## In This Issue

## *From the President:*

Love of historical scholarship and community service warrants active membership in UNLV's History Honor Society, Phi Alpha Theta—Psi Sigma Chapter. Psi Sigma was honored with Phi Alpha Theta's Best Chapter Award in 2010, and we hope to continue meeting, and exceeding, the high standards set by Psi Sigma's history.

This semester, Psi Sigma has worked to maintain the high standards of academic scholarship befitting Phi Alpha Theta members. This effort is reflected in the publication of this, the first issue of our revised historical journal — the *Psi Sigma Siren*. Published Psi Sigma historians, welcome to a vibrant, active community of faculty and student scholars!

*Ashley Guthrie*

## *From the Editor:*

The five essays presented in this issue of the *Psi Sigma Siren* represent the strengths of our History Department and the hard work of our Phi Alpha Theta members. Amanda McAtee's comparative book review reflects the breadth of our program, Angela Moor's exhibit review showcases our public history program, Summer Burke's and Stefani Evans' essays illustrate the strength of the social history and urban history perspectives in our department, and Richard Keeton's essay demonstrates the quality of original research our students are conducting. It is my pleasure to present these essays as the best of UNLV student writing in history for Spring 2011!

*Marie Rowley*

# "Uncoiling the Modern Sino-American Relationship"

*Amanda McAtee*

Mann, James. *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, From Nixon to Clinton*. New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 1998.

MacMillan, Margaret. *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007.

Through proper comparison and critical analysis one can objectively discern the nature of any given object of study. Understanding the differences in approach and nuances in presentation is crucial in being able to formulate a substantiated opinion on not only one's own scholarship, but also everything else one engages in throughout life. For this particular paper I seek to qualify the true nature of the Sino-American relationship as it has developed over the last quarter of the twentieth century. To more fully appreciate the complex relationship that evolved between such seemingly antithetical nations, I will critically review both James Mann's *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, From Nixon to Clinton* and Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*. This paper will specifically focus on evaluating the similarities and inconsistencies between Mann's and MacMillan's theses, elucidate the structural differences between each author's arguments, and analyze each author's interpretation of specific events, leaders, and issues in order to establish a broader cohesive understanding of the modern Sino-American relationship.

Before one can fully recognize the strengths and weaknesses of any given source it is important to establish exactly what question that source is ultimately seeking to answer. This question – the thesis – must be clearly articulated and understood in the mind of the reader in order to assess the applicability of that source to any given phenomenon, as well as compare it to any other work. Mann's underlying objective in writing his book is to "explore, describe, and interpret American policy toward China over the past quarter-century" with the intention of overcoming America's "collective ignorance" and shedding light on the "very recent past."[1] In contrast, MacMillan's objective is to highlight the significance of President Richard Nixon's and Chairman Mao Tse-Tung's initial surprise meeting in the spring of 1972 and argue that this single event serves as both a culmination of important events in the U.S.'s and China's past, as well as the beginning of a very important, albeit complex, relationship for the future.[2] Despite the fact that Mann and MacMillan are both addressing U.S.-Chinese relations in a broad sense, it is important to emphasize that they are clearly not seeking to answer the same question. It is precisely the discrepancies between these questions that this paper seeks to explore more specifically.

One of the most significant differences between Mann's and MacMillan's theses is the role that the audience is prescribed. Mann's audience is an active motivation behind his research. He makes it very clear that he is interested in teaching an American audience something specific about America's political history as it relates to its Chinese counterpart. In

this way, Mann is arguably building upon the longstanding traditions of previous American journalists and scholars by using China as a convenient mirror into which he can compare the American image. For example, as editors of *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present*, R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee pieced together multiple primary source materials written by Chinese individuals in order to benefit Americans by elevating American understanding of their own society.[3] While Mann may not be alone in his attempts to use China as a sounding board for espousing important lessons to American audiences, it is noteworthy to point out that this in no way undermines the legitimacy or necessity of his scholarship; rather, it stands more as a curious reminder of America's inherited past.

To understand what sets Mann apart from his predecessors, and for this paper's specific purposes MacMillan's work, one can point to the fact that he purposely goes beyond the surface of the historical timeline to reveal the extenuating circumstances that precipitated each calculated overture the U.S. government took towards building diplomatic relations with China. For example, Mann emphasizes that the enormity of the Nixon-Mao meeting in 1972 was largely predicated upon the "clandestine secrecy", "undisclosed bargaining", and unofficial backhanding that the U.S. president was willing to accept in return for his own personal political profit.[4] Mann also iterates the details behind President Clinton's "retreat on extending MFN [Most Favored Nation] status to China" in 1994 when Chinese officials failed to adequately meet the human rights preconditions he had executively prescribed for China the year before.[5] The rest of Mann's book details highly sensitive and momentous occasions between China and the U.S. in this similar format. More importantly, Mann's critiques of American politics lend tremendous insight to Americans regarding the way they view their own government and urge them to possibly reconsider and appreciate the U.S.'s relationship with China in its larger context of manipulation and political orchestration.

Like Mann, MacMillan addresses an American audience with her thesis; however, contrary to his audience, her audience serves as a passive motivator behind her research. In other words, she is not trying to teach Americans specific lessons about themselves. Instead, she aims to impress upon Americans from all walks of life – businessmen, scholars, politicians, and unassuming ordinary citizens – the general significance of the U.S.'s current relationship with China by illuminating the extensive measures that were taken to make Nixon's and Mao's momentous meeting in 1972 even possible. Particularly set on underscoring the lengths to which both Chinese and U.S. officials had to stretch themselves, MacMillan asserts that "Nixon would not have been in Beijing [thus the foundations of the modern Sino-American relationship would be null and void] if both sides had not been prepared, for their own reasons, to break out of the old patterns".[6] In most instances, exalting the delicacy of the historical moment supersedes the audience. For example, MacMillan insists, "opening that gate had been a tricky and difficult process, and there had been many times when it looked as though it would never occur".[7] She goes so far in defending the necessity of Nixon's trip to China that she justifies the extent of secrecy and unofficial procedural policies enacted with suggestions like, "while secrecy is not always necessary in human affairs, in negotiations of this delicacy, with such huge potential for misunderstandings, it was essential".[8] In other words, MacMillan feeds into the logic Nixon and his administration were spinning at the time. Instead of challenging the audience to critically question the underhanded tactics of their government like Mann does in his book, MacMillan argues for her audience to accept the conduct as natural and acceptable in light of the historical moment.

While the essence of Mann's and MacMillan's theses, as well as their expectations for their respective audiences, have been properly situated, it is still necessary to critically compare the structural composition of their arguments. It must be noted that the structure of any argument is as impactful as the substantive nature of those arguments. Since both authors differ considerably on this front these variations must be understood if one is to adequately interpret the consequences of such divergent manifestations. Mann's book is laid out chronologically and each chapter more or less follows a linear timeline of events as they evolved from President Nixon's visit to China in 1972 up to the 1996 U.S. presidential election. The first three chapters overlap quite obviously with MacMillan's points of emphasis in that the events surrounding 1972 are discussed. Chapters four and five highlight President Jimmy Carter's relations with China, then President Ronald Reagan's relations with the Chinese are discussed in chapters six, seven and eight. Mann then provides an extensive analysis of President George H.W. Bush's accords with China in chapters nine through fourteen, and finally concludes the story with the culmination of President Bill Clinton's first term in office in chapter fifteen through eighteen. It must be pointed out that Mann's timeline is strictly measured by American standards; more precisely, the American political cycles – elections, re-elections, new congresses, new presidents, and new advisors – dictate Mann's narrative. While one can see that Mann emphasizes the continuity of American policies and politics in relation to China, one can also see the inherent limitations of his authority on the entire Sino-American relationship.

MacMillan's structural format is not as straightforward as Mann's. While there is an underlying linear progression of events in relation to Nixon's trip, the book is in no way limited to the confines of a single week's highlights. MacMillan actually uses Nixon's trip as a backdrop through which she explores how various complex histories converged. Most of the chapters are constructed around particular subject matters that MacMillan uses to reinforce the depth of each participant's and geographical setting's importance and role within the grander historical significance of the U.S.-Chinese relationship. For example, there are separate chapters for Chou Enlai (chapter three), Mao Tse-Tung (chapter six), the Soviet Union (chapter nine), Taiwan (chapter fifteen), Indochina (chapter sixteen), Haldeman and the American press coverage of Nixon's momentous week (chapter seventeen), and so forth. MacMillan successfully interweaves and transforms these storylines into an extraordinary supporting cast for her much adulated main event, Nixon being able to overcome history and go to China. Both MacMillan and Mann structured their particular arguments in a fashion that best suited the scope of their intentions. MacMillan stretched back in history to build the platform onto which the monumental week in 1972 could be highlighted; Mann kept the information current in order to challenge contemporary American citizens with easily recognizable and relevant lessons from a nearby history. In both instances structure supported and influenced substance.

Finally, the most important basis on which Mann's and MacMillan's books must be compared is how their individual interpretations of the historical facts relate to one another. At the core of MacMillan's research is the notion that "it took individuals – four men, in this case – to make it [America's re-opening to China] happen."[9] MacMillan asserts that President Richard Nixon and General Mao Tse-Tung had the "necessary vision and determination" to forge a new relationship while Henry Kissinger and Chou Enlai had the "talent, the patience, and the skill to make the vision reality."[10] Much of MacMillan's work meticulously details the direct roles each of the men played in forging a new era in international history. Lending credit to MacMillan's interpretation of events, Michael Schaller's *The United States and China: Into the Twenty-First Century* also emphasizes the role key individuals played in orchestrating Nixon's meeting with

Mao. Schaller insists that "the foundation laid by Nixon and Kissinger and Mao and Zhou proved quite durable."[11] When both MacMillan's and Schaller's assessments are taken into consideration, one is lead to assume that history required these very men at that very moment for America and China to bridge the gap that existed between them culturally, economically, and politically. Whether this is a fair assumption or not, MacMillan's emphasis on individuals is nonetheless a distinguishing trademark of her research and must be appreciated as such.

Much like MacMillan, emphasis on the roles of individuals is also largely at the core of Mann's book. Presidents Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton were all weighted figures in Mann's research. Mann also makes reference to other instrumental figures who worked behind the scenes to nurture the precarious balance of relations, figures like Kissinger, Brzezinski, Allen, Lord, Lilley, and Perry. Unlike MacMillan, Mann's emphasis on individuals was not so much by design but as consequence. Mann argues that "in both style and content, Nixon's and Kissinger's diplomacy guided America's relationship with China for at least a quarter-century."[12] In other words, whether Mann agreed with the aggrandizing of the individual or not, Nixon's and Kissinger's precedent forced later individuals into a narrow mold of how to conduct diplomacy with China, thus forcing the historical narrative to be predominantly benchmarked by individual actors – presidents, secretaries of state, or otherwise influential persons.

Even though the opinions, ideals, backgrounds, and roles of individuals have played a big part in shaping both Mann's and MacMillan's interpretations of the American-Chinese relationship, Mann seems to lend more credit to the greater historical context and global events in which these key individuals were situated than MacMillan is willing to concede. Whereas MacMillan was committed to the notion that it was the people involved that dictated the nature of the two countries' associations, going so far as to suggest that "without the right individuals to push the process ahead, it could have failed any number of times," Mann challenges the assumption that the efforts of individual people were the sole determining factor in shaping the U.S.'s associations with China.[13] One only has to examine Mann's evaluation of President Carter's policies toward China to understand his appreciation for the impact of external influence. For example, Mann suggests Carter's conception of dealing with China was largely linked to "America's immediate needs in the Cold War" and that much of Carter's attention was distracted by "too many short-term problems [such as the Iranian revolution and high inflation in the U.S.] to think about the long-run, in China or elsewhere."[14] With anti-Soviet calculations at the forefront of American leaders' and politicians' minds, the ensuing military cooperation between the U.S. and China throughout the 1970s and 1980s is easily understandable as mutually beneficial for both countries' interests. There need not be any special emphasis on the particular efforts of any one person in order to appreciate the direction America's and China's relations headed. In the end, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the U.S.'s special relationship with China, even Mann does not deny the unparalleled position of authority and credence particular American leaders have afforded themselves when it comes to shaping policies and general opinion of the Chinese. In this sense, Mann and MacMillan agree.

