would keep me up.”²² In Embattled Courage, Gerald Linderman explained that in Victorian America, actions were thought to be “direct extension” of values, and therefore many soldiers used the terms “courage” and “manhood” interchangeably. Courage had a very narrow definition for Civil War soldiers, being simply “heroic action undertaken without fear.” Furthermore, courage was not something that was implied; instead, it had to be tested and proven.²³ Those labeled as cowards were not only publically shamed, they were often court-martialed and sometimes even executed. Since most regiments were raised locally, close ties to soldiers’ home communities within their regiment further increased pressure to be courageous. A Massachusetts soldier describing this test of courage after the battle of

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²⁰ Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 45.
²² Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 74.
First Manassas was not exaggerating when he wrote, “I knew if I flinched I was ruined.”

For officers, the pressure to remain courageous during the heat of battle was even greater. Courage was highly important to the army as a whole because it motivated the soldiers to fight and support each other on the battlefield. Therefore, important characteristics of an officer were “personal courage and a willingness to do anything he asked his men to do.”

For officers, courage was a necessary quality, but “cool” courage was ideal. Soldiers liked to talk about the “coolness” of their officers, men who “showed an absolute indifference under fire; they were those ideal officers who were perfectly brave without being aware that they were so.” This seemed to be a lesson Abbott took to heart; during the battle of Ball’s Bluff, Henry Abbott was described by his company commander as walking calmly amongst the men, ignoring the hail of bullets, in an effort to keep their fortitude strong. The commander, Captain William F. Bartlett, wrote in a letter to his mother that “Lit. [Abbott] was as cool and brave as I knew he would be.”

Ball’s Bluff also marked Abbott’s first exposure to death on the battlefield. Although the 20th Massachusetts fought honorably and courageously, they were cut to pieces. To deal with this aspect of war, the concept of courage was used as well. Linderman maintained that courage was used by soldiers to detach from the horrors of battle, and prevent them from being “unmanned.” An ideally courageous soldier was able to insulate himself against the carnage of war by not reacting to the bloodshed.

Abbott illustrated this by largely ignoring the sight of casualties of the battle in his

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letters, which must have been a jarring experience for him, and instead focusing on the bravery of the men and the worthiness of the Union cause. After this battle, Abbott’s mood as ascertained from his letters was still very buoyant and patriotic, and could even be described as a bit blustering. His descriptions of the carnage of battle were very matter-of-fact and detail oriented, and basically consisted of a listing of the wounded men and the severity of their individual wounds. Most of his letters concentrated on recounting the infallible courage of his men, such as the following account sent to his father the day after the battle, when he optimistically stated that “the good of the action is this. It shows the pluck of our men. They followed their commanders admirably...”

In the months following his first battle, Abbott was preoccupied with the idea of being able to fight again and redeem himself from the loss he and his men suffered at Ball’s Bluff, and seemed positive that Union victory was an inevitability.

At this point, Abbott was already establishing close ties to his regiment, particularly the men in his company. In a letter to his father, he described his men as “the best set of [men] that could be...desired,” and admitted that his attachment to them sometimes prevented him from disciplining them in the same way as he did at the beginning of the war. He also refused a promotion to captain, despite his own very powerful ambitions to rise in rank, because the change in position would also require him to leave his company for another. His letters to his parents also indicated transformations in his attitude about war in general. Correspondence with his father was of a much more political and military nature, and he seemed to be embracing his role as a soldier. A few days before Ball’s Bluff, Abbott wrote, “I have lost all ambition,

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30 Abbott, 100-135.
31 Abbott, 52.
for the present, for any thing but the military. I am now completely absorbed in that, & have no interest for any thing else.”\textsuperscript{33} Letters to his mother, although much more personal, also indicate his contentment with army life. Although he often nostalgically mentioned home, and admitted that he missed it greatly, he also repeatedly indicated his intention not to return home until the war was over. He maintained that he was “beginning to get entirely over that feeling of homesickness.”\textsuperscript{34} The early stages of Abbott’s military career were generalized by a preoccupation with courage, a growing bond with the men of his company, and an increase in patriotic fervor and martial spirit. However, Abbott’s fairly positive and hopeful view of the war was destroyed when the death that came along with battle affected him on a personal level.

The aftermath of the battle of Cedar Mountain left Henry Abbott with a very different experience with death, which would shake his convictions to their core. Although Abbott did not participate in this battle personally, it can be argued that the fighting of August 9, 1862 was the most transformative of his military career. It was during the battle of Cedar Mountain that Henry’s beloved older brother, Edward “Ned” Abbott, was killed. Abbott received the news on August 22, and in an August 24\textsuperscript{th} letter to his father he expressed his shock, writing, “It came upon me with terrible force. I could hardly believe it. I thought Ned would surely come through all right.” Abbott also expressed a desire to have witnessed his brother’s death in the same letter when he wrote, “I wish to God I could have seen him on the battle field...It is very hard to think that we will never see him again. If I could only have seen his body.”\textsuperscript{35} This fits in with

\textsuperscript{33} Abbott, \textit{Fallen Leaves}, 50.
\textsuperscript{34} Abbott, 48-132, 119.
\textsuperscript{35} Abbott, 136.
the common desire of upper class Victorian society to bear witness to the death of their loved ones, a key component of the “Good Death.”

Abbott’s ability to properly grieve for Ned was complicated by two factors. The first of these he outlines in a letter to his father a little under a month after Ned’s death, in which he wrote,

I have had a good many letters about Ned but I can’t answer them. To think of the subject unmans me. I have to keep it from my thoughts. Ever since the news came, the regiment has been in the most trying circumstances where it was absolutely necessary to force cheerfulness before the men as well as the officers. A man who didn’t would have been a coward & false to his trust. I know I haven’t allowed my feelings to interfere with my duties.

It is clear from this passage that Abbott felt openly grieving for his brother in the presence of his men would undermine his own masculinity, and possibly cause him to be viewed as cowardly and weak in the eyes of the regiment. This view directly contrasted the pre-war mentality of the middle class, which valued mourning as the most sincere expression of the ideal sentimentality. Again, Abbott was feeling the tension that existed between manly duties as an officer and as a member of a family and social class, and had to attempt to answer the question of which took precedence. This was related to the concept of being a “restrained man.” Officers from the elite saw manhood as being synonymous with self-restraint and emotional coolness, and if Henry

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37 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 139-40.
39 Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 12.
Abbott had come undone over the death of his brother, his reputation for emotional restraint would have been damaged.40

The second factor that prevented Abbott from openly grieving was how the Civil War complicated the “elaborate cult of death” elite Victorian Americans had created for themselves.41 Americans at this time were much more acquainted with death than their modern counterparts, but the Civil War changed who died when, where, and under what circumstances. The widespread death that occurred during the war was not considered “ordinary death,” despite it becoming the most widely shared war experience.42 The pre-war culture had many assumptions about how death should occur, and these assumptions did not cease with the onset of war. According to the widely prevalent concept of the “Good Death,” a person’s last moments were supposed to be “witnessed, scrutinized, interpreted, narrated,” and prepared for, ideally by their family and loved ones; this was impossible for those dying in battle or in field hospitals. Death at this time was very connected to the home, and family played an integral role in the “good death.” Therefore, it was highly distressing that so many soldiers were dying away from their homes.43 This fixation with bearing witness to a loved one’s death can be seen in Abbott’s letters. Many times, soldiers attempted to find substitutes for the missing pieces of their rituals, hoping to find proof that their loved ones “died well.”44 Henry Abbott was no exception to this phenomenon, and he attempted to find substitutes for Ned’s last moments in several different ways.

42 Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, xii-xiv.
43 Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 6-10.
44 Faust, 11.
One substitute Abbott found was by openly expressing his grief for other soldiers in his regiment who were killed in battle. Outwardly mourning for a dead comrade was an appropriate form of masculine sentimentality, because it fit with the idea of the “heroic martyr” common at the time. Although Ned certainly fit into the mold of a martyr’s death, and could be easily mourned in that way by his family, Abbott felt uncomfortable expressing grief in this way since Ned fought with a different regiment, Abbott would be solitary in his pain. This was not true with the deaths of men from the 20th Massachusetts. Because the entire fighting unit shared in the grief, it was acceptable to express that sorrow in an open and honest way. This represented the moment when Abbott’s company began to transition in his mind from a band of comrades he was very fond of to a surrogate family. He habitually referred to the men killed by using very fraternal terms, and often compared their loss to the loss of his own brother. This was made easier by the fact that Civil War soldiers did not make a complete transition from civilian to military life; the fact that so many of these soldiers came from the same area meant that it was easy for them to see their fighting units as an “extension” of their communities.

One excellent example of Abbott using the grief of a comrade as a substitute for his brother was Abbott’s reaction to the death of Second Lt. Leander Alley, who was killed at the battle of Fredericksburg. When describing the death of this man to his father, Abbott stated, “You will know how I feel about his loss when I tell you that for a moment I felt the same pang as when I first heard of our great loss. I don’t want to say anything more about him now, for thinking on such a subject makes a man bluer than

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46 Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 21.
he ought to be in the presence of the enemy...”  

Abbott, *Fallen Leaves*, 149

Abbott, 162.

Abbott, 152.


Regiment. and i do not think i would of missed one of my own Brothers anymore than i do him... he as a deedful good hearted fellow and our offesers thought every thing of him...”  

Abbott wrote similar letters almost compulsively after Ned’s death. The first of these was a highly emotional missive written to Leander Alley’s mother, in which he complimented Alley’s high moral character by writing that “he was as brave, resolute, and energetic, and at the same time as tender-hearted a man as I ever knew. A great deal of the superiority of Co. I... is due to Lieut. Alley.” He also directly compared his feelings on Alley’s death to that of Ned’s once again, lamenting that, “When I first heard of his death (I didn’t see him fall), I felt the same kind of pang as when I first heard of my brother’s death...I shall never cease to think of him with love, to my dying day. Perhaps even more significant, Abbott wrote this letter to Alley’s mother on December 13th, the day of his death; he did not write to his own parents to inform them of his safety until one day later. A similar instance occurred after the battle of Gettysburg, when Abbott apologized to his father for not being able to give him an account of the battle because he had to write to two of his deceased comrades’ families. This could show that Abbott was beginning to see his comrades as being on a level equitable to his own family.

Abbott also seemed to be more conscious of his own mortality. In a January 19, 1863 letter to his father, Abbott indicated that he expected another large and costly battle to occur soon, and closed the letter by writing, “If I don’t have the luck to come back with the army, good bye to you and all the rest...” He amended this farewell with the instructions that his father should burn the letter if news came that he survived the battle, but admitted that he wanted “to take advantage of the last chance I possibly may

have to say good bye to you and all.” In this letter, Abbott also dictated that upon his death, his earnings should go to a fund established in order to help the families of those soldiers in his company who were killed or disabled.  

