Liberation or Oppression?
Tyranny or Anarchy: America's Second Amendment in Context
The Invisible Impact
Eleanor Roosevelt on Women in the Workforce through Mass Media during the 1930's and 1940's
An American Highway Journey: United States Road Policy and Culture from the Colonial Era to 1956
Nationhood in Print: Literacy and the Ratification Debates
Racism’s Infiltration of Civil War Medical Practices and Disease Contraction
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Synopses

I. Carling Prize and WALKS Papers

Catherine Lee ‘17
“Liberation or Oppression?”

In this Carling Prize-winning essay, Catherine delivers a nuanced view of the myriad causes of democracy’s uneven development. With clarity of thought and organization, she argues that entrenched traditions, restricted freedoms, and rigidified social hierarchies delayed and complicated the success of democratic reform throughout early modern history. Her working definition of democracy gives no quarter to anything less than a system of governance that gives legitimate power to the people. This exacting standard for democracy parallels Catherine’s expectations for her own writing and use of evidence.

Erin Jones ‘16
“Tyranny or Anarchy: America’s Second Amendment in Context”

A WALKS finalist, Erin Jones makes a case for the centrality of context. Rather than understanding historical context as merely the scenery on the stage, Erin asserts that we must first set our sights on context if we are to understand anything about our past and ourselves. Her analysis of original intent, point-of-view, and meaning is truly extraordinary, particularly given the controversial nature of her subject: the Second Amendment. Erin’s paper also reveals the importance of employing a wide range of primary and secondary sources. A sharp paper, indeed.

Ellen O’Brien ‘16
“The Invisible Impact”

A WALKS essay finalist, Ellen O’Brien focuses on the oft-debated language of the Second Amendment in her paper titled, “The Invisible Impact.” What makes Ellen’s paper unique is the lens through which she examines this issue: race. Ellen begins her study by citing Pew Research Data from the past fourteen years that shows a spike in the number of Americans who cite “protection” as the top reason for owning a gun. She then moves quickly into an examination of the intersection between guns, power and race throughout the history of the United States. Drawing on research from the relationship between Native Americans and settlers and Southern plantation owners and slaves, Ellen highlights the importance of guns in the power dynamic. Ellen continues her study of race by deftly weaving together defining legislative cases such as Dred Scott vs Sandford and Harper’s Ferry with more recent events such as those that occurred in Ferguson. Ellen is skilled at posing key questions throughout the paper that force her readers to reconcile the past with the present and consider the role that race plays in interpreting the Second Amendment. While Second Amendment debaters are not likely to reach a definitive resolution, Ellen’s study adds an important angle to their discussion.
II. Full-length Research Papers

Mia Edelson ’16
“Eleanor Roosevelt on Women in the Workforce through Mass Media during the 1930’s and 1940’s”

In her work titled, “Eleanor Roosevelt on Women in the Workforce through Mass Media during the 1930s and 1940s,” Mia Edelson traces the evolution of Mrs. Roosevelt’s ideas about women’s rights. She does this by examining the correlation between the First Lady’s different stages in life and her opinions regarding women’s role in society. Mia adds an interesting angle to her study by focusing more closely on the way in which Mrs. Roosevelt used the media as an outlet for her message. Mia’s research paper draws upon key primary sources, such as “My Day” – Mrs. Roosevelt’s “public diary” to illustrate the way in which the First Lady’s writing evolved from mostly musings on everyday events to strong opinions on issues involving such topics as public policy. This paper offers a fresh angle on an inspirational female leader who continues to influence generations of women today in the fight for equal rights.

Joe Hinton ’16

Befitting its topic, this project ranges far and wide in its textured analysis of the history of the American road. Joe’s argument is cemented by an impressive familiarity with both American political and technological change. With carefully calibrated balance and exhaustive detail, Joe has delivered a project that is built to last. Throughout this work Joe demonstrates that American roads can be much more than a way to get somewhere interesting. With Joe in the driver’s seat, the journey is the destination.

Laurie Zielinski ’16
“Nationhood in Print: Literacy and the Ratification Debates”

Laurie takes her readers directly to the heart of the late-eighteenth-century public sphere and the debate over ratification of the Constitution. Her analysis is refracted through an unexpected and far-reaching lens: the ways that literacy shaped the debate for both Federalists and Anti-federalists. More broadly, Laurie examines how literacy transformed the young nation through the development of an American identity, through the democratization of information, and by affirming the legitimizing power of the written word. In a surprising twist, Laurie shows that whether reading alone, reading out loud to others who may not be literate, or actively participating in America’s vigorous print culture of the late nineteenth century in various ways, Americans of this era helped to create meaning for the Constitution and the debate surrounding it.
III. Excerpted Research Papers

Samantha Aube ‘16
“Racism’s Infiltration of Civil War Medical Practices and Disease Contraction”