In conclusion, there is much that can be gained from the comparison of Mann's and MacMillan's works. Certainly there are great differences between the two books. This paper has illuminated a few major divergences – the role each author expects the audience to fulfill, the general structure of each author's arguments and how such framework is fundamentally linked to espousing their message, and finally how each author has interpreted the facts and has centered their assertions and shaped their historical narratives on these interpretations. Even though Mann and MacMillan both speak about the same China, there are more differences than similarities

between the two authors and thus there can be no single interpretation of Sino-American relations. Perhaps with something that is so complex and relatively new – America only opening up to the PRC forty years ago – multiple interpretations of Sino-American relations are to be expected, possibly even encouraged. It is also worth pointing out that these two sources' scopes are inherently limited. As extensive and enlightening as they are in their own right, they still only tell part of the U.S.-China story because they are both chronicled in relation to what Americans deem monumental and important. The Chinese version of the Sino-American relationship probably reads much differently than both Mann's and MacMillan's books. If Americans are to ever fully appreciate and understand the true U.S.-China history, they will not only have to build upon the lessons of Mann's and MacMillan's research, they will have to integrate the lessons and perspectives of the Chinese scholars and people themselves. Only then will proper comparative analysis and critical evaluation shed a truly objective light on the Sino-American narrative.

References:

[1] James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, From Nixon to Clinton*, (New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 1998), 12.
[2] Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*, (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007), xxii.
[3] R. David Arkush and Lee O. Lee. *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989), 12.
[4] Mann, 15-16.
[5] Ibid, 304.
[6] MacMillan, 110.
[7] Ibid, 160.
[8] Ibid, 161.
[9] Ibid, 338.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Michael Schaller. *The United States and China: Into the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 183.
[12] Mann, 50.
[13] MacMillan, 160.
[14] Mann, 96.

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# *Exhibit Review*

# "The Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas, NV"

### *Angela Moor*

In 2002, a debate erupted in Nevada over the selling of license plates bearing the likeness of mushroom clouds and received national media attention. The Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation (NTSHF), due to receive a proceed from the sale of each plate in order to fund a museum, ardently supported the mushroom cloud design, claiming the mushroom cloud was an "undeniable icon" of Nevada's important role in the Cold War; Nevada's governor ultimately rejected the controversial plates.[1] The NTSHF, despite the loss of revenue from the plates, officially opened the Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas in 2005. The NTSHF, dedicated to the "preserving and interpreting the history of the Nevada Test Site" continues to operate the museum and their views color many of the exhibitions.[2]

The ticket booth to the museum is a recreation of a Wackenhut (one of the corporate sponsors of the museum) guard station at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) and sets the tone for the visit to the museum. Upon entering, the museum's statement of purpose welcomes visitors; "The Nevada Test Site played a vital role in the Cold War. Thousands of workers supported these efforts. These are their stories." The entrance area, a short hallway, continues with large photo panels of mushroom clouds on each side, and at the end of the hallway, a video plays clips of the Nazis and Japanese at the end of World War II, signaling the beginning of the Cold War. These newsreel clips, meant to provide context, offer no interpretation and assume the visitor will understand the relationship of the Cold War and atomic testing to World War II. The first moments inside the Atomic Testing Museum clearly illustrate the point of view of the museum.

The innovative use of interior space inside the Atomic Testing Museum provides a multi-sensory experience to visitors. The design clearly guides visitors through a history of atomic testing. Visitors first encounter the beginning of the Atomic Age with a video clip and text panels explaining nuclear physics and the technology behind atomic bombs. While these offer an important technological history of atomic bombs, the panels contain a great deal of complicated text. The museum offers a glimpse into the Atomic Age by including popular culture artifacts of the 1950s. This exhibit provides visitors with a look back in time, but all 64 of the artifacts are contained in a single case, proving overwhelming to most visitors. A timeline starting in the 1940s moves visitors through the end of the Atomic Age and into the Atmospheric Testing gallery, a much more extensive exhibit.

Atmospheric testing, the detonation of bombs above ground, first began in Nevada in 1951. The museum includes information on the atmospheric tests that took place in Nevada and on islands in the Pacific Ocean. An exhibit dedicated to the information gathered by atmospheric tests related to civil defense recreates a wooden fallout shelter. Another section offers a small amount of local history and tells of the impact of the NTS on 1950s Las Vegas. The pièce de résistance of the entire museum, the Ground Zero theatre, forms the core of the Atmospheric Testing gallery. The Ground Zero theatre, made of concrete with wooden benches inside, recreates the experience of seeing an atmospheric test close up. Following an ominous

countdown, the walls release gusts of air, the seats vibrate, and bright lights simulate the conditions of the bomb detonating. A movie follows with a history of testing in the Nevada desert. The movie includes interviews by past employees at the Nevada Test Site educating visitors on the overwhelming importance and value of atmospheric tests and that they "had no choice to put people at risk" of radioactive fallout because of the grave danger faced by the United States. The Ground Zero theatre undoubtedly provides a powerful experience for visitors, but the clips included clearly cross the line from historical analysis to editorial. Upon exit from the Ground Zero theatre, visitors continue to flow through the museum. Tucked in a corner near the theatre, a small section details the experiences of participants in the tests including participation certificates of spectators and workers. Visitors easily miss this portion, one of the few areas dedicated to the workers at the NTS, and move down into the Underground Testing gallery.

The entrance to the Underground Testing gallery, a ten-foot diameter decoupler, clearly delineates between the two portions of the museum. The gallery focuses heavily on the technology needed to move the tests underground including giant pieces of equipment used to drill through rock in order to detonate bombs far below the Earth's surface. The gallery recreates the Control point, where technicians controlled the bombs. Nearly all the text panels included in the section contain long quotes by workers followed by a paragraph of information, making it nearly impossible for the average visitor to read the information on underground testing and the Nevada Test Site. The gallery features a model of testing in underground shafts; this miniature recreation offers visitors an easier way to conceptualize the practice of underground testing. Video and sound equipment attempt to tell the story of testing, but are cumbersome and long. One text panel on underground testing discusses the Baneberry accident of 1970, but fails to mention the deaths and subsequent lawsuits. The end of the Underground Testing gallery moves visitors through the termination of the underground testing program and into the Stewards of the Land portion of the museum.

Stewards of the Land surveys the activities at the NTS beyond the testing of atomic bombs. It appears only obliquely related to the museum's emphasis on atomic testing. It describes activities at the NTS, including an experimental farm by the Environmental Protection Agency, the development of the MX missile, and rocket development. Text labels accompany these exhibits but they are lengthy and printed in small type. Visitors move quickly through the section because it offers little information about atomic testing. The gallery then jumps back in time to explore the early history of the Nevada Test Site area. Visitors, who dutifully began their visit with the timeline in the 1940s, suddenly are presented information about the archaeological and geological aspects of the land. The Native Americans who once inhabited the land also receive attention in a case filled with reproductions of baskets and other tools they would have used. Another case covers the settlement of the West through mining and ranching artifacts. A second part, Stewards of the Land II, continues the confusing story of stewardship at the Nevada Test Site. It contains materials related to radioactive waste, radiation monitors, and waste disposal at the NTS. Stewards of the Land appears confusing, with little continuity between the objects. This entire section of the museum offers no information on how it relates to atomic testing, and for visitors who have already seen the artifacts on atomic testing, merely serves as a path to the exit.

The Atomic Testing Museum attempts to bring the story of nuclear technology current in the final section, Discovery and Innovation. Television screens loop interviews of Test Site employees. One text panel, "The Challenge of Nuclear Peace," argues for the continued

importance of the NTS as it lists the countries (including Canada) that have the technology to develop nuclear weapons. Just as in the rest of the exhibit, the text is too lengthy and too small for visitors to read. "Today and Tomorrow" offers a glimpse into the future of the Nevada Test Site. A computer monitor plays a video on the importance of continued sub-critical testing. The exhibit ends with artifacts seemingly unrelated to the history of atomic testing; a piece of the Berlin Wall and a large section of the World Trade Center in New York. The museum stressed the importance of the World Trade Center piece saying that it showed that the "test site could help win the new war."[3] A text panel connects the Test Site to the current fight against global terrorism with the explanation, "Just as during the Cold War, the Nevada Test Site stands ready to insure the safety and security of the American people."

The Atomic Testing Museum offers a wide range of artifacts from popular culture and ephemera from testing to important technological and weapons developments. The museum tells a number of stories as visitors wind through the museum. Ultimately, though, the museum fails to lose its political position and provide a balanced history of atomic testing. Exhibits continually attempt to indoctrinate visitors on the importance of the Nevada Test Site in the Cold War and the ongoing need for nuclear weapons testing and development. Panels like the "Challenges of Nuclear Peace" and interviews with past workers clearly inform visitors of the museum's position. The creation of the museum by the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation makes it nearly impossible to avoid such bias. The vision statement of the NTSHF, to "work as responsible stewards of the U.S. defense legacy by conserving the history of the Nevada Test Site and assuring public access by future generations to resources which define the nation's nuclear testing program," captures the difficulties of presenting a balanced position at the Atomic Testing Museum.[4] The group does not exist to stop the development of nuclear weapons or discuss the costs associated with the Atomic Age, but to create a history of atomic testing in the nation's defense. While this is an appropriate goal for a group, it presents significant problems when it determines interpretation at the museum. Despite a statement in the beginning to tell the stories of the workers at the Nevada Test Site, the museum focuses much on the benefits of atomic testing and the continued need for the Nevada Test Site. The story of workers is limited to snippets about the wonderful contribution NTS employees made to the Cold War. Little attention is paid to the workers who got ill or died as a result of their employment at the Test Site.

Just as the museum subscribes to a particular ideology, it seems equally particular about its audience. The content of many of the exhibits is complicated and difficult to understand. Clearly, the museum does not hope to attract elementary age children. Many of audio-visual elements appeal to young people, but prove hard to navigate for older visitors. The overall content and design of the museum suggests that it is meant to appeal to people who lived through the Cold War. The designs recognizes that many visitors may approach the bomb or atomic testing with ambivalence and attempts to sway visitors to pro-nuclear from the beginning by carefully framing atomic testing as the reason the US never entered into a hot war with the Soviets. In the first moments inside the museum, visitors face text panels, large pictures of mushroom clouds, and a video showing the Nazis in World War II that assure them of the positive role atomic testing played in the Cold War.

The editorial position of the Atomic Testing Museum indicates the high level of involvement by the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation. Issues of sponsorship also prove complicated as many of the private companies who played a key role in the maintenance and development of the Nevada Test Site sponsor exhibits or galleries inside the museum. Lockheed Martin, REECo, Bechtel, and other companies that had contracts at the Nevada Test Site donated

large amounts of money to the museum. These companies, like the NTSHF, have a clear stake in promoting a positive image of the Nevada Test Site and encouraging support for continued development. The Atomic Testing Museum, through its corporate sponsorships and the invested interested by the NTSHF, presents a one-sided, pro-testing story of America during the Cold War. The museum lacks any real supporting material. Visitors receive a map upon entering, but it only contains one grainy black and white picture. The scant material provided to visitors offers no other sources to challenge visitor's beliefs or concerns. Even in promotional materials, the narrow position of the NTSHF appears.

The interior of Atomic Testing Museum creates a positive experience for visitors. Clear separation between sections and the use of different walling and flooring materials create intimate experiences. Outside companies did nearly all the work in the construction and design of the exhibit. Andre and Knowlton designed the exhibit. Outside audio, visual, and construction companies built it. Considerable effort went into the design and construction of the museum, but an evaluation after the opening would have alerted the designers to some serious issues. Several exhibits use audio, but the audio bleeds into and interrupts other exhibits. Other uses of technology last for several minutes, longer than the attention span of most visitors. The display of artifacts inside the museum ranges from engaging to overwhelming. Some exhibits, like the home bomb shelter engage visitors. Other cases, however, display artifacts on shelves with a numbered guide at the bottom. Some of these cases contain more than eighty artifacts, far too many for the average visitor to hunt for information on artifacts of interest. Many of the other cases have text labels that contain a great deal of information that are too small for most visitors read. Some labels are placed near the floor making it nearly impossible to read them. The large text panels on the wall, designed to look like index cards, also create difficulties for the average visitor. Most contain a quote, usually three or more sentences long, followed by a lengthy explanation of the subject. Even the most exuberant visitor faces fatigue after reading several of these panels. In addition, in some areas titles or panels are placed far up on the wall, well above eye-level for most visitors. The shortcomings of the Atomic Testing Museum illustrate the importance of evaluation of exhibits following completion.