In antebellum culture, a considerable amount of emphasis was placed on the last moments of life and particularly “the life-defining last words.” Those at home were often eager for messages from their dying loved ones, and it is possible that Henry Abbott was attempting to prevent his parents from having to bury another son without any idea of what his last moments contained. This letter shows that Abbott took pains to provide substitutes for a “good death” for his parents in the case of his own demise.

In the months following Ned’s death, Abbott’s morale was the lowest it would be at during his military career. He was much more pessimistic, distrustful of the leadership in the army, and even angry at times. In a letter to his father after the battle of Fredericksburg, Abbott summed up the state of the army by saying, “The enthusiasm of the soldiers has been all gone for a long time. They only fight from discipline & old associations.” Many of his writings at this time painted him as a loyal dissenter, believed that “The strongest peace party is the army,” and expressed his fears that the army would “disgrace itself.” He began extensively discussing politics with not only his father but his mother as well, and often expressed to his mother his strong desire to return home. His ardent patriotism, excitement for vindication through battle, and faith in the Union army’s cause that he had gained after Ball’s Bluff was for the most part gone, and it was clear that he was fighting, like many other soldiers at the time, because his comrades were.

55 Abbott, 163.  
56 Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 10, 23.  
57 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 149.  
58 Abbott, 155, 162.
In March of 1863, the Abbott family faced another tragedy. On March 27th, Henry’s nine year old brother Arthur died of “the croup.” Abbott applied for leave on the 31st, and was able to spend about a week grieving with his family before returning to his unit on April 7th. In contrast to Ned’s death, Arthur’s passing was not mentioned in any of Abbott’s correspondence, and his little brother’s name was only mentioned once more in August, when his mother sent him a photo and he commented, “Poor little fellow, one can’t help feeling sad to look at it, though it is so pleasant to have it.” This decided difference was not because Abbott was unaffected by Arthur’s death, but instead because Arthur’s death was a much more “typical” death than Ned’s. Arthur was a child, and Victorian America was well acquainted with the deaths of children. He also was able to die at home surrounded by his family, who were able to perform the rituals and rites of a traditional “good death.” Abbott was also able to share his grief with his family; one of his greatest lamentations concerning Ned’s death was that he wished he “were at home to talk with you both about it.” It was easier for Abbott to come to terms with Arthur’s death more quickly because he was able to grieve in a traditional way, without having to alter or amend his values to fit his current situation.

During the summer of 1863, Abbott began to show signs of coming to terms with his grief. He continued writing emotionally charged letters to the families of soldiers killed, but he began to write of these same men to his own family and friends as well. Perhaps the best example of this was in how Abbott described the death of Henry Ropes to his father, writing that “Poor Henry Ropes was one of the dearest friends I ever had or expected to have. He was one of the purest-minded, noblest, most generous men I ever

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59 Abbott, 173.
60 Abbott, 196-97.
61 Faust, This Republic of Suffering, xii, 9-11.
62 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 140.
knew. His loss is terrible.” This letter also provided evidence of how grief for comrades was able to be more openly expressed. Abbott related to Ropes’ father that “His men actually wept when they showed me his body, ever under the tremendous cannonade,” showing that the men felt comfortable enough to express their lamentations even during the heat of battle.63 In this letter, a pivotal difference can also be seen in how Abbott personally dealt with Ropes’ death in comparison with Ned’s. Instead of pushing grief for Ropes from his mind, Abbott admits that he “can’t cease to think of him.” Abbott also expressed similar sentiments to his close friend and fellow soldier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., when he wrote to Holmes, “Henry Ropes’ loss I felt as I should a brother.”64 This illustrated that Abbott was not only openly exhibiting these strong emotions with his family and the families of those killed, but with his fellow survivors as well.

Abbott also began to mention Ned more often in his letters, and not necessarily in conjunction with comparing his loss to that of another soldier. He would often express his renewed sorrow when something reminded him of Ned or Ned’s death, and admitted to his father once again that he “can’t think now of him lying on that field, unable to speak, & turning his eyes to the soldier that spoke to him, without being a good deal unmanned.”65 In another significant change, Abbott began to repeatedly mention that Ned’s death was “for the best” and once stated in a letter to his younger brother Fletcher that Ned was “better off as he is.”66 Up until this point, aside from wishing to God that he could have been there when Ned died, religion had been conspicuously absent in Abbott’s progression of grief. Overall, Abbott seemed to grow more religious as the war dragged on, transitioning from a boy who repeatedly skipped chapel at Harvard to a

63 Abbott, 184.
64 Abbott, 194.
65 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 199.
66 Abbott, 212.
man who asked his mother to send him a prayer book, and this pattern may have proved true for his grieving process as well. At this point, he may have been referring to the idea of the “heavenly country.” During the Civil War, many northern civilians were able to handle their grief by focusing their hope on an eternal reunion in heaven. Many seemed willing to accept that heaven was a better world because familial reunions occurred there, along with the absence of sin, sorrow, and sickness. This was accompanied by the pivotal idea that body and soul would be preserved in heaven, and that the family would recognize each other when reunited. Abbott may have been comforted by the idea that Ned still existed on some plane of existence, and that they would meet again in the afterlife.

It is also at this point that Abbott truly emerged not only a good and valued officer, but an influential role model for other soldiers in the 20th Massachusetts. Abbott was rising in the ranks, having been promoted to major in October of 1863, and was at certain points in temporary control of the regiment. Recognized as being one of the longest serving officers in the 20th Massachusetts, despite only being twenty-one years of age, he was looked upon as an example to less experienced officers. Sumner Paine, a promising seventeen year old lieutenant killed at Gettysburg, often spoke of Abbott in glowing terms, such as in the following letter to his father: “Company I is the best drilled company in the regiment, and Captain Abbott is the best officer this regiment has ever

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67 Abbott, 78.
had. He could handle a brigade better than half the Brigadier Generals in the service.”

The success and strong reputation of the 20th Massachusetts reflected on Abbott as its even temporary commander, and earned him recognition from generals such as Gibbon and Meade. In the last few months of his life, Abbott grew into himself and his role as officer. Abbott’s transformation in his personal views on war are perhaps the most extreme change in ideals he went though, for in September of 1863, in a letter to his mother, he described himself as being “naturally of a warlike & ferocious, & not of a domestic turn,” a direct contrast to how he saw himself at the beginning of the war.

Abbott’s feelings about his comrades had fully transitioned from fighting unit to pseudo-familial unit. He expressed the deep feelings he had for his fellow soldiers in this letter to his father: “Before the war, one could scarcely feel the same for a companion, untried as those friends since made have been by the scorching ordeal of this war, which discloses all the noblest qualities of the noblest men.” Even when given the opportunity for great personal gain, Abbott refused to leave his regiment; he refused both an offer to advance to lieutenant colonel of another regiment, and an offer of leave to see his family, in order to stay with the regiment he believed needed him.

It was possible that Abbott and the 20th Massachusetts were experiencing the phenomenon of “small-unit” or “primary group” cohesion. This was the bond soldiers formed with those closest to them, particularly with their companies and regiments, and the dependence they had on their fellow soldiers in order to fight. The members of the primary group were thought of as “brothers,” often referred to as such, and the unit itself served the

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71 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 217.
72 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 223.
73 Abbott, 208-09.
purpose of a surrogate family. There was nothing short of love amongst veterans who fought together for extended periods of time, and leaving the unit would be the same as leaving family. Loyalty to members of the primary group did not end with the end of life; to leave or betray the primary group would be the same as dishonoring the dead.74 This cohesion extended far beyond the battlefield, and the close bond of Abbott’s surrogate family allowed him to create a space where he felt comfortable openly expressing his emotions away from his home.

Abbott’s usage of surrogates in his grief for his brother culminated in September of 1863, upon his visit to the Cedar Mountain battlefield. Significant preparation went into this visit, and Abbott made sure he was accompanied by a guide, so as to stand as close as possible to the location of his brother’s death.75 After his visit to Cedar Mountian, he sent an extremely descriptive letter to his parents detailing the experience, as well as how he imagined his brother’s final moments. He wrote that “Ned advances through the field, where he is met by a heavy fire from the front and the bushes on his right, driving him back with tremendous loss, & it is back on the edge of the wood that he is at last hit.” He then openly expressed anger and frustration with Ned’s death, writing that, “When I look at the place, I think he was murdered…Think of that noble life lost by the heartless vanity of the politician who wishes to have the newspapers say that he advanced &c…”76 Abbott was fixated on the idea of seeing the spot where Ned was killed because that was the closest he would be able to come to witnessing his brother’s last moments. By sharing this experience with his parents in detail, the Abbott family found the best means for giving Ned a “good death” given the situation. This was

74 Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 158-59; McPherson, For Cause & Comrades, 85-87.
75 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 206.
76 Abbott, 217.
only possible because Abbott felt comfortable enough with his surrogate family, his fighting unit, to allow himself to visit the old battlefield and come to terms with his grief.

May 6, 1864 was Henry’s Abbott’s little brother Frank’s twelfth birthday. It was also the last day of Henry Abbott’s life. During the ferocious battle of the Wilderness, the 20th Massachusetts once again found themselves in the thick of the worst fighting, and once again proved themselves worthy of their reputation by consenting to do the impossible.77 As the Harvard Regiment headed directly into the fray at the Brock Road-Plank Road intersection after being asked to make an unreasonable advance, the face of Henry Livermore Abbott was spotted by Colonel Theodore Lyman, a member of Meade’s staff. Lyman recounted the impression the young major made in the following way: “Abbot smiled and waved his sword towards me, as he rode by, and I called out to him wishing him good luck.” The sight of Abbott cheerfully leading his men into battle would remain with Lyman for the rest of his life, and he would forever remember him as “a man who could ride into the fight with a smile on his face.”78 Henry Abbott died the epitome of the cool, restrained man. John Perry, the assistant surgeon of the 20th, remembered him as “an ideal man; an ideal officer, reverenced by his friends and deeply respected by all who knew him. What will become of the Twentieth without him I cannot imagine; for he was its life, its discipline, and its success.”79 Abbott was remembered not only as a heroic martyr, but as a shining example of the coolness and masculinity he struggled with emulating throughout the war.

Henry Abbott’s death itself fit into the pattern of grief he displayed during his life; his comrades mourned him in a very similar way to how he mourned his comrades.