In her paper titled, “Racism’s Infiltration of Civil War Medical Practices and Disease Contraction,” Samantha Aube looks carefully at the role that race played in the treatment of black Civil War soldiers. Samantha embarks on this lofty project by first providing her readers with a comprehensive analysis of medical practices during the Civil War. Her background sections on medical practices and physician training come alive, as she seamlessly incorporates a wide variety of primary source material into her paper. Remarks from physicians in the field, letters written to loved ones, and more formal accounts of injuries and surgeries give the reader an excellent sense of how care was administered. Samantha then shifts her attention to an examination of the treatment of black soldiers as compared to whites. Not only does Samantha examine the soldiers, but she also works hard to drill down for the potential reasoning behind the great disparity in care. This paper is thoroughly researched; Samantha draws upon a treasure trove of primary sources. More impressive, however, is the fact that Samantha is able to support her assertions with strong scholarly research. This paper weaves together research in the areas of anthropology, epidemiology and history to make it a highly informative and interesting read.

Dani Hove ‘16
“Affirmative Reaction: Effective Reanalysis, Restructure and Reconstruction Over Retirement in Affirmative Action Programs”

Dani Hove’16 undertook extensive statistical analysis in his research paper, “Affirmative Reaction: Effective Reanalysis, Restructure and Reconstruction Over Retirement in Affirmative Action Programs”. The following excerpt demonstrates how Dani integrated that analysis into his paper’s argument, using statistics to define aspects of the racial and economic diversity of California during the 1990s. Moreover, Dani used these statistics to consider how Affirmative Action programs looked from different groups’ vantage points in the American socio-economic hierarchy. Inviting readers to engage in the complexity of a topic and a range of perspectives on that topic are some of the hallmarks of successful analytical writing.

Nathaniel Lyons ‘16
“Americanizing Space: How the Growth of University Research and Technology Led to American Dominance of Astrophysics, 1900-1950”

In this excerpt, Nathaniel demonstrates the methodological and historiographical underpinnings of a successful interdisciplinary project. He creates space in which he can analyze a significant moment in the modern history of science. Appropriately critical of other historians’ work and fully confident in his own project’s originality, Nathaniel compels his reader to read on.
This excerpt showcases a sophisticated use of primary visual sources in advancing the author’s argument. A difficult research skill, the analysis of primary visual sources can provide the reader with nuanced, original claims that are otherwise unavailable. In this case, Nolwenn relies on a range of advertisements to explore Americans’ perceived anxieties about social status, work, identity, and more.
By the liberal standards of modern day society, the implementation of democracy as the form of government is almost a convention. Anything less than providing all citizens with equal rights and opportunities is criticized - especially by western countries. Though the roots of democracy are believed to have originated in the ancient Greco-Roman times, and matured in concept during the 17th century, accomplishment of a democratic government had not occurred until well into the 19th century, given the various elements beyond citizens electing leaders that constitute a democracy. Religious and cultural toleration, reform inspired by citizens, freedom and equal opportunities for all, and egalitarianism – concepts that condense into the quintessence of democracy - were rarely demonstrated during the time period of the 1600 – 1700s. Strewn throughout the supposedly revolutionary actions of many “democratic” leaders and movements beginning in the 17th century, actualization of these qualities did not last long enough to precipitate or inaugurate form of governance. Loyalty to tradition, both conscious and subconscious, thwarted progression; religious and social persecution smothered citizens’ right to liberty; and enforcement of social strata and slavery violated egalitarian principles; and for these reasons, forms of government in the 17th century did not develop enough to be labeled as a democracy.

Tradition inculcated by the history of nations prevented radical reform in government – reform necessary to transform monarchial governments to democratic ones. Though many rulers and innovators exhibited bravery in the face of change, revolutionary events almost always lead to a subconscious shift slowly back to the original. In China’s Ming Dynasty, Li Zicheng, struggling to sustain a comfortable lifestyle as a peasant, rallied fellow lower class citizens to fight the cycle of
hardship. Following the disastrous famine of 1640 that starved many, Li congregated an army of 20,000 men in a peasant revolution. By 1644, Li had advanced to Beijing, and successfully overthrew Emperor Congzhen, ending the 276-year reign of the Ming Dynasty. With aspirations to provide liberty by dividing land equally and abolishing the tax system, Li Zicheng seemed to have a plan for severe alteration in the Chinese government. Ironically, this vision was short-lived, figuratively and literally. Instead of allowing the commonwealth more liberty and freedom by progressing towards a republic, or democracy, Li established the new Shun Dynasty. By announcing himself as the new Emperor of China, Li essentially made headway in one full circle; beginning and ending with a monarchial dynasty. Li’s propositions would have transformed China into a republic or possibly even a democracy, but adherence to the convention of a monarch ruling a nation ultimately drove him to reclaim the throne. Though some might argue the steps that Li took to reach a new dynasty exhibited the spirit of democracy, of audacity, his ideas were never fully carried out during his rule, both due to his regression back into a sovereign government, and his remaining in power for less than half a year.