The Atomic Testing Museum presents one side of a very complicated debate on the value of atomic weapons. Most exhibits offer only a cursory study of the artifacts of and ignore any serious discussion about how and why the mushroom cloud became a hotly debated part of American iconography. Other exhibits seem content merely to describe, in highly technical terms, the equipment of atomic testing. Most importantly, the museum lacks any serious discussion on the impact of atomic testing on the "downwinders" in southern Utah and the problems of fallout across the country. These glaring omissions seriously challenge the museum's credibility.

The Atomic Testing Museum attempts to interpret history that has barely ended. The controversy and emotion that surround nuclear weapons remain fresh in many Americans' minds. The museum must walk a careful line when interpreting such recent history. Few other American history museums offer interpretation of the Cold War, and certainly, the Atomic Testing Museum stands as the sole museum dedicated to atomic testing. As years go by, and the memory of the mushroom cloud floating on the Nevada desert fades, the museum may feel more comfortable in providing a balanced narrative on atomic testing. For now, as retired "Cold Warriors" from the Nevada Test Site hold the interpretive keys, the museum offers a narrow, one-sided approach to an important topic in American history.

References:

[1] Ed Vogel, "State rejects special license plate honoring test site," *Las Vegas Review - Journal.* Jun 7, 2002. pg. 1.A

[2] http://www.ntshf.org/atmfacts.htm

[3] Keith Rogers, "Trade Center I-Beam Joins Las Vegas Museum: Artifact from September 11 Attacks Part of Permanent Collection," *Las Vegas Review-Journal.* January 26, 2010. Pg. 3B.

[4] http://www.ntshf.org/philosophy.htm

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# "Community Control:
## Civil Rights Resistance in the Mile High City"

### Summer Burke

On Thursday, September 12, 1968, an 8-year old black elementary school student made his way through the Five Points neighborhood in Denver, heading home from school. As he walked his usual route, Gerald Mitchell passed Gregory's Dry-cleaning, owned by white neighbor, Oather B. Gregory. As he skipped by the drycleaner's shop without stopping, a screen door, propped ajar, caught Mitchell's arm. Bleeding, Mitchell walked into the shop to tell the owner what had happened. Bryce O. Gregory, Oather's adult son, was working the counter when Mitchell approached. As Mitchell began to retell Gregory what had happened, Gregory left the counter, retrieved a steel bar from the back, and returned to face Mitchell. Gregory shouted at the boy, demanded that he leave, and eventually threw cleaning liquid on the 8-year old. Mitchell fled the store. What followed was unexpected violence in the city of Denver for the next few nights.[1]

#### "Symptoms of an Underlying Disease"[2] – Denver and the Nation

Denver politicians in the mid 1960s enjoyed a relatively conflict-free existence regarding race relations. In 1965, when Watts broke out in riot, Denver smiled and applauded their "more western, individualized" approach to racial conflict.[3] It was assumed, "Denver blacks in general were a select element of the Negro population in the U.S."[4] Residents considered their city to be unique; its racial make-up was a "phenomenon."[5] While Denver's black population trailed steadily behind the Latino population throughout the 1960s and 70s, with blacks representing about 11% of the population in a 25% non-white city, white liberal Denverites boasted about their integrated community with racial tolerance found due to a racial balance in population.[6]

Denver, like other cities in the west, was not a city where civil rights failed or stalled. Instead, Denver citizens experienced their own version of the movement with its own distinctive victories and defeats, collisions and conquests. But the nuances of Denver's civil rights movement have been conflated with its story of how "unique" and "exceptional" its black population was at the time.[7] Falling victim to the national trajectory which places The Movement in the south beginning with *Brown v. Board* and ending with the Civil Rights Amendment in 1964, Denver made nonviolent protest at the center of its story and viewed black militancy, along with its local rise of black power as a malfunction of the local movement.

Black power in the late 1960s was once blamed for the fall of the civil rights movement. The more militant and abrasive black power approach was mistaken for the alternative civil rights movement, contradictory to the progressive approach of nonviolent marches in the South. However, recent scholarship contextualizing black power and the Black Panthers in particular, restructured this paradigm. This move toward a more inclusive approach to studying black resistance across the country steered The Movement out of the Memphis to Montgomery narrative, and instead provides a more textured understanding of black radicalism as a vital aspect of civil rights history.[8] As the lens widens to view civil rights activity in the West, the movement lengthens chronologically as well. While the Civil Rights Amendment was passed in 1964, most

western civil rights activity took place in the later part of the decades, and Denver was no exception.[9]

Denver's Black Panther Party (BPP) chapter was one of many across the U.S., and internationally, that gained recognition in 1967.[10] The specific events of the rise of Denver's local BPP remain shrouded in secrecy. Local documentation of the party can be found only in newspaper articles and through oral interviews.[11] Histories of the national movement merely mention Denver's BPP in passing, and specific names are never used.[12] Locally, their history has been erased. In 1968 and 1969, the Denver Police Department raided BPP headquarters multiple times. Upon his arrest in 1968, leader Lauren Watson's home was also raided and vandalized by the Denver PD. The loss of the local chapter's history is due to police destruction.[13] *The Rocky Mountain News* first mentioned the local BPP in 1967 when they introduced Watson as the "self proclaimed leader" of Denver's Black Panther Party. However, more recently, Watson has assumed a posthumous cult following. Young scholars at Colorado University conducted interviews with Watson's family members and friends. Through these anecdotes, Watson's history as an activist and community member became more readily available for public knowledge. The Denver Public Library's collection consists of a short biography of Watson, hailing him a "certain type of activist." Watson is credited for the start of Denver's BPP, due to his relationship with Denver's black paper *The Denver Blade*. In 1967, the paper sponsored Watson's trip to San Francisco to meet and interview Huey P. Newton at the height of Newton's infamous imprisonment.[14]

Regardless of the credit they've been denied, the Denver BPP was instrumental in the local civil rights movement, particularly from 1968-1971. By embracing the national party's ten-point program, the BPP radicalized Denver's civil rights climate. They publicly criticized Denver's police force and elected officials for racist practices. The BPP also instituted a free breakfast program for school children, and attempted to take control of their community through the local schools, and by recruiting young black men interested in making change.

### "Mayors Like My Type" – Denver's Myth of Progress

At first glance, one might dismiss Denver's civil rights struggle as anti-climatic. If one centers on riots in Los Angeles, the rise of Black Power in Oakland, or inter-ethnic issues in Phoenix, Denver's sleepy civil rights activity might go unnoticed. Many white and black residents of the Mile High City made the comment that the black experience in Denver just "wasn't that bad," compared to that which was happening on a national scale.[15] But further inspection complicates this trajectory.

Denver prides itself on its symbols of progressive politics. In 1957, the city passed an anti-discrimination housing law that stated that no person would be prohibited from purchasing a home based on his race. While politicians pointed to this icon of Denver's lack of de jure segregation, it didn't halt de facto segregation in neighborhoods. Instead, like other cities, it simply recorded a law that didn't necessarily mandate behavior. Denver's blacks were nonetheless restricted to the inner city neighborhood of Five Points. The Five Points neighborhood, located north and east of the Denver capital building, is the historical home to the city's black community.[16] But Denver's politicans were more likely to point to the Park Hill neighborhood as an example of housing integration in the late 20th century.[17] In 1960, self-proclaimed liberal white homeowners started The Park Hill Action Committee (PHAC), a neighborhood activism organization that advocated for intentional integration of the

community.[18] The PHAC encouraged white homeowners to stay in Park Hill, blacks who were shopping to consider maintaining appropriate ratios of race in the neighborhoods that interested them. "If one Negro is living on that street, look for a house on another street," they encouraged.[19]

Another jewel in Denver's crown is the liberal stance the city's residents took when it came to electing their politicians. Elvin Caldwell, of Five Points, was the first black man to serve on Denver's city council. Caldwell maintained an accommodating stance regarding all political issues he confronted. His conservative methods were much preferred by the governor, the mayor, and the police chief. Caldwell, remembering those days, once stated, "Mayors like my type. I'd like to tell you, it's just a fact of politics. Mayors… they like someone they can sit down with and they can talk to and try to work things out. They don't like – you know, lambastes them into the paper and then in the afternoon calls and says 'can we sit down and talk it out?' I never resort to that technique and I think I got along with all the mayors."[20]

Denver government officials boasted that community members had an active voice in proposing solutions to neighborhood concerns. In 1967, Mayor Tom Currigan attempted to resolve the "racial violence" problem by delegating the responsibility to members of the black community. A group of volunteers formed the Commission on Community Relations for the City and County of Denver, Colorado. The Commission identified a number of issues within the Five Points and Park Hill neighborhoods, and provided which pointed to a number of concerns in the Denver area that many residents faced. Black youths faced a lack of jobs, and on weekend nights, they had no productive means of entertainment. The Commission advocated for weekend "Negro youth dances" at the YWCA in Five Points.[21]

### The Drycleaner Riot

On the night of Gerald Mitchell's altercation at the Drycleaners, nearly 100 teenagers and young men returned to the East Denver store. Black Panthers Lauren Watson and James E. Young led the ambush, though Watson claimed that he was only planning to confront Gregory, and that he regretted the results of the conflict.[22] Rioters threw rocks at the window of Gregory's shop, but for the most part, the crowd remained nonviolent. When a police force of over 80 men responded, they dispersed crowds with Molotov cocktail tear gas, but as soon as the tear gas disseminated, crowds returned to the shop and the riot turned ugly. Police arrested Watson, and as a *Rocky Mountain News* article of the incident claims, "In the excitement and widespread use of tear gas, a few seemingly innocent area residents became victims of police efforts to put down the disturbance."[23]

Though the crowds finally dispersed early Friday morning, they returned with renewed spirit on Friday night. On September 13th, nearly 100 young to middle aged black men stormed the Five Points intersection. They beat up Bryce O. Gregory, looted the drycleaner's register, trashed nearby businesses, and continued shooting at the firemen. Once police arrived, forty-three men were arrested, and fifteen were injured. Friday night's violence resulted in a citywide outbreak of disorder. Nearby, various groups of young adults vandalized East Denver.[24]

Following the Drycleaner Riot, Denver Police Chief George L. Seaton, along with Councilman Caldwell and Mayor Currigan, announced that he would be increasing police protection in the Five Points community. Seaton promised to "beef up" police protection in the Welton Street district. He vowed to hire thirty-five more officers, a measure that would increase the number of officers in the neighborhood at a time. Seaton's promise directly contradicted

community requests to decrease police numbers. Seaton blamed black militants for the unrest. He stated, "If you really want to do something, get people like yourselves to do things, not like Loren [sic] Watson." Seaton's disdain for Watson was obvious, as he blamed the Black Panther Party for provoking violence in the neighborhood and vowed to increase arrests. The announcement was met with mixed results.[25]

### "Not Shocked, Dismayed, or Set Back" – Continued Resistance in Denver

Contrary to Denver's accepted narrative and histories that attempt to outline the city's civil rights activity, the Panthers did not disappear after 1968's altercation with police. Regarding the need for community control, Watson wrote, "We are intelligent enough to realize what Black people want is freedom and the power to determine their own destiny."[26] Throughout the 1960s and 70s, the Denver BPP remained vocal and active. In 1969, their militant practices came in direct conflict with Denver's progressive political gem. They openly challenged Elvin Caldwell for failing to fix the aggravated climate, and for ignoring problems with Denver PD. The BPP demanded that Caldwell advocate for the immediate dismissal of specific aggravating police officers that patrolled the Five Points neighborhood. Additionally, they called for an immediate end to harassment of black children by the police, arguing that children could not be arrested if the police failed to notify parents. Once again, the Panthers argued that the solution to this problem would be the full removal of white police from black neighborhoods.[27] The result was a severed relationship with Caldwell and increased harassment from the Denver PD.