77 Miller, Harvard’s Civil War, 336-37.
78 Abbott, Fallen Leaves, 250-51.
79 Abbott, 253.
Although it is unknown whether or not any of Abbott’s comrades wrote to his parents after his death, the tale of their son’s heroic demise almost certainly reached the Abbott family. One example of an attempt at a good death does survive in the official report of General Winfield S. Hancock, Abbott’s corps commander, when he referred to Abbott as “a brilliant young officer,” and praised him for “his courageous conduct in action, the high state of discipline in his regiment,” and “his devotion to duty.” Reports such as these would assure Abbott’s loved ones that he died ‘well.’ Thirty years after Abbott’s death, the event was still on the minds of his men. A man named Donnelly, a corporal under Abbott’s command, reflected on the moment of Abbott’s death by writing, “I had learned to love and admire him. The tears welled up in my eyes at the time, even through such an appalling scene…His death was universally regretted.” Similarly, in a Memorial Day address years later, Abbott’s close friend Oliver Wendell Holmes emotionally regretted his death in very familial terms: “He was little more than a boy, but the grizzled corps commanders knew and admired him; and for us, who not only admired, but loved, his death seemed to end a portion of our life also.” Finally, Frank Bartlett mourns Abbott in a way very similar to how Abbott mourned his own brother; a way in which a family member would lament the denial of a “good death.” In a letter to his mother, Bartlett exclaimed, “Oh! If I only could have seen him!”

Historian Steven E. Woodworth aptly observed that “Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of the Civil War may be how little it changed, rather than how

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81 Miller, 342.
82 Miller, 40-41.
83 Miller, 342.
much.” To some extent, this is true in the case of Henry Abbott. Throughout his three years of soldiering, Henry Abbott’s overall views on grief and death, or his ideals concerning manliness, changed very little. The true change occurred in how these ideals were implemented. Through his use of surrogates for both his family and the creation of the “good death,” Abbott was able not only to grieve for his brother, but also come to terms with the stresses the Civil War placed on his ingrained ideological world. By finding avenues through which the implementation of his traditional views on manliness and death could be altered, Abbott was able to salvage his ideological foundations and apply them to a new world of carnage and violence, even when that world threatened to tear those foundations apart.

Bibliography


On September 8, 1934, the steam-liner *Morro Castle* was sailing up the New Jersey coast on a return trip from Havana, Cuba when it mysteriously set on fire. The captain had suffered a fatal heart attack just hours before, adding to the level of suspicion cast on the tragedy that claimed the lives of 137 of the passengers. Over the ensuing years, investigators, researchers, and historians alike gathered hordes of evidence and testimony concerning this voyage in an attempt to decipher what exactly happened on that fateful night. Although a tragedy such as this brings nothing but pain and anguish to those involved, much can be learned historically from the increased collection of information. In this way, the tragedy of the *Morro Castle* can thus provide a window into various facets of American history that otherwise would be shrouded in the normalcy of events. It is no surprise, for example, that the historical sources on the *Morro Castle*’s sister ship, the *Oriente*, are rather sparse in comparison.

After the Roaring Twenties, etched in memories by F. Scott Fitzgerald and his contemporaries’ portrayal of a society bent on lavish and pleasurable pursuits, Americans experienced a depression unparalleled before in the annals of United States history. Leisure in the 1930’s, which had been so accessible in the past decade, suddenly became something of dreams for many as the Great Depression took its toll. The development of cruising, however, tells a different story. Until this point, cruising had been reserved for those in the elite echelons of society. One needs only to think of the abundant excesses from the *Titanic* as a point of reference. Developments such as the Great Depression, Prohibition, and the allure of Cuba in its American connection modified and expanded cruising as a form of leisure in the 1930’s. Rather than from any
inherent consumer demand for cruises, these external forces helped shape the cruising industry and set it on a path that would see increased demand in subsequent decades. These developments expanded the cruising industry to not just the economic elite but also many in the middle-class as well. What is all the more remarkable is that this increased accessibility for the middle class to cruising as a form of leisure occurred in the midst of incomparable economic hardship. Using the Morro Castle as a case study will thus provide insight into the development of leisure in 1930’s America and show how and why this was a pivotal moment for cruising as a form of leisure.¹

The development of the Morro Castle and its sister ship the Oriente in 1930 arose out of unique circumstances in regards to the American economy. While both of these ships were designed for a New York City to Havana run, steam-liners traveling between these two cities were not a newfound invention. Rather, by 1930 this run had been prevalent for almost a century. In 1840 and 1841, Samuel Cunard, head of the newly founded Cunard Line, designed four steam-liners to carry mail between the U.S. and Great Britain in a timely and scheduled fashion. These ships, along with carrying the Royal Mail, also had the capacity to carry 115 passengers.² By 1859, there was a similar type of mail run between the U.S. and Cuba. Richard Henry Dana’s 1859 travel account To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage, illustrates the fact that this mail run also took passengers on its scheduled runs between New York and Havana. As the U.S. Mail

¹ I owe a great deal of thanks to Deb Whitcraft and all the others at the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History in Beach Haven, New Jersey for providing me with access to all of their abundant resources and personal interviews on the Morro Castle. For more information on the Morro Castle disaster that took place on September 8, 1934, see Brian Hicks, When the Dancing Stopped: The Real Story of the Morro Castle Disaster and Its Deadly Wake (New York: Free Press, 2006); or Gretchen Coyle and Deborah C. Whitcraft, Inferno at Sea: Stories of Death and Survival Aboard the Morro Castle (West Creek, NJ: Down the Shore Publishing, 2012). These two more recent works provide very definitive explanations of the mysterious events surrounding the fire and the ensuing investigation.
Steamer *Cahawba* takes off from its crowded pier, Dana recalled, “inexperienced passengers run against everybody,” not knowing who is who as they commence an uncertain but exciting journey south.³

In the early 1900’s, cruising as a form of leisure had increased in popularity. It was “fashionable for the wealthy to cross the Atlantic,” often going to Europe but sometimes to the Caribbean as well.⁴ These ocean-liners were reserved mostly for the social elite. The second and third class accommodations that did exist were consequently “Spartan at best,” with a “crowded public toilet and bath facilities.”⁵ Throughout the first thirty years of the twentieth century, this exclusively elite image held dominance in the realm of cruising. Again, one can only think of the exquisiteness of the *Titanic*. Although this type of vacation attached to a practical mail route had been going on for almost a century, many in 1930 still saw it as something newfound. Thomas Torresson Jr., third assistant purser on the *Morro Castle*, believed that the idea of people “going on a round trip, on a cruise, such a thing, was kind of new.”⁶

The Ward Line similarly had a humble, one man beginning in 1841, founded singlehandedly by James O. Ward. In 1930, the Ward Line was still considered to be the “oldest operating company in the United States.”⁷ In 1930, under the auspices of the Merchant Marine Act, designed to “increase private shipbuilding and help the merchant marine get an edge in world competition,” the Ward Line designed two new ships, the

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⁵ Dickinson and Vladimir, *Selling the Sea*, p. 6.
Morro Castle and the Oriente. It was through this 1928 Merchant Marine Act that the Morro Castle received its main source of income—a $750,000 a year government contract to carry mail between New York and Havana.\(^8\) Although the Morro Castle was designed to hold 489 passengers and 240 crew members, advancing the trend of vacationing on these practical-oriented voyages, “the passengers were not their bread and butter, not how they made their money. The Ward Line that owned the ship made most of their money in shipping.”\(^9\)

Apart from the main source of income through the government mail contract, the Morro Castle also had a plethora of other ways in which it made money, most of which were not entirely legal, including an illegal fur trade. Marjorie Gianini, a twenty-three year old newlywed honeymooning onboard during the Morro Castle disaster, remembers having jumped off the ship because of the horrid smell of pelts burning.\(^10\)

Stories of contraband and other illegal activities were not uncommon on the Morro Castle, which consistently made headlines due to many of these nefarious activities. Helen Brodie Hoye, another passenger during the time of the disaster, recalled in a later interview that they were “most definitely carrying arms on its downward voyage to Havana on a weekly basis.”\(^11\) Torresson noted that the ship often carried automobiles along with arms and munitions, and brought back pineapples, bananas, coconuts, and

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\(^8\) Ibid., p. 15-17; Brian Hicks, \textit{When the Dancing Stopped: The Real Story of the Morro Castle Disaster and Its Deadly Wake} (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 9, 13. This government measure, also known as the Jones White Act, despite being put forth as an economic stimulus for shipping, also was a way in which the government could provide naval auxiliaries in the event of war. Each ship had to be built to specifications that would “allow for quick conversions to warships or troop transports.” Hicks, \textit{When the Dancing Stopped}, p. 13; \textit{Inferno at Sea: Morro Castle}, directed by Melissa Jo Peltier (Burbank, CA: MPH Entertainment Inc., 1997), DVD.

\(^9\) Marjorie Gianini, interview by Deborah Whitcraft and Gretchen Coyle, undated, DVD. Accessed in Museum of New Jersey Maritime History.

\(^10\) Ibid.

Illegal immigrants and stowaways were also commonplace on the *Morro Castle*. Jerry Edgerton, fourth assistant radio room operator for the ship, remembered that “there were always stowaways,” on board. Despite this “dubious reputation” held by the *Morro Castle*, executives of the Ward Line either did not know or (more likely) “did not care as long as the mail was faithfully delivered and bottom line financials showed a profit.” Notwithstanding these disreputable undercurrents, those running the ship put on a façade of regality and relaxation for its passengers on board.

Many considered the two new state of the art ships to be “floating hotels capable of competition with the biggest foreign liners.” The ships, designed by America’s premier naval architect, Theodore Ferris, were “really designed after the great Atlantic liners of the 1920’s and 1930’s.” Veneered paneling, lush draperies, and plush furniture all emphasized the fact that passengers “wanted a lot of comfort.” What differed from the past ocean-liners, however, was the social and economic make-up of the passengers on board. Where in the past only the socially elite who could afford such an extravagant trip were privy to such exquisite happenings, now those in the middle class could partake in these voyages as well.

Ralph Giordano, a historian of American culture in the twentieth century, noted that as the effects of the depression set in, many leisure companies “saw the need to offer economical vacations.” Thus, “ocean liners began offering short cruises for the less

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12 Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002.
14 Coyle and Whitcraft, *Inferno at Sea*, p. 13, 23. It is difficult to say how much the passengers themselves knew of these illegal activities. It seems that Marjorie Gianini was surprised at the smell of burning pelts, emphasizing the belief that many of these illegal activities were well hidden from the passengers.
16 *Inferno at Sea: Morro Castle*, directed by Melissa Jo Peltier (Burbank, CA: MPH Entertainment Inc., 1997), DVD.
wealthy vacationer.”17 This is just what the Ward Line did with the *Morro Castle*. On its maiden voyage in 1930, the cheapest cabins were advertised from $140. After three to four years of a depression-starved economy, however, one could find a “seven day all expense cruise to Havana for $65” a cabin.18 This lowering of rates, which was not necessary before the effects of Great Depression had set in, “allowed for a broader clientele” that did not simply consist of wealthy elites.19

While a cruise was a regular vacation for the rich, for many in the middle class it was the chance of a lifetime who “saved religiously to afford such a luxury.”20 Although these lavish cruises found on steam-liners such as the *Morro Castle* “reinforced the image that had emerged from the first-class transatlantic voyages of the 1920’s,” the social and economic make-up of the passengers on board was far from simply elitist.21 An integral shift had occurred in this form of leisure, spurred by the depression, which witnessed a creation of opportunity for those in lower classes. Vacations for those in the middle-class were viewed as “not only desirable, but also essential.” At least, this is the image espoused in advertising. In 1930, the *Ladies Home Journal* advised readers to “save nickels and dimes from food and clothing; get your vacations, and never, never, say they are not important.”22

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17 Giordano, *Fun and Games in Twentieth Century America*, p. 105-106.
18 Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002; Hicks, *When the Dancing Stopped*, p. 18. On this page, Brian Hicks notes that this lowered rate is about the equivalent of $900 in early twenty-first century dollars, a considerable sum but still attainable for many in the middle-class.
20 Coyle and Whitcraft, p. 14. Apart from the work of Hicks and Coyle and Whitcraft, another good source to consult for a typical sampling of the types of passengers on board is Joseph Hergesheimer, “The Casual Ark,” in *Saturday Evening Post* 206, no. 41 (Apr. 7, 1934): 14-90, 7p. This source, contemporary to the *Morro Castle*, provides a perspective of a passenger on such a cruise ship. His section “Regimented Americans” provides clear insight into the types of people cruising at this time.
21 Dickinson and Vladimir, *Selling the Sea*, p. 16.
22 Giordano, *Fun and Games in Twentieth Century America*, p. 106.
Many who could not afford a cruise for themselves found a way to partake in a trip regardless. Helen Brodie Hoye, for example, went in lieu of her sick cousin with her cousin’s family, all staying in one cabin to save on expenses. Some passengers even boarded in Havana and took only the return trip north to New York, presumably paying a lower fare. One such woman, Madeleine Desvernine, noted that she shared a C-Deck cabin with another woman to save on expenses. The opportunity to take a vacation such as this was unheard of before this lowering of rates for many, even if they were hit hard by the depression. In an era of “desperate desires and diminished expectations,” it was a chance of a lifetime that could not be passed up.

This downward flow of leisurely opportunity reflects a greater trend in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American culture. It is what American cultural historian Michael Kammen called the “entertainment discount revolution.” This trend began in the 1880’s with a decline in popular pricing for amusements such as vaudeville and early cinema theaters. Similarly, in the 1930’s as a result of the depression, this discounting trend seeped into the leisure form of cruising through the lowering of rates. While it is most likely the entertainment discount revolution began in the 1880’s from a high demand for leisurely pursuits such as attending the theater, the subsequent discount revolution in cruising arose as a result of the sinking economy. Cruising as a new form of leisure for many, however, was too enticing an opportunity to pass up once the prices became affordable. Although this trend did not occur on a “mass-oriented”

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23 Helen Brodie Hoye, interviewed in Tragedy at Sea [documentary], produced by John Geary, 1990. DVD.
25 Inferno at Sea: Morro Castle, directed by Melissa Jo Peltier, 1997. DVD.
scale as it did with magazines or television after the Second World War, it still reflects this ongoing development in the smaller niche of leisure.\textsuperscript{27}

Regarding leisure and culture in the early twentieth century, Michael Kammen argues that the 1930’s and beginning of 1940’s represented a sort of “proto-mass culture” for many Americans. Before every family owned a radio and/or a television set—definitive examples of mass culture—there were approximately two decades in which “persons of all classes and taste levels [could] pick and choose which aspects and objects of commercial culture they [wished] to have or attend.”\textsuperscript{28} Although again only representing a small niche of leisure when compared to a commodity as universal as the radio, the availability of cruising in the 1930’s as evidenced by the lowering of rates for the \textit{Morro Castle} demonstrates this proto-mass culture. It must be noted that even today cruising is not wholly mass culture.\textsuperscript{29} The widening of opportunity for people across several different class levels to choose to take a cruise as a leisurely pursuit was introduced in the 1930’s in the midst of the Great Depression. The very thought of cruising was enticing enough, but two other factors—Prohibition and the allure of Cuba—need to be considered when dealing with this increased opportunity in this form of leisure. The rest of this study will thus focus on what passengers would have experienced on a typical \textit{Morro Castle} cruise, based on primary testimony from \textit{Morro Castle} survivors and other contemporary accounts, to illustrate the importance of these factors.

What the \textit{Morro Castle} and other cruise ships of the time represented for Americans was escape—an escape from the depression stricken streets of their

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 167.
\textsuperscript{29} While mass culture fosters the notion of the citizen as a consumer, this type is normally associated with the transmission of culture through media rather than through people’s daily interactions.
hometowns where people struggled to make ends meet. On a luxury cruise-liner, these same people could be treated like royalty. Joseph Hergesheimer, remarking on his own American cruise in 1933, stated in the Saturday Evening Post that people on board were “engaged by luxury, pleasure, and the present: the abstract future was fainter in their minds than the island of Martinique, rapidly vanishing in a tender, blue haze of evening.”30 Passengers, by partaking in a cruise, attempted to mask themselves in this blue haze and hide from the hardships normally experienced in depression America. As Hergesheimer summarized, the “world of land had been replaced with a world of water.”31 Cruising was escapism at its finest. Even so, if escaping to Havana down the Atlantic coast on a “floating hotel” was not enough to convince someone to invest in a cruise vacation, the endless and flowing quantities of alcohol on board were.

Many cruise ships during Prohibition (and after to a lesser extent) were no more than “oceangoing bars.”32 Drinks were served at almost all times of day to passengers eager not to miss a beat. Drinking was “maintained at a high, unflagging level.”33 Even before the bars had opened for the day, drinks were present in high quantities. By noon, thought by contemporaries to be the time for beer, many were indulging themselves with whiskey highballs. Hergesheimer recalled that one day, in the middle of an incredibly hot morning, three passengers drinking from green cordials invited him to

31 Ibid., p. 89.
32 Hicks, When the Dancing Stopped, p. 13. Although Prohibition was a long-term phenomenon, beginning with anti-alcohol sentiments in the early nineteenth century, the term generally denotes the years 1919 to 1933. Two events bookend this era: the Volstead Act on October 28, 1919, which created the Prohibition Bureau, and the Repeal of Prohibition with the twenty-first amendment on December 5, 1933. See Thomas R. Pegram, Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America (1800-1933) (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998).
have one with them on the house. Upon refusing, Hergesheimer was followed by these three (only slightly inebriated) passengers with “protests and a glass.”

The crew, instead of being instructed to monitor alcohol intake, were encouraged to facilitate it. The ship line owners knew what attracted people and did not want to disappoint passengers by having a less than considerable amount of alcohol on board. Third assistant purser Thomas Torresson noted that many crew members had only one extracurricular obligation apart from their normal jobs: to help people drink. He, like many others workers, was given a weekly bar account of fourteen dollars, with which he was instructed “to buy drinks for the passengers.” Seeing that drinks “were something like twenty cents” a piece, factored in with the large number of crew on board, this often resulted in quite the night for many passengers.

When drinking was not on the immediate to do list, Morro Castle Cruise Director Bob Smith and his assistant Herman Cluthe were put in charge of ensuring the passengers constantly remained entertained in some fashion. On the Morro Castle deck, there were bridge games, contests, courts for shuffle board, flying fish, moving pictures, horse racing with wooden horses and dice. There was a gymnasium, a library, a doctor’s office, a barber shop, a general store, children’s playroom, and a writing room. Even more, there were innumerable gambling opportunities and of course dancing at night. In 1934, the Morro Castle’s newest feature was the aptly named “Sea Spray” attraction. The crew would pump hundreds of gallons of seawater on the deck to allow passengers to splash around and cool off while

34 Ibid., p. 14, 15, 90.
35 Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002.
under the hot sun. Many of these activities took place in a regal and elegant interior, with each room taking on a unique theme. Marjorie Gianini remembered the ship as being “beautiful,” while life on the ship “was just lovely.” Because the ship had no air conditioning, the ship’s architect Theodore Ferris designed “ducts that ran behind false, wood-paneled cabin walls,” allowing air to circulate throughout the ship. As a result, advertisements for the ship noted that it was “Sea Cooled.”

There was a quite popular smoking room, decorated in Italian Renaissance style with card tables, comfortable chairs, and smoking stands throughout. Hergesheimer noted the great popularity this room held, always full of excited and vivacious chatter. A wide array of galas and dances were arranged for nightly entertainment. The balloon dances, in which prizes were given, were popular. Of particular interest was the masquerade ball held every Wednesday night. Torresson noted that many of the crew were given time off to attend this dance. He recalled that “we had to dress up, masquerade costume, and dance with the girls.” In discussing his poor dancing skills, he noted that the ship “didn’t have stabilizers in those days... so the ship rolled and everybody rolled with the ship, so it wasn’t too bad.” For many, however, the real excitement began when the ship docked in Havana. This cultural allure, so prevalent in the early twentieth century, was made popular in American culture through various means and methods.

In Cuba, it is said, “all roads led to Rum.” In an attempt to escape from reality and the effects of the Great Depression, people believed that in Cuba “conscience takes a

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37 Hicks, *When the Dancing Stopped*, p. 18.
38 Marjorie Gianini, interview by Deborah Whitcraft and Gretchen Coyle, undated, DVD.
41 Coyle and Whitcraft, *Inferno at Sea*, p. 20; Torressson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002.
American perceptions of Cuba had been shaped by its seductive and intriguing appearance in theater plays and movies, songs and radio programs. In *You’ll Never Get Rich* (1941), scenery behind the actors alludes to a picturesque vision of Havana: palm trees, Spanish-style façades of houses, and an entrance to Havana Harbor, guarded by the picturesque Morro Castle fortress. Fred Astaire sings Cole Porter’s “So Near and Yet So Far,” a song that alludes to the mystique and almost exotic nature of Cuba. Havana, then known as “the gayest city in the western world,” was something of a fantasy island in American perceptions. Basil Wood’s published tourist guide *When It’s Cocktail Time in Cuba* (1928) alluded to the strong presence of alcohol in this country. He stated that in Cuba you could do what you could never do in the states—“drink to your heart’s content.” In this way, Americans of the early twentieth century developed an intrigue in this country Gustavo Firmat terms the “Havana Habit.” It was truly the pinnacle of escapism for Americans mired in depression-era hardships at home.