By the mid 1970s, the Denver Panthers lost their steam. Denver community members were more preoccupied with Corky Gonzales and the national Chicano Movement, as well as the War on Poverty. Watson retired and the majority of Denver's BPP members had moved out of the city. But their legacy in the Mile High City remains. The story of the Denver Panthers is of national significance because it speaks to a number of aspects of the civil rights movement. First and foremost, the Denver Panthers' actions in the 1960s and 70s were a part of a greater civil rights discourse. The national Black Panther Party made a call, far and wide, for black men like Lauren Watson to answer, and they provided a platform for change. Denver's BPP experienced police brutality, vandalism, and mistreatment, all which were encouraged by the city's mayor, police chief, and elected officials, in a city which claimed that blacks just didn't have it that bad. Denver's black politicians were agents of change no doubt, but their mere representation in the state house and city council, and the school board did not inherently guarantee protection from racism. Denver's blacks were involved in changing their city, through local politics, national conversations about school desegregation, and in the Panther's case, through active resistance. Sure, blacks in Denver might have had an exceptional experience, but it wasn't because racism didn't exist. On the contrary, because Denver boasted a liberal image, and claimed that their racial relations were kept in order; African Americans in Denver had a harder time justifying their demands for improved conditions.

References:

[1] Alan Cunningham, "Negro Youths Harass Police in 20-Block Riot," *The Rocky Mountain News*, 13 September, 1968, 2-3.

[2] Jules Mondschein, *The Summer of 1967 -- Northeast Park Hill* (Denver, Colorado: Commission on Community Relations, 1967), 16.

[3] Charles F. Cortese, *The Park Hill Experience* (Denver, Colorado: The Colorado Civil Rights Commission, 1974).

[4] Ibid., 8.

[5] Ibid., 16.

[6] Denver's demographic makeup corroborates with other western cities. In 1970, Denver's black populace reached 47,011, making it 9.1% of the overall population. The majority of Denver's blacks lived in East Denver, and had situated themselves there for nearly a century, when black migration to Denver began.[1] The majority of Denver's black migration came from "North Central States" and the South, overwhelmingly second-migration participants, who had lived in urban centers prior to their move west. As in other western states, blacks overwhelmingly migrated from urban centers to the west, instead of directly from a rural southern base. U.S. Census, *Migration Between State Economic Areas,* within *Characteristics of the Population.*

[7] Cortese, *The Park Hill Experience.*

[8] See Robert O. Self's Introduction within Charles E. Jones, *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 519.

[9] To distinguish the metanarrative of The Civil Rights Movement from *Brown v. Board* to the Civil Rights Amendment in 1964, I will capitalize The Movement, whereas local activity will be identified as the civil rights movement or activity.

[10] Started in Oakland, CA in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, the national BPP attracted a wide range of interested compatriots. The BPP party recruited young, disenfranchised men from urban centers, though activists, students, and politicians were also attracted to the BPP. Their ten-point program included community service and control, education through a newsletter, and "survival programs" such as free breakfasts for children. But the memory of the Panthers and the interpretation of their practices are often convoluted with images of their militant posture, and their violent interactions with police. Yohuru R. Williams and Jama Lazerow, *Liberated Territory: Untold Local Perspectives on the Black Panther Party* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 3.

[11] The lack of tangible BPP sources is in tandem with national modern research on the party. The BPP rarely published their true numbers of membership numbers, and their organization patterns were more spontaneous. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru R. Williams, *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).

[12] Williams and Lazerow, *Liberated Territory.*

[13] The Black Panther Party newsletter 1969, Dr. Evie Dennis, interview by Summer Burke, March 17, 2010.

[14] "Lauren R. Watson" (Unpublished pamphlet,). Despite the DPL biography, which eludes to Watson's freelance article for *The Blade*, this author has no evidence of the article's publication.

[15] Dr. Evie Dennis, interview by Summer Burke, March 17, 2010., Jesse T. Moore. Jr., "Seeking a New Life: Blacks in Post-Civil War Colorado," *Journal of Negro History* 78, no. 3 (06, 1993), 166.

[16] Five Points was also home to most of Denver's poor, both black and Latino. This ultimately led to interracial conflict among residents and politicians in the area. *Lauren R. Watson.*

[17] Park Hill was best known in Colorado as the only fully integrated community in the 1970s and 80s. Home to the majority of Denver's middle and upper class black families, Park Hill was 45% black, 45% white, and 10% Latino. Between 1968 and 1974, over twelve articles, sponsored by Denver University, sociological societies, and the Colorado Civil Rights Commission were published attempting to explain the phenomenon of Denver's incredibly achieved racial balance, particularly in Park Hill. Cortese, *The Park Hill Experience.*

[18] Ibid, 24., Housing Committee of the Denver Coordinating Council for Education and Research in Human Relations, *People who Live in Glass Houses* (Denver, Colorado, 1958).

[19] *Rebels Remembered: The Civil Rights Movement in Colorado,* video recording; DVD, directed by Dick Alweis (Denver, Colorado: Alice G. Reynolds Memorial Fund, 2007).

[20] Alweis, *Rebels Remembered.*

[21] The youth dances were not without issue, however. In the summer of 1967, while the Denver Police were patrolling the YWCA location of a Thursday night dance, they arrested a young man for jaywalking. Black teens resisted this arrest by throwing rocks at the officers, and police responded with force. Mondschein, *The Summer of 67*, 25., Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Cunnngham, "Negro Youths Harass Police in 20-Block Riot," 2-3.

[24] Michael Rounds, "3 Teen Dropouts Arrested Trying to Enter School," *The Rocky Mountain News*, September, 1969.

[25] Vocal East Denver businessmen applauded the measure, welcoming the additional presence of law enforcement. However, some voiced concerns. One pointed out that an increase in police presence had already caused problems in the community. Clemens Work, "Seaton: Will Enforce Law," *The Rocky Mountain News*, 27 September, 1968. Throughout the remainder of the 1960s, and despite the BPP demands and community concerns, Denver's police chief and mayor relentlessly advocated for increased police presence in East Denver, as they believed this would improve the relationships among Five Points neighbors, the Denver Police, and within the community. The BPP did not agree. Members of Denver's Black Panther Party requested a meeting with Chief Seaton, following Seaton's promise for a stronger police stand in Five Points. Lauren Watson, who led the meeting, outlined concerns that Seaton's commitment to increased police presence in Five Points would suppress black business through police involvement. Additionally, Watson took issue with Seaton's claim that the overall majority of Denver's black businessmen were present and accounted for at the meeting. Both Currigan and Seaton argued that black businessmen wanted increased protection in Five Points, and advocated for amplified patrols, as well as more vigilant response to issues in the community. Associated Press, "Black Militants React to Seaton."

[26] Lauren Watson, "Denver Panthers Determined: Community Control of Schools," *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* III, no. 7, 1969, 6.

[27] Lyle, "Councilman Takes Stand Against Panther Demands," 5-6.

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| *Historiographical Essay* | "Migration, Community, and Stereotype: Shaping Racial Space in the Twentieth-Century Urban West" |
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## Stefani Evans

> *The American city should be a collection of communities where every member has a right to belong. It should be a place where every man feels safe on his streets and in the house of his friends. It should be a place where each individual's dignity and self-respect is strengthened by the respect and affection of his neighbors. It should be a place where each of us can find the satisfaction and warmth which comes from being a member of the community of man. This is what man sought at the dawn of civilization. It is what we seek today.*

> —Lyndon B. Johnson[1]

President Lyndon Johnson addressed Congress regarding the nation's cities in March 1965: while he spoke in the rhetoric of his times by using universal "man" to represent males and females, Johnson's language was unequivocal and thoroughly inclusive when he stated that "every member has a right to belong." Based upon his legislative record, Johnson's vision of a collection of communities likely included a multicultural collection of community members. In 1965 many U.S. cities resembled tattered quilts of separate patches of color that were breaking apart at fragile seams. Five months after Johnson outlined his hopeful urban vision the Watts section of Los Angeles rioted. Race riots ripped through America's fraying cities in five consecutive summers from 1965 to 1969, and Johnson's vision seemed increasingly unattainable.

African Americans who migrated to western cities in the twentieth century encountered a polyglot mix of Euro Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans. Diverse western populations dictated that western racial contests over space and power would evolve differently from those in the North or the South. This paper examines the discourse on white, Latino and African American racial landscapes in western cities through themes of migration, community formation, and white stereotypes and community responses to those stereotypes in seven key monographs and two articles published between 1993 and 2005.

### Migration

This essay examines the effects of migration on western urban racial landscapes as illuminated by the work of Arthur R. Gómez, Albert S. Broussard, Quintard Taylor, and Douglas Flamming. Arthur R. Gómez's 1994 book, *Quest for the Golden Circle: The Four Corners and the Metropolitan West 1945−1970,* informs discussion on migration and offers the first model for regional community formation.[2] Broussard's 1993 study, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900−1954,* is the first case study of blacks in the twentieth-century urban West and provides a model for racial studies of western urban places.[3] Taylor's 1994 book,

*The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* follows on the heels of Broussard; Taylor was the first to focus on one city from reconstruction-era migration through the civil rights era.[4] Flamming's *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (2005) placed black Los Angeles in the national civil rights struggle in the five decades preceding World War II.[5]

Ironically, the sparsely populated Four Corners subregion was perhaps the best contemporary western example of President Johnson's 1965 urban vision of diversity in the West. Gómez examines regional community development in the Four Corners, a confluence of four states marked by four towns that anchored the subregion and vied for pre-eminence: Moab, Utah; Flagstaff, Arizona; Durango, Colorado, and Farmington, New Mexico. Gómez addresses Native American longevity through a chain of residence from the Anasazi in 200 B.C. to Navajo tribes that later populated Anasazi areas. Navajos shared the southern half of the Four Corners with Hopis and Apaches and the northern half with Utes and Pueblos. Euro American Mormons, Texans, Californians, and Midwesterners who settled the Four Corners in the late nineteenth century encountered a landscape peopled with Navajo and Hopi tribes and Hispanics of Mexican and Spanish descent. In the mid-1960s, the four states embarked on two cooperative efforts that forged a lasting regional "ethos"—a federal lobbying coalition that pushed for the Navajo Trail highway across the Navajo Nation and a regional planning effort to capitalize on tourism.

Gómez cites Earl Pomeroy when he argues that western hinterland communities emulated their metropolitan neighbors through economic dependence on eastern industry, struggle to gain social and economic acceptance, and eagerness to exploit resources. Gómez argues that, just as World War II transformed the West from colony of the industrial east into pacesetting region, so did federal subsidies and the resources of the Four Corners fuel western growth and transform the Four Corners into an intraregional colony of its larger neighbors.[6] Gómez cites Bernard DeVoto to argue that extractive demands "plundered" the west. From the 1960s Four Corners cities forged municipal and private partnerships that aggressively courted tourists to Four Corners ski resorts and national parks in order to diversify sagging extractive economies. However, in his 2000 Preface, Gómez cites Hal Rothman to argue that tourism is often a "devil's bargain" through which cities compromise their cultural integrity to attract tourist dollars.[7]

Albert S. Broussard, Quintard Taylor, and Douglas Flamming examine massive World War II African American in-migration that transformed the West and changed the racial landscapes of San Francisco, Seattle, and Los Angeles, respectively. In 1993 Broussard investigated national and transnational factors—the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, and the postwar era—that changed San Francisco's black community.[8] Examination of pre-World War II patterns of migration, employment, housing, family and social life, politics, protest activities, and status reveals that struggles of black San Franciscans paralleled those of black Bostonians, and that African Americans in both cities lagged far behind their white urban counterparts in all categories. Broussard writes that before World War II western black communities developed differently from those in other regions: before 1940 western cities (except Los Angeles) had only small African American populations; western urban centers lacked black ghettos; moreover, San Francisco, Seattle, and Los Angeles had sizeable Asian communities that deflected white racism. The author demonstrates that David Katzman's racial caste model belies San Francisco's liberal and progressive image and reveals a "polite racism" that limited social, political, and economic opportunities for African Americans.

Broussard cites Nash when he argues that World War II was a "watershed" that

transformed western race relations. The war pulled African Americans to the San Francisco Bay Area in record numbers in search of jobs, education, and freedom from violence; San Francisco's black population increased more than six hundred percent between 1940 and 1945. The author cites studies that profile African American wartime migrants to San Francisco. Such migrants mostly came from the South, primarily from Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Louisiana, and Arkansas; they moved to the Bay Area in search of racial and economic equity. Wartime African American migrants differed from San Francisco's established black population: they had little to lose economically; they had neither friends nor family in the city; they migrated as family units; they were young, ambitious, and almost as well-educated as long-established black San Franciscans; they likely traveled to San Francisco by train or bus, rather than by automobile; their families were larger, and they shared their homes with extended family.