What the movies, plays, and tourist brochures did not portray, though, was the real Cuba: a Cuba full of crime, political turmoil, and Communist threats of usurpation. Because of this, the Ward Line strictly regulated the area in which passengers could travel. In doing so, cruise officials effectively attempted to create a Cuba that had been made famous in the minds of Americans by shutting out reality from their designated area. Still, Havana was “wide open,” and it was inevitable that if the passengers would not seek out illicit pleasures, the illicit pleasures would seek them out

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46 Coyle and Whitcraft, *Inferno at Sea*, p. 23.
instead.\textsuperscript{47} A land full of hand rolled cigars and plentiful rum waited for eager passengers who sought to suspend reality and continue living in their fantasy world.

One way one could spend a night in Havana was by making a nightclub tour in which you followed the team of musicians known as “the rumba king and queen of Havana.” By making the tour, you could see them at about four nightclubs. In total, there were eight nightclubs you could visit in the area designated by the Ward Line, including the famous Sans Souci, “one of the most famous nightclubs in the world.”\textsuperscript{48} Gambling, of course, was also a prevalent activity in Cuban night life. Torresson recalled at one time winning sixty dollars at a jai alai game and then treating his mother to dinner at the aforesaid Sans Souci.\textsuperscript{49}

In the daytime, Cruise Director Bob Smith offered designed packages for tours in Havana. These tours, the Valdez tours, were designed to give passengers “the impression they had seen much of Cuba in a very short time.” Passengers would be loaded into the tour company’s sedans and driven around various parts of the town that the Ward Line and the separate tour company had decided were safe.\textsuperscript{50} Still, some passengers did make regrettable choices which showed the dark underbelly of the city and exposed the Ward Line’s attempts to construct the fantasy island of American perceptions. For example, Torresson recalled that one seventeen year-old girl had left her parents while in Havana and later that night, at 11:00, returned with a Cuban gigolo. After the ship’s crew members on watch told them he was not allowed to come on the

\textsuperscript{47} Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002.
\textsuperscript{48} Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002
\textsuperscript{49} Hicks, \textit{When the Dancing Stopped}, p. 19. The story of Tom Torresson winning sixty dollars at a jai alai game is actually in reference to a cruise he took on the \textit{Morro Castle} before he worked on the ship. The experience left such an impact on him that he then decided to take the job on the very same ship as third assistant purser.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}; Hicks, \textit{When the Dancing Stopped}, p. 19.
ship, he took her to the dock and tried to rape her. The crew members thankfully became aware of the situation and threw the man off the dock.51

In sum, the allure of Cuba was an attraction to a created myth of American culture and media. The Ward Line and cooperating companies in Havana did their best to portray this fantasy island, and for the most part, they succeeded. The attraction of unlimited alcohol both on the ship and in the port city, especially during the years Prohibition was in effect, with enticing novelties and activities offered by Bob Smith on the ship, and of course the extravagant night life of Havana itself all combined to give passengers the experience of a lifetime. It is no wonder families and individuals would save religiously just to partake in one of these voyages.

Whether in regards to the New Deal, the Popular Front, or leisurely pursuits, the 1930’s was “the decade of participation and belonging.”52 This statement is relevant to the Morro Castle context on two levels. Firstly, the “entertainment discount revolution” passengers experienced as a result of the Great Depression was followed by a vastly heightened and expanded participation rate in cruising. That is not to suggest more people went on cruises, but rather that a more socially and economically diverse group of people went on cruises. Secondly, this sense of participation and belonging permeated into activities on the cruise ship itself. Whether it was dancing around in the newfound “Sea Spray” attraction on deck or passing the time playing card games and drinking rum in the smoking room, the Morro Castle and other contemporary ships espoused a tradition of participation. For middle-class families, it was a new experience all around through which they all bonded. Elitism surely continued to thrive in such an

51 Torresson, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and David D’Onofrio, September 25, 2002.
52 Warren Susman, quote in Kammen, American Culture American Tastes, p. 84.
environment, but much less so than before. Thus, many of the political ideals put forth through the New Deal and the Popular Front flooded various forms of leisure, albeit somewhat expensive forms, such as cruising.

Walt Disney, a middlebrow self-made man, in a 1942 radio address at intermission during a performance of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, discussed to the crowd what he called “Our American Culture.” In this address, Disney went on to argue that the word ‘culture’ itself seemed “snobbish” and had an “un-American connotation.” In Disney’s view, such a snobbish and tyrannous form of culture that was guarded by the socially elite was intolerable because culture belonged “equally to all of us.” In the 1930’s United States, cultural opportunities existed for the “rich and poor alike in great abundance.” 53 The shift in cruising as a form of leisure reflects this Disney-era populism, even if on a smaller scale than many forms of leisure.

It must be acknowledged that not all could afford a vacation as extravagant as a luxury cruise from New York to Havana, even with the entertainment discount revolution, but the 1930’s witnessed a downward expansion and proliferation of opportunity for middle-class families and individuals. This was not an inherent demand by the middle-class to suddenly wish to cruise more. Rather, exterior circumstances permitted the opportunities to arise. These changed opportunities have remained salient since the 1930’s. This social and economic shift in cruising in this decade solidified and subsequently set in motion the modern notion of cruising. The cruise of today is certainly not an egalitarian vacation in which anyone can afford any cabin, but various opportunities exist for those who are very wealthy and for those with meager incomes alike. Once the ticket is purchased, activities on board and services offered are

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available for all in an equal manner. This was a novel idea for many in the middle-class in the 1930’s. Where the rich expected the elegance and excesses, those in the middle-class were delightfully surprised. Abundant alcohol and a visit to the port city made famous in American culture both also served as enticing aspects that passengers would recall to their children in years to come.

The Morro Castle disaster of September 8, 1934 changed considerably the lives of all those on board who survived. It was an event that would never be forgotten by both the survivors themselves and historians who were drawn to the intrigue of this mystery. What this paper has attempted to convey, however, is that perhaps what happened before the disaster also changed considerably the lives of many passengers. For numerous middle-class families and individuals on board, this was a unique experience that they had only dreamed of before. For those on board the fateful voyage of the Morro Castle, the disaster most likely erased the fond memories of the cruise itself. That does not mean, however, that these good memories of nighttime dances, drunken socialization, and the blue haze of evening upon arriving to the alluring Havana port need be lost to memory. For most who were lucky enough to partake in such a cruise, it was an escape from reality that left an indelible mark on their lives as one of the finest examples of American culture available in the early twentieth century.
Figure 1: An advertisement from the Ward Line detailing seven day cruising schedules from July to October. This advertisement also emphasizes the $65 minimum rate for a cabin, which would have attracted many eager vacationers in the middle-class. (Photo courtesy of Deb Whitcraft and the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History)
Figure 4: Thomas Torresson, who served as third assistant purser on the Morro Castle. When the disaster struck in September of 1934, Tom was just completing his first summer of employment with the Ward Line. (Photo courtesy of Deb Whitcraft and the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History)
Figure 5: Depiction of a typical horse racing game with wooden horses on the deck of the *Morro Castle*.
(Photo courtesy of Deb Whitcraft and the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History)
Figure 6: Passengers playing shuffle board on the deck of the *Morro Castle*. Cruise Director Bob Smith is shown on the far right.  
(Photo courtesy of Deb Whitcraft and the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History)
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"La Bretagne aux Bretons?": Cultural Revival and Redefinition of Brittany in Post-1945 France
By Gabriella Hornbeck

A sense of national identity in France has been defined and redefined throughout the twentieth century. With a history encompassing two world wars, the creation of the European Union, and decolonization of former French colonies, particularly in Indochina and Algeria, there have been notable increases in immigration to France.¹ These actions have forced France to question the nature of its national and cultural identity. In addition to recent immigrant culture, there are also individual cultures that have existed within France’s borders for centuries. One such area of France is known as Brittany or Bretagne in French. The Bretons, a Celtic people, were forced out of Great Britain by the Anglo-Saxons during the fifth century. Establishing themselves in the northwestern part of France, they remained largely separated from the rest of the country during the Middle Ages, perpetuating Celtic cultural traditions and developing their own language.² Contemporary Breton society interprets many of these traditions, illustrating the struggle to define cultural identity which many regions in France continue to grapple with. The liberation of German occupied France in 1944, as well as the regional reorganization of France during the 1970s and the 1980s, both serve as periods of great change in modern French history, which are paralleled by periods of cultural redefinition in Brittany. These two significant periods of cultural revival in post-1945 Brittany illustrate the continued struggle with the French question of national and cultural identity.

² William F. Edmiston and Annie Duménil, La France contemporaine, 4th ed. (Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2010), 40.
The occupation in Brittany began with the arrival of German soldiers in Rennes on June 18, 1940. As German soldiers, along with the Wehrmacht, began to control France, Brittany was relegated to the northern occupied zone which was separated from the southern Vichy “free” zone, although it was still subject to laws imposed by said Vichy government. Brittany serves as a microcosm of pertinent events during the French experience in World War II. Just as with the whole of France during this period, no blanket statement can be made that all citizens were either collaborationists or members of the resistance. During the occupation, there was “confusion about who was really Brittany’s enemy.” While some Bretons became prisoners of war and were sent to Germany, some seventy-seven other Bretons were killed in 1943 RAF (Royal Air Force) air-raids. Although the number of pro-fascist Breton nationalists was likely marginal, an “intolerant [and] aggressive sense of bretonnitude” was ingrained in the culture as a whole. Those active pro-fascist individuals, largely drawn from the Breton National Party (Le Parti nationale breton, PNB), expected a potential equality in partnership with the Nazis, but ultimately became simply “tolerated.” This tolerance was manifested in a number of ways, such as the influence of compelling speeches on German approval of nationalist recruitment of Breton POWs, and the establishment of Luckenwalde, a Breton POW camp which taught Breton-language courses. Additionally, under the occupation, there was a greater investigation of Breton culture through “Celtic Studies,”

4 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 212-218.
7 Ibid., 216.
8 Ibid., 22; PNB stands for Parti nationale de bretagne in French.
9 Ibid., 22.
as well as “a study [of] Brittany’s pre historic past.”10 PNB member Roparz Hemon even defined a unified Breton language in 1941, a key aspect of ensuing and continuing Breton cultural nationalism.11

While some PNB members were hoping to find an ally for an autonomous Brittany in the Nazis, members of the French Resistance became a part of “a unique process of ‘mutual discovery.’”12 The approximately 1.5 percent of the Breton population who were involved with the Resistance were crossing cultural and religious divides in their contact with other areas of France.13 Therefore, the end of German occupation presented a nuanced and paradoxical political and cultural aftermath in Brittany. The Resistance had bred a “sense of common suffering,” creating an opportunity for integration into France.14 At the same time, the PNB became a “source of shame,” and created a negative association with nationalist politics and, to an extent, the “ancestral language.”15 A few years following the war a mixed perception of purely Breton cultural practices developed, indicating and fostering a division between cultural and political nationalism. While a 1948 festival in Quimper saw protestors shouting “‘collaborators!’,” a Breton priest in 1949 approved a “festival of Breton-language poetry and dance,” indicating a developing sentiment in favor of Breton cultural nationalism.16 The cultural revival following World War II was ironic in that it propagated the same Celtic traditions which the “shame[ful]” PNB had supported, but singular in that it led to an, at

10 Ibid., 225.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 226-228
14 Ibid., 229.
15 Ibid., 230.
16 Ibid., 232.
least temporary, division between Breton nationalist politics and Breton cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{17}

The war and the occupation impacted not only the interpretation of the political and cultural landscape of Brittany, but also its geographical divisions. The German occupation of France demonstrated the 1941 Vichy governmental decision to develop a regional system; Brittany officially became the “Region of Brittany.”\textsuperscript{18} The general idea of a regional system, which created new dividing lines throughout France, would later be revived during the Fifth Republic, providing an impetus for the second major cultural revival in Brittany’s post-1945 history.\textsuperscript{19} Beginning with President Georges Pompidou in 1973, and culminating in the “Defferre laws” under President François Mitterand in 1982, the resulting administrative decentralization became a major reform during the latter half of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{20} This policy represented a broader concept of decentralization of the economy and culture throughout France.\textsuperscript{21} This regional system was intended to provide more autonomy in addition to “a better balance of powers” between the national and local government.\textsuperscript{22} Additionally, this system reorganized France into “Regions,” 22 of which are a part of continental France, and the other five of which are overseas.\textsuperscript{23} This resulted in the largely disregarded “cultural and historic identity” of Brittany, as well as other former provinces that had existed since the Middle

\textsuperscript{18} Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez and Divi Kervella, Atlas de Bretagne (Éditions Coop Breozh, 2011), 132. - Translation “région Bretagne”
\textsuperscript{19} William F. Edmiston and Annie Duménil, La France contemporaine, 4th ed. (Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2010), 34.
\textsuperscript{20} William F. Edmiston and Annie Duménil, La France contemporaine, 4th ed. (Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2010), 120.; The “loi Defferre” was so named after Gaston Defferre, the Minister of the Interior during this time period.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} “La France à la loupe: Decentralization in France” (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006).
\textsuperscript{23} Edmiston and Duménil, La France contemporaine, 24.
Ages.\textsuperscript{24} Most places still associated with their former provincial borders, more so than either their departmental or regional divides.\textsuperscript{25} Brittany is an excellent example of this, as its redefined borders excluded Nantes, the historic capital of the province.\textsuperscript{26} There have been further developments vis-à-vis the decentralization of France since the 1980s, however, in Brittany, there remains a strong sect in favor of further cultural, as well as political, autonomy.\textsuperscript{27}

While the revival of cultural heritage in immediate post-war Brittany led to the creation of a division between political and cultural identity, the period of decentralization led to the simultaneous resurgence of these two facets of Breton identity. The actions of militant Bretons, in addition to the rise of the Breton Democratic Union (UDB - L’Union démocratique bretonne), have defined a clear political path for political revival. While political Breton nationalism has increased, cultural identity had been dynamic in its own right.\textsuperscript{28} One dimension of this Breton cultural revival is evident through sports. Of a number of athletics practiced in Brittany, two notables are gouren, similar to “Cornish wrestling,” as well as horell or “hurling.”\textsuperscript{29} Gouren serves as an important example of a cultural revival through sports, as it has strong Celtic roots which saw growth in Brittany during the 1930s.\textsuperscript{30} It is even on an international stage today with the creation of the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling (FILC) in

\textsuperscript{24} Edmiston and Duménil, La France contemporaine, 34.; In French: “largely disregard ‘cultural and historic identity’” is “...ne correspondent à aucune identité historique ou culturelle.” All translations are my own.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{26} Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez and Divi Kervella, Atlas de Bretagne (Éditions Coop Brezoù, 2011), 19.
\textsuperscript{27} Edmiston and Duménil, La France contemporaine, 58.
\textsuperscript{28} Erwan Chartier, La question bretonne: Enquête sur les mouvements politiques bretons (Plougastel-Daoulaz: Editions An Here, 2002), 24.; The Breton Democratic Union is the “Union démocratique de Bretagne” in French. All translations are my own.
\textsuperscript{29} Francis Favereau, Bretagne contemporaine : culture, langue et identité (Morlaix: Skol Vreizh, 2005), 82, 85.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
Other dimensions of Breton culture include religion, festivals, dance, and music, all of which are interwoven to create a larger Breton cultural identity. The dominant religion in Brittany is Catholicism, as is the case with most of France. However, Brittany has a number of “Breton religious festivals” that interweave Celtic culture with traditional Catholic practices. One such example is that of a pardon, an ancient tradition that honors a patron-saint through a penitential ceremony and serves as a pilgrimage, while also representing a “Breton syncretism which melds old pagan traditions ... with a Christian veneer.” Although largely practiced in the westernmost parts of Brittany, the pardon serves as an example of an important Breton cultural tradition which endures today, if not an example of Brittany on a world stage. Both the cultural revival through sports and through religion illustrate a continuing movement to combine Breton tradition with contemporary society on a national and international level.

Among elements that define Breton cultural identity, those of festivals, dance, and music overlap significantly. One of the well-known celebrations in Brittany is that of festoù-noz or festoù-diez, a dancing festival which includes live musicians and dates back to the Middle Ages. The music at these festivals is divided into a cappella songs in the Breton language called kan-ha-diskan, or music performed on various instruments. Although the origins of certain instruments to Brittany were spread across different periods as well as different parts of Brittany, those which appear most frequently are the clarinet, the violin, the hurdy gurdy, variations of bagpipes, and a

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31 Ibid., 87-88.
32 Ibid., 88.
33 Ibid.; In French: “Breton syncretism which melds old pagan traditions ... with a Christian veneer” is “de ce syncrétisme breton entre le vieux fond païen ... et un vernis chrétien.” All translations are my own.
34 Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez and Divi Kervella, Atlas de Bretagne (Éditions Coop Breozh, 2011), 64.
35 Ibid.
double-reed instrument called the biniou-bombarde.\textsuperscript{36} Despite the centuries long history of this traditional music, the 1970s experienced the introduction of a completely new variation of Breton musical heritage into “a completely new style, often called ‘celtic music,’ which, from folk to rock, transcends musical genres.”\textsuperscript{37} The revival of Breton music serves the dual purpose of representing the way in which this era has led to a full cultural revival, but also how it has been redefined within the context of contemporary international society. Current Breton music is able to combine elements of political and cultural nationalist sentiments through its use of language and instruments. As Professor Favereau of the University of Rennes describes:

The twentieth century will have seen, just as in other areas, a double paradoxical movement, at least in appearance: on the one hand, the demise of popular songs and traditional music as Breton society saw a decline during the middle of the century, but, on the other hand, a remarkable revival ... The contemporary revival of music during the 1970s ... led to an remarkable abundance [of new music]: the success of a world music version of Breton music.\textsuperscript{38}

Breton music represents a larger scope of Breton national identity, particularly in relation to cultural identity, but also within the bounds of France’s own struggle for identity.

\textsuperscript{36} Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez and Divi Kervella, Atlas de Bretagne (Éditions Coop Breozh, 2011), 64.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Francis Favereau, Bretagne contemporaine : culture, langue et identité (Morlaix: Skol Vreizh, 2005), 97.; In French: “Le XXe siècle aura donc vu, là comme dans d’autres domaines, un double mouvement paradoxal, du moins en apparence : d’une côté, la disparation annoncée du chant populaire et de la musique traditionnelle, à mesure que la société bretonnante se dissolvait vers le milieu du siècle, voire plus tôt, mais de l’autre, un revival remarquable. ...contemporaine du revival musical des années 70 ... c’est depuis lors un égal fisonnement, tout à fait remarquable : succès de la world music version bretonnante...” All translations are my own.
In the post-1945 world, France has faced many, sometimes troubling, realities regarding their world power status as well as a continuous search for national identity. For Brittany, this has been illustrated through two significant periods of cultural revival in the post-1945 period. The liberation of German occupied France in 1944, as well as the regional reorganization of France during the 1970s and the 1980s, both represent changes for the search for national identity in France and the revival of cultural identity in Brittany. Revivals and redefinitions of Breton culture represent both larger nationalist movements in Brittany, but are also a part of France’s struggle with national and cultural identity. The transcendence of contemporary Breton music is representative of this, moving beyond the simple cultural heritage it represented in immediate post-World War II France to the international stage of world music. Brittany still clearly expresses its own cultural identity and national identity and some citizens even convey a militant desire for autonomy with the idea that “...our culture should never die.”

39 Francis Favereau, Bretagne contemporaine : culture, langue et identité (Morlaix: Skol Vreizh, 2005), 121.; In French: “...notre culture ne doit jamais mourir.” All translations are my own.
Bibliography


By David Wemer

When the iron curtain collapsed across the center of Europe and the Soviet Union imploded in the early years of the 1990s, economists and policymakers throughout Europe were confronted with a new and difficult challenge: how to revitalize the former Communist economies of Central and Eastern Europe into capitalistic economies ready to compete in the modern world. Western economists quickly began preaching the theory of “shock therapy,” which mandated the quick and comprehensive dismantling of communist economic structures and the introduction of market forces as soon as possible. Economic success was soon judged by the extent to which these countries privatized their economies, and leading countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Baltic States embraced “shock therapy” within the first few years of independence. One country, however, approached “shock therapy” with more caution and, in almost direct defiance of the Western economists, enjoyed considerable macroeconomic success.