One year after Broussard's study appeared, historian Quintard Taylor's investigation of one hundred years of spatial and institutional development in Seattle's Central District was published.[9] Taylor and Broussard acknowledge each other in their works, and both authors argue that the presence of Asian peoples shaped and complicated the African American narrative in their respective cities. Taylor explores the paradox of Seattle, which, like Broussard's San Francisco, offered neither overt prejudice nor economic opportunity and mixed condescension with contempt. Taylor argues that the presence of Asian Americans, Seattle's largest population of color before World War II and since 1970, modified racial identities and expectations of Seattle's blacks. From 1890 to the 1940s white Seattleites focused their racial fears on Asians and Native Americans rather than on the small African American population. Seattle Asians and blacks demonstrated "competition and cooperation among various peoples of color" as they jointly pressed for racial equality but competed for jobs and housing.[10] Taylor reconceptualizes northern ghetto formation models by arguing that his study of Seattle agrees with previous studies of Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Denver in demonstrating that no single city can define the black urban experience.

The author rethinks a black community "ethos" molded, but not defined, by denial and exclusion, and he argues that black Seattleites "sought to retain and transform their rural values and sense of shared culture" through their organizations and institutions.[11] Like Broussard, Taylor affirms the transformative effect of World War II; Seattle's massive in-migration from rural places in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana precipitated development of ghetto-like conditions, changed the city's race relations, and increased urban pathologies that revealed the "disintegration of the pre-World War II system of parental and community supervision."[12] Taylor argues that Seattle's Central District demonstrates that economic inclusion of all persons demands that a racially liberal platform also incorporate an economic plank.

A decade later, Douglas Flamming's study of Los Angeles race relations in the fifty years before World War II was published.[13] The author focused on Los Angeles because the sprawling, multiracial city then prefigured the landscapes of twenty-first century cities. In contrast to Taylor's findings in Seattle, Flamming asserts that most pre-World War I black Angelenos were middle-class migrants from the urban (not rural) South—specifically, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Atlanta, Georgia, as well as Texas cities of San Antonio, Austin, Galveston, Beaumont, and Dallas—a migration, he argues, that "highlights the selective nature" of the black migration West and the importance of "chain-migration links between Los Angeles and several key southern cities."[14] Early-twentieth-century western blacks believed the South represented tyranny, the West represented freedom, and "the West was in danger of becoming another South."[15] The

histories of black Angelenos reflected southern oppression and generated the civil rights activism that guided their daily actions.

Flamming revises a traditional declensionist tale of a black Los Angeles "golden age" with a complex account that echoes Broussard and Taylor, in which Los Angeles black migrants found ambiguous conditions in a city that was freer than southern and most northern cities, but was, nonetheless, tightly constrained by the city's dominant white population. Educated black Angelenos of the middle class were often underemployed in menial, insecure jobs; they represented a "blue-collar bourgeoisie, earning working-class wages but holding middle-class aspirations."[16] Like Broussard and Taylor, Flamming engages other racial and ethnic groups in his study. He observes that white domination over non-white Angelenos—World War II internment of Japanese Americans, Great Depression repatriation of ethnic Mexicans, and wartime "zoot suit" riots against Mexicans—never prompted the diverse groups of Los Angeles to band together in mutual support except briefly during World War II; indeed, he argues that black Angelenos viewed freedom solely in black and white terms. Flamming writes that black Angelenos built an unrelenting activism through the early decades of the twentieth century, and in concert with northern and western blacks, they inserted it into the New Deal and ended Jim Crow in the West. For the middle-class black Angelenos of whom Flamming writes, civil rights activism was a daily way of life.

**Community Formation**

The present survey explores themes of community formation in western urban settings principally through the works of Andrew Wiese, Robert O. Self, David G. Gutiérrez, and Ramón A. Gutiérrez. Wiese's *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (2004) is the first synthesis study of black suburbanization.[17] Self's historiographical essay, "City Lights: Urban History in the West," explores how historians have conceptualized the effects of metropolitanism on the western racial landscape.[18] David G. Gutiérrez was the first scholar to move beyond advocacy to tease out contradictory ethnic Mexican views on identity and immigration in his 1995 study, *Walls and Mirrors*.[19] Ramón A. Gutiérrez's 2004 essay chronicles U.S. historiographic traditions of writing about Latin American peoples and how those depictions shaped the identities that Latino people assign themselves, particularly regarding the terms "Latino" and "Hispanic."[20]

Andrew Wiese's examination of place, space, race, class, and gender in working-, middle-, and upper-class African American suburbs challenges the myth that suburbs are synonymous with white middle- or upper-class communities.[21] Wiese cites groundbreaking studies by Kenneth T. Jackson and Robert Fishman that criticize the racialism that segregated America's cities and suburbs, but the author argues that "historians have done a better job excluding African Americans from suburbs than even white suburbanites."[22] Wiese posits a new model of suburbanization that includes all expansion beyond the city limits in order to accommodate millions of black suburbanites and African American working-class families that have long lived on the suburban fringe. Wiese examines the types of homes African American suburbanites desired, the neighborhoods they sought, and what would have preferred if they had had the freedom to choose. The suburban places they created illustrate their commitment to Johnson's 1965 ideal of "a place where every man feels safe on his streets and in the house of his friends."

Wiese discovers that black suburbs developed in spaces previously claimed by earlier generations of African American community-builders, and the geography of the suburban spaces reveals a continuous pattern of black suburbanization from the late nineteenth century. Black suburbs that developed after 1960 vary in socioeconomic and physical details, but they uniformly grew out of previous black settlements, and, in turn, they served as the ground floor for future

black development. The suburban boundaries illuminate racial struggles over time to create a living space. Through much of the twentieth century the intertwined connection between race and class dictated that African Americans could live in only circumscribed areas; the community's racially defined places, therefore, fostered political and social capital.

Like Wiese, Flamming examines the intertwined themes of race and space. Flamming depicts the poorer and more ethnically diverse Los Angeles Eastside (east of the Main Street divide) in relation to the wealthier and whiter Westside.[23] Central Avenue was situated firmly in the city's Eastside directly south of downtown. Blacks, Asians, ethnic Mexicans, and ethnic whites shared Eastside space circumscribed by Westside housing restrictions. Flamming describes early twentieth-century Eastside residents as a racially mixed group of "scrappers and strivers," of whom the blacks "were probably the most affluent."[24] World War II in-migration created desperately crowded conditions, but Flamming describes the area as "neither ghetto nor slum," and argues that to imagine it as such "misrepresents the essence of the place."[25] Like Wiese, Flamming looks beyond the physical description of a place to examine its social capital. He writes that Central Avenue derived its vibrancy from its multi-ethnic character, but that black Los Angeles claimed the space of The Avenue through its residences, newspapers, churches, jazz clubs, and businesses.

Robert O. Self examines how metropolitanism shaped western racial landscapes in his essay on western urban historiography.[26] Beginning with its 1925 University of Chicago roots that emphasized concentric economic zones from dense urban centers to the hinterlands, Self identified four major interpretive trends in western urban history: spatial economy of western cities, the urban public, the urban white republic and its legacies, and the metropolitan west. Historians examine spatial economies to seek connections between cities and their hinterlands, cities and extended networks of power, and cities and religion. Historians of the urban public ask who and what belongs to the public and under what terms. Because race defined the urban public before and after World War II, historians of the white republic and its legacies examine western cities born after the late-nineteenth century. Scholars of the metropolitan West move beyond conventional dualisms of center and periphery, ethnic conflict and assimilation, and industrialization and deindustrialization to question, for example, the urban crisis or the feedback loop that compounded urban disadvantage. Self argues that economy, space, and power are the core of urban history, and urban historians must explode false boundaries between varieties of history and investigate all sides of a question.

Self's own exploration of the effect of post-World War II metropolitanism on black Oakland, not surprisingly, is a good example of the kind of urban history he calls for in his historiographical overview.[27] Self examined tropes of urban decline and white flight to unmask and define Oakland's postwar racial struggles over race, space, and economy. He cites Kenneth Jackson to highlight federal subsidies of white suburbs and the consumer culture that privatized the public sphere even as Johnson's Great Society tried to combat racism and poverty. Self reaches deeper to explore political scales (including household, neighborhood, municipal, county, state, regional, and national) that control urban spaces. The author argues that homeowners in Oakland's East Bay suburbs expected low property taxes and racial segregation and accepted "the conflation of whiteness and property ownership with upward social mobility."[28] Property, then, became capital for homeowners and municipal governments, as Self demonstrates by his examination of Oakland and the southern Alameda County cities of San Leandro, Milpitas, and Fremont. Oakland's escalating capital flight, deindustrialization, and black social isolation

contrasted with the simultaneous corporate investment and population growth in the three suburban cities.

Like Self, Josh Sides explores how metropolitanism affected and shaped African American communities.[29] Sides examines the post-World War II African American struggle for space and property in Los Angeles, thus beginning his coverage at the point Flamming would end his 2005 study. Sides explains that the spatial complexity of Los Angeles made its neighborhood desegregation story different from that of most postwar American cities and "was the impetus for a burgeoning civil rights movement that forced black demands into the public consciousness of white Los Angeles."[30] As the Central Avenue area became more densely populated, working-class and middle-class blacks moved out to the West Jefferson and West Adams districts or to newly integrating working-class suburbs. When working-class and middle-class residents left, Central Avenue became poorer and more socially isolated. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) built several public housing projects throughout the city before World War II, but after the war proposed HACLA projects in Compton and Santa Monica faced fierce white resistance; thus, the HACLA built public housing in places where African Americans already lived, notably siting four large projects in Watts, creating a "ghetto within the ghetto," and fomenting conditions that precipitated the 1965 Watts riot.[31]

Scholars who examine community cohesiveness and identity heed Johnson's call to ensure that "each individual's dignity and self-respect is strengthened." Such scholars include David G. Gutiérrez, Ramón A. Gutiérrez, Taylor, and Wiese, all of whom focus on ethnic and racial identity, and Matthew C. Whitaker who focuses on political identity and the interplay of racial identities. David Gutiérrez examined differences and commonalities that divided and bound Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants through themes of class, ethnicity, and politics in order to illuminate questions of immigration, identity, and community development.[32] He argued that constant influx of recent Mexican immigrants precipitated heated debates in Mexican American communities between long-term U.S. residents and recent arrivals and forced community members to daily refine their identities in relation to the incomers. He writes that such debates among Mexican American and Mexican immigrant activists complicated adoption of a unified political and cultural identity. However, Gutiérrez argues that such activists formulated and articulated the concerns of Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants and mobilized and empowered them to shape their own destinies in the U.S. David Gutiérrez's delicate probing of ideological debates prefigured a later call by Ramón Gutiérrez to write such histories.