Slovakia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar, transitioned to capitalism slowly, maintaining government control of key industries and banks, and using substantial government spending to boost the economy and maintain social entitlement programs at their communist-era levels.1 Instead of sliding into stagnation or collapsing under the weight of market forces as Western economists predicted, Slovakia, from the years of 1993 to 1998, “registered one of the best macroeconomic performances in Central Europe,” meeting or even surpassing some of its neighbors on

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1 The official name of Slovakia is “the Slovak Republic”, but for conciseness I will only refer to the country by its common short form “Slovakia.”
economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment, and inflation.\textsuperscript{2} Despite this macroeconomic success, historians and economists largely view the Mečiar period in Slovakia as one of economic mismanagement in which the Slovaksians dangerously threatened their economy by delaying true privatization and failing to completely transition their economy. The question begs to be asked: which is true? The data or the interpretation? Given the economic disadvantages of Slovakia following the break-up of Czechoslovakia, the continued GDP growth of the Slovakian economy, and the stabilization of inflation and unemployment, the economic actions of the Mečiar government must be viewed as a success. These policies gave Slovakia the stability it needed to consolidate nationally, modernize its economy, and prepare its population for the pains of complete privatization.

Vladimir Mečiar is not a man who normally receives praise outside Slovakia. While he was, and remains to this day, the most popular politician in Slovakia, his populist and sometimes heavy-handed political style did not gain him many friends during his almost six years as Prime Minister of Slovakia. Mečiar governed from June 1992 to October 1998, except for a nine month period in 1994 when opposition parties were able to form a temporary government under Jozef Moravčík. Mečiar's term was described by historian Padraic Kenney as “the most disheartening story of the region,” due to the controversial and border-line repressive actions of Mečiar and his political allies.\textsuperscript{3} Mečiar was heavily criticized by the United States and the European Union, and even labeled an authoritarian for his suppression of the media, manipulation of the Parliament, and use of political murder and kidnapping to intimidate his political


The most notable case of Mečiar’s ruthlessness was the 1995 kidnapping of the son of then-Slovak President and Mečiar rival, Michal Kováč, in Austria by the Slovakian secret service and the car bombing of an intelligence officer who leaked information about the plot.4

Criticism of Mečiar has spread into the economic realm as well. Despite the multitude of positive economic indicators during the Mečiar period, Western analysts have heavily criticized Mečiar’s handling of the Slovakian economy. Historian Karen Henderson argues that “the Slovak economy in the 1990s was plagued by some exceptionally bad decision-making,” which, although producing some economic growth, made the economic situation in Slovakia “unsustainable.”5 Western economists attacked Mečiar for his reluctance to privatize heavy industries and banks, his failure to attract foreign investment, the persistence of long term unemployment, and the growth of the deficit due to government spending and the maintenance of large social entitlement programs. When Mečiar was defeated in 1998, Western analysts depicted Slovakia as an economy driven into the ground with a vital need for substantial economic reforms and financial austerity. Indeed, even the macroeconomic successes of GDP, unemployment, and inflation were not the result of Mečiar’s slow-go policies, but could be credited to the reforms of the Moravčík government, the economic upturn in Western Europe, and new technology in Slovakia.6

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This narrative of the Mečiar government, however, fails to address the context of
the Slovakian economy in the early 1990s, the true macroeconomic successes of Mečiar’s
policies, and the political atmosphere within which Mečiar was working. Analysts
frequently compare Slovakia’s progress in privatization and economic growth with its
Visegrád neighbors, despite the fact that these countries’ economic situations were
vastly different from Slovakia’s.7 Slovakia had been underdeveloped economically since
World War One and did not properly industrialize until the 1960s. This industrialization
took place under the watch of the Czechoslovak communists who had “the most rigid of
the communist planned economies.”8 The communists developed Slovakia with large
heavy industries including chemicals, smelting, and most importantly, weaponry, which
could be manufactured safely for East Germany and away from the borders of NATO
countries. When the communists fell in Czechoslovakia, the Slovak economy was almost
entirely dependent on this heavy industry and a small amount of agriculture in the rural
regions. On top of that, the primary markets for Slovakian chemicals and weapons, East
Germany and the Soviet Union, were either wiped off the map or were in no position to
continue to purchase Slovakian weapons.9

The outdated and largely defunct Slovakian heavy industries were an easy target
for the early privatization schemes of the new Czechoslovak government in 1991 and
1992. Additionally, many Czech ex-dissidents were repulsed by the idea of Slovakia

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7 The Visegrád group was formed in 1991 and consists of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and
Slovakia. The group was formed to promote free trade liberalization and to present those countries as a
“Central Europe” distinct from the other post-communist states. For more information on the Visegrád
group, see Iver B. Neumann, “Regionalization and Democratic Consolidation,” in Democratic
Consolidation in Eastern Europe: Volume Two International and Transnational Factors, eds. Jan
8 John Fitzmaurice, Politics and Government in the Visegrad Countries: Poland, Hungary, the Czech
Republic, and Slovakia (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 36-37; Goldman, Slovakia Since
Independence, 19.
9 Ibid., 19, 27.
exporting arms and called for the weapons factories to be closed. Slovak politicians fought hard to keep many of the industries open, but even the small amount of privatizations had a devastating effect on the Slovakian economy. In 1991, around 100,000 Slovaks were out of work and, after the free market reforms, this number rose to 319,000 in 1992. The Slovak unemployment rate hit twelve percent nationally in 1992, more than three times the rate in Czech lands. Adding to the crisis, which saw unemployment reach twenty percent in some places and food prices spike, was the lack of assistance Slovakia seemed to be getting from the Czechoslovak government and Western investors. Of the 3,000 Western joint-ventures started in Czechoslovakia in 1991, only 600 opened in Slovakia.\(^\text{10}\)

The disadvantages for Slovakia did not end once Czechoslovakia split in 1993. Unlike its Czech neighbor, Slovakia lacked many of the state institutions and administrations needed to efficiently manage the economy. Slovakia was thrust into statehood in the middle of an economic crisis without any of the structures necessary to perform such vital tasks as taxation, trade, and economic regulation. Starved of tax dollars and trade revenues, the Slovak government initially had to choke off funds from vital health and education programs. In the first months of independence, Slovakia appeared to foreign governments and investors as an unstable state with a collapsing economy and little prospect for growth, which only added to Slovakia’s problems. Of the $8.98 billion in aid given to Visegrád countries from 1991 to 1994, Slovakia received only $366 million or four percent of the total. From the years of 1989 to 1997, Slovakia only received 1.8% of the total foreign investment to post-communist states while the

Czechs received 12.2% and the Hungarians 25.2%. For every one dollar of foreign investment in Slovakia, the Czech Republic received nine dollars in foreign investments. Western investors simply did not feel confident investing in a state with the possibility of instability and whose economy was dependent on outdated heavy industries.11

Even with its reliance on communist-era heavy industry, administrative problems, and lack of foreign investment, Slovakia enjoyed remarkable macroeconomic success from 1993 to 1998, even when compared to its neighbors who lacked some of Slovakia’s structural problems. Perhaps the most striking economic indicator during the Mečiars period was the change in Slovakia’s GDP. During the Czechoslovak years, the Slovakian economy GDP fell a devastating -14.6% in 1991 and -6.5% in 1992, and trouble during the transition caused GDP to slide further in 1993 by -3.7%. In the subsequent four years, however, GDP grew at a spectacular rate, with a growth rate of 4.9% in 1994, 6.8% in 1995, 6.9% in 1996, and 6.5% in 1997. The GDP growth rates in 1994 and 1995 were higher than the neighboring Czechs’ and in 1996 Slovakia’s GDP growth was the highest of any Central or Eastern European transition economy.12

On top of the growth in GDP, two other important indicators, unemployment and inflation, stabilized or even decreased during this period. Unemployment continued to climb following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia throughout 1993 and, partly as a result of the privatizations of the Moravčík government, reached as high as fifteen percent in 1994. By 1996, however, unemployment actually fell to between twelve and thirteen and stayed at those levels until the end of the Mečiars administration. The stabilization of the unemployment rate was due in large part to Mečiars slowing of the

12 Ibid., 400-401; Goldman, Slovakia Since Independence, 110-112.
privatization process, which allowed the government to retain control of “strategic” industries such as chemicals, weapons, and energy so that these industries were not shut down and workers laid off. Given the structural problems of the Slovakian economy, the stabilization and modest decline of unemployment from 1994-1997 is striking. While the unemployment rate was much higher than in the Czech Republic (the rate there never reached higher than four percent), Slovakia’s rate was lower than Poland’s (fifteen percent in 1995) and even those of some Southern European countries such as Portugal and Greece.\(^\text{13}\)

Mečiar also orchestrated tight control over Slovakian banks which led to a steep decline in inflation over his term. The inflation rate fell sharply from 23% in 1993, to 12% in 1994, and 6.2% in 1995, giving Slovakia the lowest inflation rate in the region. In addition to controlling inflation, Mečiar used control of key industries to enact wage increases to keep Slovaks’ savings intact. Average wages in Slovakia rose constantly after 1993, growing by seven percent in both 1996 and 1997 at a rate higher than both Hungary and Poland. These policies led Slovakia to have one of the most stable levels of income inequality of any of the transition economies. As the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) wrote in 1999, “the combination of high GDP growth rates and relatively low, stable inflation has ranked Slovakia amongst the most successful transition countries as regards macroeconomic stabilization.”\(^\text{14}\)

The Mečiar government even achieved economic success in areas which most critics attack, such as privatization, budget deficits, and industrial investment. The most common of these criticisms was the charge that Mečiar was holding back the process of

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 105-106, 111-112; Kolodko, From Shock to Therapy, 374, 394, 400.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 202-203, 380, 394, 400; Goldman, Slovakia Since Independence, 111; Henderson, Slovakia, 128; OECD, Slovak Republic 1999, 25.
privatization and severely threatening the future of the Slovakian economy. While it is true that Mečiar slowed down the rate of privatization in order to cushion the blow of unemployment, Mečiar and his ministers still supported free market reform and privatization continued to occur from 1993-1998. At the beginning of 1994, only five percent of Slovakia’s state-run enterprises were privatized, but by the end of 1995 74% of Slovakian enterprises were private, a larger share than both Poland (55%) and Slovenia (54%). In 1995 private enterprises made up 60% of GDP and, following a rapid sale of manufacturing firms, this share increased to 79% by the end of 1996. Mečiar also restructured many of the outdated heavy industries in order to make them more attractive to foreign and domestic buyers. The World Bank reported in 1999 that Slovakia had the highest ratio of gross and net profits to GDP of any transition economy and the OECD observed that “by most indicators, a substantial amount of restructuring has taken place [in Slovakia] since the beginning of the transition.”

Although maintaining control of a few key strategic industries and still lagging behind his Czech neighbors in terms of complete privatization, Mečiar was not, as some critics characterize him, an enemy of privatization or a danger to the Slovakian economy. Despite the outdated state of Slovakia’s heavy industry, domestic instability, and a lack of foreign investment, Mečiar could boast that by 1997 only three percent of Slovakian enterprises remained in public hands.

Critics also attack Mečiar for leaving Slovakia with an enormous deficit which forced Mečiar’s successor, Mikulas Dzurinda, to pass several painful austerity measures. These critics point to Mečiar’s continued control of costly heavy industries and the

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16 Ibid., 88.
maintenance of social safety net programs as the main culprits. Economic data from 1997 and 1998 demonstrate, however, that the deficit problem in Slovakia was not as severe as Mečiar’s critics assert, and was largely caused by outside factors, instead of simple government overspending. Writing on the economic situation in Slovakia in 1998, the World Bank argued that “the Slovak Republic’s external debt to GDP ratios do not look excessive by international comparison.”\(^{17}\) In 1997, Slovakia’s current account balance as a percentage of GDP was -7.9%, only slightly higher than the neighboring Czech Republic at -6.1%. Slovakia was also not an outlier when it came to government expenditures.\(^{18}\)

Although increasing spending on health, social, and employment insurance, Slovakia benefitted from having fewer problems with their public pension program, which made up only 8.3% of GDP in 1996, as compared with 8.4% in the Czech Republic and 14.4% in Poland. Total government expenditure as of 1996 only made up 47% of GDP, which placed Slovakia somewhere between Switzerland and Canada and was less than both Germany and France. The OECD even wrote in 1996 that “recent developments in the state budget indicate that Slovakia has been pursuing a restrained, prudent fiscal policy.”\(^{19}\) While deficits did emerge in the last years of the Mečiar government, these were not primarily a result of his economic policies, but as the World Bank pointed out “due to cyclical factors” such as an economic slowdown in the European Union and the disruption of trade with the Czech Republic as that country looked primarily westward.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{17}\) World Bank, *Slovak Republic*, x.

\(^{18}\) Kolodko, *From Shock to Therapy*, 92.


The lack of foreign investment in Slovakia during the 1990s is also largely attributed to Mečiar because of his public support for domestic as opposed to foreign investment. Mečiar and his economic advisers made it publically known that they wished to include domestic buyers in the privatization process so that Slovakia was not tied down with too much foreign money. Several critics such as Minton Goldman describe this policy as “a specious argument at best,” given the high level of poverty in Slovakia, but it seems that the focus on domestic investment did produce positive effects in the 1990s. More than 70% of Slovaks took advantage of a voucher privatization program in 1991 and 1992, launched by Czechoslovakia to invest in privatization funds, which helped to increase domestic demand and household consumption in 1993-1995. The OECD even attributed the economic growth of Slovakia during the European Union slowdown of 1996-1998 to the high levels of domestic consumption in Slovakia and government investment. While Slovakia in 1998 still had to lower their deficits and complete privatization, the economy was, as the OECD argues, “not an emerging economy on the verge of crisis,” like some of Mečiar’s critics argue.21

Critics of the Mečiar government often exclusively focus on the many political crimes and failures of the Prime Minister and his advisers in the years of 1993-1998. When commenting on the economic actions of Mečiar, however, they fail to understand the political context under which these policies were enacted and the many political benefits they brought about. Slovakia was not the ideal location to experiment with free market reforms. One of the side effects of Slovakia’s late industrialization under the communists was that the corresponding rise in standard of living, which most countries

21 Goldman, Slovakia Since Independence, 97, 104; OECD, Slovak Republic 1996, 5-7; OECD, Slovak Republic, 10-11, 23, 25.
undergo after industrialization, was thought to be a direct result of communist policies. Slovakians, even today, equate the communist years with economic success, industrialization, and modernization. When communist Czechoslovakia collapsed, Slovak politicians and their constituents were cautious about abandoning the socialist system which had benefitted them so much.²²

The Slovaks’ concern over free market reforms only worsened under the newly democratic Czechoslovakia. As described earlier, free market reforms devastated the Slovakian economy, causing massive rises in unemployment and food prices. Justifiably, many Slovaks fiercely opposed the reforms, believing that they were both targeting Slovakia unjustly and threatening the social safety net which Slovakians relied on for assistance. Only five percent of Slovakians supported the economic reform package of 1990-1991 and the issue was soon pushed to the forefront of the fight over dissolution in 1993. The leader of the Slovakian nationalists was, incidentally, Mečiar himself. He and his allies campaigned against the economic reform package and the perceived inequalities of the Czechoslovak system. While a majority of the Slovakian people did not support independence outright, the victory of Mečiar and his Czech counterpart Vaclav Klaus in June of 1992 set in motion the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, known as the “Velvet Divorce,” which was completed without a popular referendum. Mečiar was aware that independence was not especially popular in Slovakia and leaned on economic reasons for the split, making the “major reason for Slovak independence…the freedom to move very slowly if at all toward the free market, with its unpredictability and unreliability.”²³ Mečiar therefore put himself in a bind. If he did not lessen the pace and

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²² Henderson, Slovakia, 113-114, 116.
²³ Toma, Slovakia: From Samo to Dzurinda, 262-263; 275; Goldman, Slovakia Since Independence, 39, 103; Kenney, The Burdens of Freedom, 72.
impact of free market reform and instead simply followed the Czechs into “shock therapy,” why did he allow Czechoslovakia to break apart?

As mentioned earlier, Mečiar had reasons to fear what market reforms would bring to Slovakia in terms of unemployment and inflation. The heavy industries of Slovakia were so outdated and cash-guzzling that privatization of these factories would have meant massive layoffs at best and widespread closures at the worst. Inflation too had to be avoided so that the savings of the population were not wiped out and their standard of living destroyed. Mečiar in 1993 and 1994 was leading a state whose people feared capitalism and barely supported the country’s right to exist. He knew he could not afford either a massive unemployment spike or a standard of living drop, and did everything to stop both. Mečiar retained control of the heavy industries, keeping their doors open and workers paid. In 1994, he pushed through legislation which mandated government majority ownership in “strategic industries” (chemicals, weapons, energy) in order to make sure new investors did not shut down plants or lay off workers. When these industries continued to lose money, he spent nearly 70 billion Slovak crowns in an “enterprise revitalization” law. Meanwhile his central banks fought back inflation, and Mečiar ensured that whenever inflation did rise he passed wage increase laws, making sure that the Slovakian standard of living did not diminish. He continued and even bolstered the social safety net, expanding health insurance and allowing the thousands of out of work Slovaksians to receive hefty compensation from the Slovakian government. All of this was done to ensure that the effects of free market reforms did not fall on Slovakia until the nation could absorb it.24

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This was the true success of the Mečiar economic program: by delaying full privatization of the Slovakian economy, as mandated by “shock therapy,” Slovakia avoided the economic hardship and unrest which would have followed until the country successfully consolidated and accepted capitalism as their economic model of choice. Slovakia was different from its Czech, Polish, and Hungarian neighbors. It did not have a state apparatus or a political history to fall upon; the Czechs took both with them following the breakup. The Slovaks needed to build not only a whole new state administration, but also a reason for their very existence, outside a purely ethnic difference. Additionally, the Slovakian people lacked the terrible economic experiences of their neighbors which made the hardships of “shock therapy” bearable. The Slovaks had largely done well under the communists; why should they go through hardship to change a system they believed benefitted them? To push through potentially painful economic reforms in this atmosphere would have been disastrous. Slovakia needed time to form its state, establish its identity, and adjust to the new world it found itself in.

Mečiar’s economic reforms provided Slovakia with the time it needed. Unemployment was high, but it never reached unbearable levels, and those who were unemployed receive compensation benefits from the government. Slovaks were never forced to buy food at exorbitant prices, nor had their savings wiped out. “Slovak democracy was never destabilized by rampaging street mobs...[and] the population has never been faced with the economic shocks of the kind that were common in most post-communist states.”25 Slovakia was given room to consolidate its government and prepare itself for the free market reforms to come. In 1998, Mečiar was defeated and a

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25 Ibid., 127-128.
government was formed under Mikuláš Dzurinda, who quickly inaugurated a set of reforms which completed Slovakia’s privatization and severely cut government spending. The shocks finally fell on Slovakia, where domestic demand fell, social assistance programs disappeared, and unemployment steadily grew to almost twenty percent by 2001. But the unrest and disapproval which may have followed in 1993 did not occur. In fact, Slovak voters rewarded Dzurinda with re-election, and he stayed in power until 2006. The success of the privatization program was followed by Slovakia’s accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004, a process which, although greatly assisted by Dzurinda’s reforms, actually began under Mečiar. Slovakia’s membership in the EU was “realistic precisely because Slovakia had an underlying stability which enabled it to survive the domestic storms of state-building in the 1990s.”

The Mečiar government had many faults, among them the suppression of free media, the intimidation of political opponents, and widespread bureaucratic corruption. The economic policies of the Mečiar government, however, should not be viewed through the lens of these political crimes. By ignoring the true political motives and benefits of the Mečiar’s policies, we lose part of the story of Slovakia’s improbable rise. The Dzurinda government deservedly receives much praise for its brave reforming of the Slovakian economy which today is seen as one of the most successful examples of economic transition in Eastern Europe. It must be understood, however, that the economic reforms of the Dzurinda government could not have taken place in 1993. Slovakia’s overreliance on Soviet-era heavy industry, reluctant population, and lack of government infrastructure and institutions required an economic policy which slowly

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moved towards privatization while Slovakia consolidated into a modern democracy. It is true that the economic success which Slovakia enjoyed from 1993-1998 was unsustainable, and that serious reform was needed by 1998. But by this time, Slovakia and its people were ready for those reforms. Evidence of this can be found in the election of 1998 itself. Mečiar enjoyed the advantages of positive media coverage, good macroeconomic success, and the image of the working-man’s savior. But he lost. The Slovakians chose democracy over repression, capitalism over socialism. Mečiar’s economic policies may not have helped his political life, but they ultimately gave Slovakia the consolidation time it needed to enter the modern world successfully. The transition of Slovakia from heavily industrial socialism to advanced capitalism was one of the most radical in Eastern Europe, but it only occurred because it was one of the slowest.
Bibliography