David Gutiérrez also explores the evolution of Mexican American society and political culture in Mexico's northern provinces following conquest by the U.S. in 1848, but he suggests that even before annexation Mexican Americans exhibited strong political, social, and cultural differences from Mexicans. The author argues that such political and social divisions continued through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continue to influence debate between citizens and aliens. Against a backdrop of increasing hostility toward Mexicans, Mexican Americans of the 1920s and 1930s adopted two perspectives on immigration and the social, economic, and political future of Mexican Americans; these discourses shaped later debates over immigration and ideological and civil rights. He analyzes how World War II and later the Bracero Program shaped civil rights rhetoric and national debates on immigration and complicated divides between and among Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants over their respective senses of ethnicity. The author explores the two threads of thought into the Cold War as the Bracero

Program stimulated legal and illegal immigration from Mexico and influenced positions adopted by Mexican American rights activists from the 1940s into the 1960s. Gutiérrez concludes that a "strident assertion of Chicano ethnicity" among Mexican American youth represented the evolution of Mexican American perception of the debate over Mexican immigration to the U.S.[33]

In his essay, "Hispanics and Latinos," Ramón Gutiérrez reveals a tension in U.S. historiography between Hispanophilia, which emphasizes European and Christian traditions and white origins, and Hispanophobia, which focuses on Indian and African ancestry and illegitimacy and cultism. Gutiérrez argues that the two views held by the dominant white culture dictated ways in which long-time residents and recent immigrants identified themselves in private and in public. He further contends that many "aggressively resisted Hispanic as an English-language identity imposed by government from above," and they preferred to call themselves Latinos.[34] Latinos are demographically diverse: geographically from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Central, and South America, racially in gradients from white to black, and financially from poor to wealthy. However, the majority of U.S. Latinos are the working poor; they depend on bonding networks to secure their jobs; they lack education and English skills, and they are racialized as nonwhite. Gutiérrez acknowledges scholarly attention to Latino cultural hybridity, and a diasporic past and calls for historians to rethink their perceptions about the "unity of nation-states, the coherence of national languages, the constancy of communities, and the complexity of personal subjectivities."[35]

Taylor presented a similar argument to David Gutiérrez in his study of the Seattle black community. Taylor wrote that from before the 1890s contradictions in liberalism and paternalism and biases in race, class, and length of residence have ideologically and spatially divided Seattle's black Central District community; the same concerns defined the contours of an ideological break in the community in the 1960s. Taylor thus argues the "fallacy of ascribing the worldview of the leadership cadre to the entire community," and he urges historians to extend their examinations beyond organizational and institutional leaders.[36]

Wiese, on the other hand, in analyzing African American suburbs eschews emphasis on divisions within the black community and instead chronicles the rise in black middle-class suburbanization and concurrent production of cultural identity. He argues that post-World War II urban restructuring forced suburban blacks into frequent and intimate face-to-face encounters with racism that heightened, rather than diminished, their racial identity. Despite distance, many suburban African Americans maintained their social and cultural ties by commuting to black events and black spaces; other black suburbanites reinforced their connections by searching for houses in communities that were "both middle-class and African American."[37]

Like David Gutiérrez and Quintard Taylor, Matthew C. Whitaker argues against assuming a monolithic African American political identity.[38] In his examination of the black struggle for civil and economic rights in twentieth-century Phoenix, Whitaker points to black liberals such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton and conservative black spokesmen such as Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, Clarence Thomas, and Alan Keyes to demonstrate the ideological complexity and fracturing of black politics. Middle-class and wealthy blacks left urban neighborhoods for suburbs and took their tax dollars and their political power with them; behind them they left the poor who could not leave. Whitaker argues that class conflict exacerbates problems of the poor, and that black communities often lack cohesion due to "[c]lass divisions, geographical separation, and lingering racial discrimination."[39]

Whitaker also points to identity conflicts between African Americans and Mexican

Americans through the social construction of race that placed African Americans at the bottom of a racial hierarchy below Mexican Americans, who had European backgrounds. Whitaker argues that black Americans "did not have escape clauses when it came to the 'race problem,'" while "Mexican Americans enjoyed a kind of racialized 'escape hatch.'"[40] Whitaker makes his case that the interplay between the groups makes the West different. As he writes, "[t]he Chicano population in Phoenix challenged the city's African Americans in ways that blacks in the East and South did not have to contemplate."[41] Whitaker's exploration of the cultural interactions between black, white, and Latino populations in Phoenix presents a more complex and realistic view of western urban life than do studies that view race or ethnicity in a black and white or brown and white duality.

**White Stereotypes and Community Responses**

Eric Avila and William Deverell examine race and space through white stereotypes and community responses in Los Angeles. Avila's 2004 book, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight,* reveals how social and political shifts forged a suburban white identity and transformed racial landscapes in post-World War II cities.[42] Deverell explores white identity formation through the "whitewashing" of Los Angeles history by elite boosters and city builders as metaphor for the city's conscious recasting of its Mexcian past.[43]

Avila questions what it means to American culture that Ebbets Field, Coney Island, and streetcars disappeared at about the same time and how these urban disappearances changed Los Angeles spatially and reflected the city's post-World War II racial order. Avila argues "that relations between diverse racial and ethnic groups are mutually constitutive," and his synthetic study of race and ethnicity uses the spatial reorganization of Los Angeles as a case study in white identity formation.[44] White America solidified its social and cultural hegemony over persons of color when Hollywood depicted urban decline and chaos in film noir (literally translated as black film), when Walter O'Malley abandoned Brooklyn's Ebbets Field and built Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, when Walt Disney's vision of sanitized order became white America's archetypal amusement park, and when Los Angelenos traded heterogeneous public streetcars for private automobiles on freeways.

Using metaphors of "chocolate city" and "vanilla suburbs," Avila chronicles the white cultural retreat from public to private spheres and the concurrent white spatial retreat from cities to suburbs; both retreats signaled white avoidance of the civil rights movement that demanded inclusion of blacks in American public spaces. Avila argues that when their distance did not shield them from "racial uprisings, moral implosions, mass murders, and political assassinations," whites turned toward political conservatism and Ronald Reagan to help them end New Deal liberalism and attain their dreams of the good life.[45] Increased immigration from Asia and Latin America exacerbated economic extremes, blurred racial lines, and prompted further white flight from Los Angeles. However, Avila argues that the "re-Mexicanization" of Los Angeles represents "an ethnic transformation of the urban landscape on a scale unparalleled in history," that popular culture reflects that demographic shift, and that Los Angeles may again be a cultural trend-setter.[46]

Like Avila, Deverell argues that white responses to Mexican ethnicity shaped the racial landscape of Los Angeles; he posits that by exposing its mythical, faulty history Los Angeles might build a different future.[47] Deverell explores how ethnic stereotypes guided municipal response to the 1924 Los Angeles bubonic plague outbreak in which nearly forty people died as

health officials quarantined five urban districts where Mexicans lived. White authorities battled the disease by instituting strict quarantine, massive rodent extermination, and wholesale demolition of the affected areas—areas that coincided with Mexican districts. Deverell explores whether authorities declared structures "public nuisances" so they could demolish Mexican properties, avoid compensating Mexican owners, and remake the ethnic landscape of the city. White newspapers avoided publicizing the "slight epidemic" that could tarnish the city's public image, while the Spanish language newspaper scolded "the hermetic silence in which authorities have locked themselves."[48] The city's actions reshaped the Los Angeles racial landscape, and Deverell argues that municipal response to the plague reflected white stereotypes that linked ethnicity to disease.

The historiography demonstrates that racial prejudices and stereotypes resulted in a racial hierarchy and structural segregation of nonwhite groups in the urban West; whites reflected these prejudices in popular cultural settings. Broussard and Flamming demonstrate that whites showed greater hostility towards Asians than towards blacks before World War II, but their greater postwar numbers ensured that African Americans received the brunt of white racism and discrimination. Broussard, Taylor, and Flamming reveal the varied southern backgrounds of World War II black migrants to western cities. David Gutiérrez, Ramón Gutiérrez, Quintard Taylor, and Matthew C. Whitaker argue the complexity of ethnic and racial identities. Avila and Deverell illustrate how the urban racial landscape reflects white stereotypes and community responses to those stereotypes.

The historiography reveals that multiple racial and ethnic groups complicate western urban narratives of migration, community formation, and the way communities respond to stereotypes, because members of various groups may or may not place racial or ethnic identity above their own social, economic, or political aspirations. The historiography on this topic also points to future studies that may complicate the racial discourse by adding layers of knowledge that may inform future racial relations. Taylor calls for more "bottom up" studies that go beyond organizational and institutional racial leaders. Ramón A. Gutiérrez urges historians to reconceptualize communities of common language or place of origin and instead to tease out differences. Robert O. Self calls for historians to synthesize western urban questions and not to slice historical query into narrow categories. Andrew Wiese calls for a new model of suburban study that includes all expansion beyond city limits. Eric Avila exhorts historians to study urban racial and ethnic groups as a collective whole. William Deverell urges historians to identify, correct, and expose false histories.

The West has always been the place where different peoples converge; the richness of that diversity makes the West unique and shapes the lives of those who inhabit the region. I suggest more synthetic histories such as those by Avila and Wiese that highlight cultural themes that connect and divide racial and ethnic groups over time. Likewise, I advocate for more studies on the model of David Gutiérrez and Ramón Gutiérrez that articulate the ideological and cultural debates that divide and connect individuals within groups. I also propose more local, in-depth studies of how multiple groups shared and contested the space of the city. Whitaker provides a model for a study of white, black, and Latino interaction; however, most western places are home to multiple groups, and studies should offer voice to all peoples that populate a place. If we expand our knowledge by weaving together complex threads of migration, community formation, and stereotypes and community responses with multiple textures of race and ethnicity, we will create intricate tapestries that will more accurately reflect the histories of the multicultural and

multiracial western urban communities that populate the West. By following multiple threads of inquiry and knitting the stories together we may illuminate a pattern of knowledge that can enlighten the "collections of communities" that formed Johnson's urban vision and create American cities where, indeed, "every member has a right to belong."

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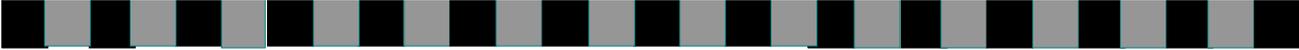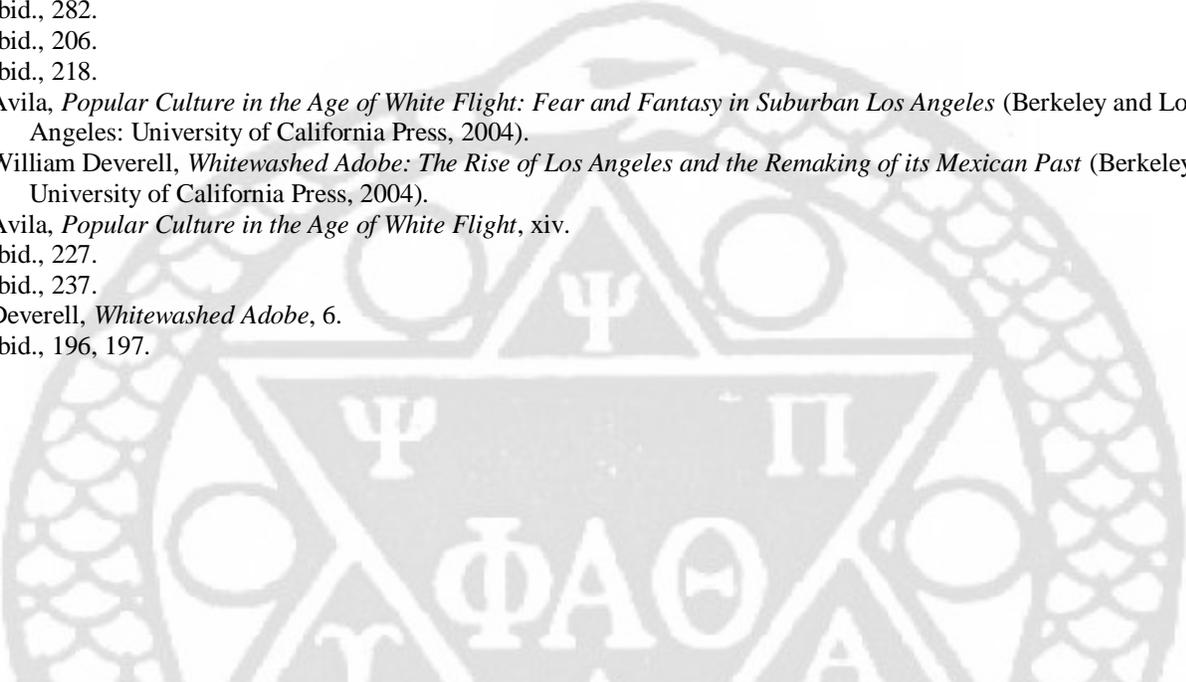
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# "Price Ceilings and Rationing:
## The Base Ingredients of the Black Market Food Industry in Nevada During World War II "

### *Richard B. Keeton*

**"It is obviously fair that where there is not enough of any essential commodity to meet all civilian demands, those who can afford to pay more for the commodity should not be privileged over those who cannot… where any important article becomes scarce, *rationing* is the democratic, equitable solution."**

-President Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Cost of Living"
message to Congress, April 27, 1942.

After the Empire of Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Americans braced themselves for what would surely be a long, hard-fought war. In World War II, brave young United States soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice across the seas on both the European and Pacific fronts. However, the millions of citizens on domestic soil also made countless sacrifices in a national mobilization to support the war effort. People in Nevada and across the nation gave up everyday conveniences and seemingly ordinary items to show their support for the troops. Government agencies instituted tight rationing guidelines on a variety of consumer goods. Perhaps the most highly regulated rationing involved raw materials of the transportation sector. Gasoline, rubber, steel, and aluminum were carefully rationed, and a limited supply was available to the public. Other consumer goods such as clothes and shoes were rationed as well so that manufacturers could focus their production on the needs of the soldiers. Perhaps above all, Americans remember the daily sacrifices of one of life's most basic necessities: *food*. Dietary staples such as meat, coffee, and sugar were rationed to the consumer by the federal government. Price ceilings and strict rationing regulations of food products resulted in widespread black market practices in Nevada and across the nation during World War II. This essay will analyze the specific government policies and regulations placed on sugar, coffee, and meat, while exploring the public reactions and the consequential black market practices that became commonplace in American society.

Beginning in 1942, the federal government began laying the groundwork for food rationing programs in Nevada and across the nation. Although rationing was contrary to the American culture of luxury and excess, government officials portrayed it as a way of showing patriotism and allegiance to one's country. For many, food rationing interrupted daily patterns and habits of eating, from the customary morning coffee to the indulgent steak dinner. In *Eating for Victory*, Amy Bentley writes, "After all, choosing between a steak or chops for dinner was evidence of having obtained the American dream, with its emphasis on material abundance."[1] Government regulations of rationing did not favor those with money or discriminate against those without. Every citizen was on an equal playing field to compete for scarce consumer resources. Deprivation of life's everyday conveniences was a way that Americans showed their support for

the war effort.  Although sometimes difficult, most US citizens realized that their sacrifices were not near that of American allies Great Britain and Russia.

The reasoning behind rationing embraced two key concepts: "since resources were rare, they should be shared equally; and to control inflation, rationing should be used rather than leaving distribution to the free market system normally in place in America."[2]  Since most citizens accepted these two ideologies, criticism was minimal.  However, rationing alone would leave the market susceptible to hoarding, leading to inflation.  Economists argued that broad price controls over all sectors of the market were necessary.

Paul F. Gemmill notes in his book *American Economy in Wartime*, "The serious inflation which accompanied World War I enriched some persons while impoverishing others, and increased the cost of the war by about 150 percent."[3]  To avoid a similar situation in the emerging war, Wall Street financier Bernard Baruch urged the government to set broad price controls in his widely publicized article "Priorities: The Synchronizing Force."  He argued that freezing only a select number of consumer goods would leave to "human judgment" as to which goods were necessary to regulate pricing, and which were to remain dependent on market demand.  However, through wide-ranging price controls, "human judgment" would not be a factor in determining which goods were to be regulated to appropriate price ceilings.  Baruch also contended that many prices were dependent on the level of other prices.  For example, food prices were subject to rising transportation costs due to the rationing of tires and fuel oil.  Baruch argued that widespread price controls were the only way to adequately prevent wartime inflation.[4]

In April 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPACS).  Its main objectives were to stabilize market prices and prevent increases due to inflation, to prevent profiteering, hoarding, and speculation, to assist in assuring adequate production, and to protect those with fixed incomes from undue impairment of their living standards.  In August 1941, functions of the OPACS concerning civilian supply were transferred to the Office of Production Management, while the OPACS was truncated to the Office of Price Administration (OPA).  It limited the purchase of various commodities that were composed of raw materials in high demand for the war effort, such as automobiles, tires, and appliances.  Also, the OPA regulated the quantity of consumer goods to be rationed equally amongst the population such as gasoline, sugar, coffee, and meat.  The War Production Board (WPB) worked closely with the OPA to create a list of items that were necessary to ration for the war effort.  Automobiles, gasoline, and tires were among the first commodities to be rationed.  Although plans for price regulation were already being drafted by the OPA, Congress passed the Emergency Price Control Act in January of 1942.  This Act placed the power of price control within the OPA, officially authorizing government jurisdiction over widespread price controls.  Leon Henderson, the first Price Administrator of the OPA, became notorious for his unpopular methods of swift regulations instituted by the new administration.[5]

In May 1942, Congress passed the General Maximum Price Regulation (General Max).  The bill declared:

1. Beginning May 18, 1942, retail prices of commodities and services, with some exceptions, could not exceed the highest levels which each individual seller charged during March 1942.
2. Beginning May 11, 1942, manufacturing and wholesale prices and the prices for wholesale and industrial services could not exceed the highest March levels for each seller.

3. Beginning July 1, 1942, no individual could legally charge more for services sold at retail in connection with a commodity than was charged during March when that price ceiling went into effect.

After enactment of the General Max legislation, the federal government extended price controls to nearly 90 percent of all foods sold at retail nationwide. [6]

As Nevadans began to accept rationing of fuel, oil, and rubber as a way of life, the first food that found itself in short supply was sugar. War Ration Book One, the first in the history of the United States, was released May 4-May 7, 1942. Over 123 million books were issued to the public nationwide. The book was primarily issued to limit consumer purchases of sugar, down to twelve ounces per individual per week. Industrial consumers had already been rationed to 80 percent of the amounts purchased from the previous year. Under the new rationing system, confectionary and beverage manufacturers were impacted the most. Additionally, the book rationed for two pairs of shoes per person for the remainder of the year.[7]

Sugar rationing was triggered by the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, which had cut off the large supply normally sourced from the islands. Sugar cargoes from Hawaii were cut in half to conserve shipping labor diverted to military work. Since the US had recently joined the Allied forces on the European front, considerable amounts of sugar were diverted to support those nations. Other Mediterranean and Near East nations were allocated sugar to replace provisions previously supplied by Japan.[8]

In August 1941, Price Administrator Leon Henderson fixed a price ceiling for sugar imported from Cuba at $3.50 per one hundred pounds. However, with the influence of Japanese forces on American sugar supply, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, an independent government agency, contracted to purchase the entire Cuban sugar output for the year of 1942. With the signing of the contract, Henderson agreed to raise the price ceiling to $3.74 per one hundred pounds, resulting in a consumer retail sale price of almost seven cents per pound.[9] The estimated amount of sugar that was available per capita was about 80 pounds in 1942. This was down from approximately 120 pounds per person in 1941. By the beginning of November 1942, institutional users, including hotels and restaurants, were additionally cut down from 80 percent to 60 percent of the base established by the previous year's usage. Sugar allotments for hospitals had been cut down to 85 percent of their established base.[10]

Coffee was the second foodstuff to be officially rationed by the government. Henderson ordered nationwide rationing of coffee to go into effect November 28, 1942. All citizens age fifteen and up were eligible to receive a ration of one pound every five weeks- about a cup a day.[11] Stamps from Ration Book Number One were used to obtain coffee rations. Leo F. Schmitt, Director of the Nevada OPA, announced that citizens who did not receive the first ration book because of excess sugar stock on hand at the time were allowed to receive a new copy of the ration book. Additionally, they were allowed to sell any excess sugar supplies to eligible retailers or others holding proper certificates issued by the local war price rationing board. Consumers selling sugar had to have permission from local war price rationing boards, and the sugar had to be sold in the original, unopened packages by the manufacturer.[12] Furthermore, consumers that were holding a supply of coffee in excess of one pound when coffee rationing officially began, were required to report the personal supply, and consequently, surrender the according number of coffee ration stamps to the local war rationing board.[13] Schmitt announced, "No consumer shall acquire roasted coffee if he owns or possesses more than one pound of coffee for personal use,

and no person shall transfer roasted coffee to a consumer if he knows or has reason to believe that a consumer owns more than one pound of coffee for personal use."[14]

The OPA did not exercise any control over the service of coffee per patron in restaurants. However, the WPB continued to restrict restaurant coffee supply purchases to 65 percent of their base, established by 1941 figures.[15] Just as the case with the sugar supply, the primary reason for the shortage of coffee was a lack of shipping capability and manpower, most of which had been diverted to the war effort. An unnamed official of a coffee roasters association was quoted saying, "The reason for the impending rationing of the beverage bean even now is the lack of shipping from Brazil and Central American republics, where coffee surpluses exists in millions of sacks."[16]

Meat was the third, and perhaps most notorious, raw food product to be rationed nationwide. In early September 1942, the OPA took the first step toward total regulation of rationing meat supplies to civilians. Officials placed the entire meat industry, from slaughterhouses to wholesalers, under a single unified licensing control.[17] There was an unequivocal public awareness in Nevada of the shortage of meat. In 1941, 20 billion pounds of beef, veal, pork, lamb, and mutton were produced nationally. Of that amount, only 1½ billion pounds were designated to US armed forces. Approximately 22 billion pounds of meat were projected to be produced in 1942; however, over 4 billion pounds were to be utilized by a much larger army at war. Nevertheless, upon applying those numbers to the population as a whole, the actual sacrifice required of each individual citizen was nominal. An editorial writer in the *Las Vegas Review Journal* commented, "We ought to welcome rationing—not dread it. Rationing simply means spreading what supplies we do have EQUALLY among all of us. Lack of rationing means some get more, some get less, others get none. The sooner we ration, the sooner that kind of maldistribution ends."[18]

The federal government introduced the "Share the Meat" campaign in the late summer of 1942. Government officials urged Americans to limit their weekly meat intake to 2½ pounds per week for each adult, 1½ pounds per week for each child six to twelve years old, and ¾ pound per week for each child under six years old. Officials hoped the campaign would persuade consumers to cut down on their meat consumption voluntarily, in hopes to prepare them for impending federally regulated meat rationing. Though it was a sacrifice for families in the prosperous economic period of the 1940s, the rationed allowances were actually about the same amount of meat the average US citizen consumed in the Depression Era of the 1930s.[19] Across Nevada, civilian organizations embraced the new "Share the Meat" campaign. For example, in November of 1942, twenty civilian defense block and neighborhood leaders in the town of Pioche organized a house-to-house campaign to show homemakers how to comply with the government program. Under the request of the Office of Civilian Defense, local block and neighborhood leaders undertook the responsibility to reach every family to "call to attention the necessity for voluntary rationing of meat, and to provide information concerning alternative foods for well-balanced diets."[20]

On September 24, 1942, Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard announced that the OPA had begun to prepare a plan for nationwide coupon meat rationing that was expected to be ready within two to three months. Wickard called for a reduction of 21 percent of deliveries of meat for civilian consumption during the latter part of the year. The Food Requirements Committee of the WPB called it "only a temporary measure" to prolong the organization of the coupon rationing plan. Wickard supported an appeal made by the Committee that citizens restrict

their meat consumption to 2½ pounds per week per person until the rationing plan began.  He advised that heavy consumption of meat during the winter season had to be discouraged until the meat rationing program was taken into effect early the following year.  Conversely, men in the armed forces were allowed twice the rationed portion of meat of American civilians.[21]

By late December 1942 in Southern Nevada, the Clark County Board of Health passed rules and regulations regarding the slaughtering of animals for the sale of meat.  Under the new regulations, it was illegal for butchers, restaurant managers, or any other persons to purchase uninspected and unstamped meat.  Ranchers were also restricted by the OPA in the number of animals they could kill.  They were only allowed to slaughter an amount not exceeding the number slaughtered in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.  The OPA justified this as a conservative measure so that animals were not killed off too rapidly.  A state regulation known as the Hide and Carcass Inspection Law required that an authorized representative of the state Department of Agriculture inspect and record all brands and stamps on all livestock killed.[22]

After a year of involvement in the war, a considerable amount of the nation's food supply was being utilized in support of both American and Allied troops in Europe in accordance with the Lend Lease program.  By the beginning of 1943, coffee and sugar were the only two foods officially rationed to American consumers.  However, there were many accounts nationwide of shortages of various foodstuffs for a variety of reasons all linked to the war effort.  In December of 1942, Las Vegas's milk and farm produce supply from the Virgin and Moapa valleys were threatened by gas rationing restrictions.  Farmers from the valleys hauled thousands of gallons of milk to the Las Vegas area on a daily basis.  However, one farmer claimed that his total gas allotment for three months only lasted him less than one week.  Certificates of war necessity that had been distributed to farmers did not allow for sufficient gas for most to operate.  Approximately three-fifths of the entire milk supply of Las Vegas was delivered from the two valleys, and without allowances made for transportation, the city was threatened with a serious shortage.  Warren Hardy, Chairman of the Clark County USDA, appealed to the OPA through a Washington congressional delegation from Nevada.  Hardy called for the establishment of local temporary OPA offices in each of the Moapa and Virgin valleys due to the distance away from the county seat.  Upon approval, these offices established immediate relief of gas rations through local issuance of certificates of war necessity to farmers, instead of the lengthy application to the central Detroit office.[23]  This was just one case that reflects the economic challenges that were threatening the nation, due to a domino effect of rationing on one industry hindering another.

With tight ration restrictions placed on gasoline and tires, distribution was the major challenge to Nevada's food supply.  By January 1943, Secretary of Agriculture Wickard disclosed that extensive reforms were necessary in the nation's food distribution system in order to fulfill economic demands and prevent a rise in prices to consumers.  Wickard's first step was to revise milk distribution practices with a program that would conserve manpower, fuel, rubber, and delivery equipment.  The new program restricted milk containers to larger sizes, prohibited milk delivery persons from leaving an "extra quart", and required a minimum deposit on each bottle.  Restaurants and hotels were limited to conducting business with not more than two suppliers, and were not allowed to return un-sold milk.[24]

War Ration Book Two was released in Nevada and nationwide March 1, 1943.  This book introduced a far more widespread rationing system for a variety of processed foods, canned goods, and most notably, meat.  Numbers on the ration book worked as a type of point system, each systematically designated to a specific category of foodstuff.  Henderson resident Kay

Dwyer vividly remembers, "I don't recall what numbers we had, but I do remember that everything was rationed. We had rationing on all canned goods and on meats, even flour and sugar." However, not all foods were tightly rationed. She continued, "Many of the food items were redirected to the military because we had so many people—so many men in the military—that many of the food items like the canned goods, the nonperishable goods, were diverted to the military; whereas, we had fresh fruit and vegetables. They were not rationed because they couldn't be transported."[25] Processed and canned foods had begun to be rationed as of February 2, 1943, and meats and fats officially became rationed on March 29, 1943.[26]

As shortages and rationing became facts of life for the people of Nevada, the advertising industry was faced with playing two important roles in creating public awareness and rallying public support. First and foremost, advertisers strived to keep the public informed about which products faced a shortage, which would be rationed, and which were totally unavailable. The ad industry's far more difficult task was finding ways to help civilians on the home front cope with rationing and shortages, and accept them as the individual's virtuous contribution to the war effort.[27] During the wartime years, Nevada experienced a booming economy statewide, from a prosperous mining industry around Reno, to a growing casino industry in Las Vegas, to the vital Basic Magnesium Incorporated (BMI) plant in Henderson. With such tremendous prosperity among citizens of the state, many were less than pleased to scale back on rationed basic foodstuffs.

Since many of the traditional commercial institutions found themselves with a relatively low production output, the majority of war ads shifted from a focus of selling products and services to "something more closely resembling public relations."[28] Institutional ads were designed to keep brand and company names before the public while their manufacturers had little or nothing to sell. While sustaining brand consciousness, these ads also aimed to lift morale on the home front. For example, ads were created to show people how the proper use of ration points was not only good for the country and the war, but that it also helped them sustain as comfortable a lifestyle as possible for *themselves*. In addition to corporate advertising, the federal government established the War Advertising Council, which rolled out ad campaigns focusing on rationing and anti-inflation. Advertisements discouraged extravagant and unnecessary spending on non-rationed items, and urged consumers to practice "thoughtful buying," or buying only what one needed.[29] The public was persuaded to redirect their extra disposable incomes into investments beneficial for the war effort such as War Bonds.

As Nevadans' tolerances of rationing and meat shortages began to wane, government officials realized that people on the home front needed to feel their desires were important and that the government was doing its utmost to make sure civilians were recognized and rewarded for their support of the war. The OPA advisors knew that for Americans to continue to comply with rationing guidelines, they would need to feel that sacrificing coveted red meat was actually "for the good of the country". In December 1943, the OPA launched a public awareness campaign that promoted meat as being crucial to the war effort. Essentially, officials reasoned that those doing the actual fighting were most deserving of meat. A pamphlet from the OPA read:

> American meat is a fighting food. It's an important part of a military man's diet, giving him energy to outfight the enemy. It helped the Americans drive the Japs from Guadalcanal. It's feeding our troops on world battlefronts. It helped sustain the heroic British 8th Army in its blistering drive from Egypt to Tunisia. It aided the Red Army in

breaking the German lines at Stalingrad and Leningrad. It's helping Soviet troopers roll the Axis forces back. Meat from our farms and packing houses is playing a part almost on par with tanks, planes, and bullets.[30]

American troops in the field were fed meat at least three times a week. The finer cuts of meat—steaks, chops, and roasts—were highly allocated for the war effort. About 60 percent of "U.S. Choice" grade cuts of beef was reserved for military consumption.[31] An article appearing in the January 1943 issue of LIFE magazine encouraged civilians to sacrifice their preference of choice cuts for other far less popular "variety meats". The article justified, "The army does not want the 'variety meats' because they spoil easily, take time to prepare, and the men don't like them."[32] Instead, American consumers were asked to cope with these inconveniences. Instead of presenting valid reasons to justify the heavy allocation of the American meat supply to military forces, the OPA's campaign almost backfired by increasing public unrest and demeaning the worth and hard work of civilians doing their part on the home front to support the war effort.

As officials implemented the meat rationing program in March 1943, consumer black markets and industry-wide black market practices shortly ensued. An article on the front page of the *Las Vegas Review Journal* in May 1943 proclaimed, "There IS a black market in Las Vegas."[33] The article, just like many others, gave little information or evidence of black markets in Nevada, but rather served as anti-black market propaganda. It compared a citizen taking advantage of the black market to a soldier that had deserted his company in the face of the enemy. Shortly after meat rationing took effect, there was no local government enforcement of rationing restrictions in Nevada, "except the conscience of the individual consumer." The writer of the editorial concludes forcefully, "We can't be worried about the chiseler and his black market. We don't want anything to do with either—they're traitors in time of emergency and not worthy of the name American."[34]

A myriad of locally sponsored advertisements appeared in newspapers, magazines, and public posters across Nevada. Ads urged consumers to "never buy rationed foods without giving up ration stamps, and never pay more than the ceiling price."[35] Ads focused on informing unknowing consumers that if they bought rationed foods without ration stamps, then they were indeed helping to maintain the black market. Local merchants urged citizens to take action against profiteers, stating, "If a food dealer tries to sell you rationed goods without collecting ration stamps—or, if he tries to charge you more than the ceiling price—he is a Black Market operator. Report him to the nearest OPA office or to the US District Attorney."[36]

There was clear public resentment of the black market and black market practices in Nevada and across the nation. However, since the OPA had a limited budget, little policing was done beyond routine inspections of meat packing houses to prevent black market practices. Therefore, the primary concern of officials was educating the public, inasmuch they would actually be able to identify black markets, while not inadvertently participating. Chester Bowles addressed the public at length on these scenarios. Bowles became the Price Administrator of the OPA in 1943, after Leon Henderson was forced to resign from the post due to overwhelming public discontent, and after Prentiss Brown covered the post for a short six-month stint in 1943. Bowles's tenure as Price Administrator was more highly praised than that of his predecessors.[37]

A lengthy article published in *The New York Times* on March 1, 1944 put into print Bowles's public address at the New York Times Hall from the previous day. Bowles called black markets, "one of the most misunderstood subjects in the country."[38] He noted that few people

actually knew how they worked, how big they were, or what was being done to stamp them out. The Administrator estimated that between 3-4 percent of the average cost of all food was due to black market operations. Essentially, the black market in food was a $1.2 billion industry, of which meat was the predominant component. However, Bowles insisted that the overwhelming majority of merchants were honest, and though oftentimes irritated by OPA regulations, they were anxious to comply. Merchants realized that price ceilings were essential as wartime measures to defeat inflation, and they resented chiselers who violated these laws for their own profit.[39]

Price Administrator Bowles addressed the major black market practices of the meat industry. Some meat sales operated completely outside the OPA rationing system, where cattle would be stolen from ranches, butchered in unlicensed slaughterhouses or even fields, and sold into private trade. So-called "tie-in" agreements were more widely used black market techniques. Wholesalers and retail butchers were offered all the steaks they could buy at regulated ceiling prices, provided they also purchase an oversupply of undesirable "variety meats", such as hearts, kidneys, and tripe. The butcher or wholesaler conceded to the variety meats being sold at a loss or not at all; however, he would make up the difference in the sale of the steaks, which would be sold at above ceiling prices. Another type of clever manipulation to bypass price ceilings would occur when a retailer would bet his supplier that he would not be able to deliver to him desired cuts of steak. When the delivery would be made, the retailer would pay the supplier on the side for his proposed bet, while still adhering to the price ceilings on the cost of the meat. The retailer would then charge his customers over the ceiling prices. Yet another black market practice of the meat industry involved simple bootlegging. A wholesaler or retailer would place an order with a supplier, but then be told that a representative will stop in to confirm the order with them. Before the product was delivered, a man would stop in, demand a certain payment, and then confirm the product would be delivered on schedule at the ceiling price. Upon delivery, the supplier upgraded less expensive cuts of meat; for example, a sirloin or flank cut might have been upgraded to a more expensive tenderloin or ribeye.[40]

Black markets were equally a major challenge to the OPA, honest food retailers, and law-abiding citizens. However, the first step in abolishing black markets was a broader understanding of the size and extent of the danger on the part of the general public. Chester Bowles advocated, "Black markets without customers quickly disappear. If tomorrow morning the American people—all of them—should make up their mind never again to pay more than the ceiling prices or to purchase any product without ration stamps, our black market problem would disappear in short order."[41] The second step in putting an end to black markets was educating retailers and wholesalers of their role in society in adhering to OPA regulations in order to keep the cost of living from rising. The OPA also worked with retailers and wholesalers by establishing "compliance divisions." These departments worked closely with businesses to "distinguish between deliberate chiseling and carelessness." The OPA also organized "price panel volunteers" on the local level to assist and advise merchants, and to detect black market practices.[42] The OPA combated the black market at the source by focusing on pre-retail operations of ranchers, and their distribution to suppliers. By 1946, the OPA had filed over 470 actions in Nevada, California, and across the nation to stop illegal slaughtering of cattle. Officials felt that black markets could be restrained if their sources of illegal meat were cut off.[43]

In the midst of the OPA's constant battle with black markets, citizens and business owners in Nevada were doing their part in the fight as well. In late July of 1945, members of the

Las Vegas Restaurant Owners Association announced a new campaign called "Meatless Days." On Mondays and Tuesdays, no red meat of any kind was served or offered for sale at any restaurant, café, hotel, or at any other member of the Association.[44] Business owners justified this program, reminiscent of World War I, as a way of staying in business to be able to continue to serve their loyal patrons. "Meatless Days" was also somewhat used as a campaign tool against the rationing regulations of the OPA. Business owners felt that overly tight restrictions of ration points actually encouraged black markets. Instead of meat going into the hands of honest business owners and millions of homes, it instead was diverted to the black market because of insufficient ration points to make those purchases. The Las Vegas Restaurant Association pledged, "in order to stay in business and serve the people of Southern Nevada, (we) have declared two meatless days per week beginning Monday, July 23, and each week thereafter, until this situation is cleared and the OPA in Washington authorizes additional points for the purchase of meat through legitimate channels."[45]

Nevada and the rest of the nation served as the *third* battlefront of World War II, and the Office of Price Administration was the neutral ambassador caught in the crossfire. Criticism and praise was dealt equally to the OPA throughout the war. The constant struggle to balance the Allied forces' military needs with public demand and public opinion was a battle in itself. Although national mobilization to support the war effort empowered armies insomuch that they were able to defeat the Axis forces, Nevada and the American public were left with fractured opinions on morale issues of the legitimacy of rationing, price control, and black markets. Price ceilings and tight rationing restrictions on the food staples of sugar, coffee, and meat undoubtedly assisted the war effort and curbed inflation on the home front. However, at the same time, these regulations created mass public discontent, along with the emergence of a widespread black market. The market thrived on a lack of enforcement, poor public knowledge of regulations, and, most ironically, the mass unrelenting pursuit of tradition, luxury, excess, and all that is the American Dream.

## Epilogue

By December 12, 1946, most functions of the Office of Price Administration were transferred to the newly established Office of Temporary Controls. The Financial Reporting Division was transferred to the Federal Trade Commission. On March 14, 1947, Price Administrator Chester Bowles issued the General Liquidation Order. The OPA was officially abolished on May 29, 1946.

**"The war and *rationing* had, I think, the most profound effect
on our culture, on our economy, on everything
because it was so all-enveloping.**

- Kay Dwyer, Henderson, NV

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