Another example of overpowering tradition is demonstrated in the Parliament of England, a nation with a ruling system much closer to effectuating democracy. As a result of Parliament’s lack of influence over the King’s decisions, and Charles I’s repeated, petulant dismissal of the party as a result of disagreement, parliament declared war against the King. This battle, known as the English Civil War of 1642, ended with reform ordered by Parliament, who passed policies that forbade the King to dismiss parliament for more than half the year, gave themselves the power of final decision in court, and placed the military in their command. Many supporters of Parliament complained against such conservatism, as these were principally statutes existent, but not in full effect, since far

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1 Wiki on China
2 Wiki on China
3 Wiki on China
4 “The King’s Hand is Forced”
5 “The Long Parliament.”
before Charles I’s rule. The inability for British Parliament to initiate a greater change lies not in fear of change, but rather in the party’s adherence to the historical convention of Parliament maintaining a position of command, in addition to fear that power in the hands of the underprivileged would result in policies that curtail the wealth and status of the gentry class.6 Parliament’s desire to conform to such traditions is especially magnified after being starved of power during Charles I’s totalitarian rule. Comparably, the actions of Queen Nzinga of Angola, Africa, also depict regression, in a manner of history repeating itself. Acting as a negotiator between the Portuguese and the natives, Queen Nzinga began her reign in 1624 after the death of her brother by fighting passionately for the rights of her people.7 Following a short lived alliance between the Angolians and the Portuguese, Queen Nzinga successfully defeated the Portuguese army at Ngoleme, preventing further seizure of territory.8 Though she displayed a concern for the commonwealth and the nerve to initiate change, she soon lost the respect of the Mbundu people, after it became increasingly clear her motives were to claim a position of unrelenting power rather than help her people. Nzinga’s actions closely parallel that of the British Parliament, given that both reveal a reluctance to split their authority with others.

Freedom of religion is also a major essential quality of democracy, the antithesis of which transpired in many nations at the time. Aurangzeb, King of India from 1658 – 1707, is a prime example of such.9 Though Aurangzeb displayed many worthy military qualities and helped India’s Mughal Empire reach its height, he chose to digress from the liberal religious perspectives of his predecessors. Instead, Aurangzeb believed in religious dominance by Islam over Hinduism, and acted upon this by demolishing over 360 sacred Hindu temples. He proceeded by banning public worship, and destroying all Hindu schools, even going as far to impeach all Hindu politicians in the

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6 “The English Civil War Part 2.”
7 Wiki on Africa
8 Wiki on Africa
9 Wiki on India
government. Evidently, the heavy religious oppression of Hindus in India does not suggest any trace of a democratic government, but instead leans towards a dictatorship. In a similar manner, England’s ruler James II began his reign in 1685 by appointing fellow Catholics to high positions in the armed forces, courts, universities, House of Lords, and local government, in spite of Parliament’s complaints. By doing so, James II hoped to establish Catholicism as the religion of influence in England, blatantly stating in the 1687 Declaration of Indulgence, “We cannot but heartily wish…that all of the people of our dominions were members of the Catholic Church.” Not only do his actions against Parliament – the representative group for English citizens – directly violate the basic idea of democracy, but the unfair mistreatment of Christians with Puritan or Protestant denominations also exhibited serious lack of concern for the commonwealth. James II’s actions appear to have retrogressed to Charles II’s rule in 1642, further revealing the dire need of further development before England’s becoming a democracy. Both India and England’s intolerance of diversity in religion reveals a mindset far from that which should be harbored by democratic leaders, as one cannot claim a democratic government while citizens of the nation suffer from victimization for an act as innocent as praying to a different god.

The lacking of equal opportunities for all citizens due to the enforcement of social class, and the legalization of slavery are defining attributes that also portray the absence of democracy during the 17th century. Though separate social class is necessary to the function of society, citizens should have the ability to gain rise in status in correspondence with gains in wealth and skill. Often times, however, the government plays a significant role in deciding the amount of power held by citizens. Despite the belief that the small British plantations in New England were democratic, the majority of citizens and newcomers were excluded from contributions to the government. In Windsor,

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10 Wiki on India
11 “The Glorious Revolution.”
12 “The Glorious Revolution.”
13 Wiki on Spanish America
Connecticut, for example, those that the Church deemed “ungodly” had little to no place in society, as economic credit and land division was contingent on holding a position in church. In Spanish America, during the 1640s, a unique form of social organization was developed. Known as a caste system, this social system was responsible for determining economic credit, and was heavily enforced by the peninsulares: Spanish officials who stood at the top of the social ladder. Those of Spanish descent were free to gain and lose power, and were not bound by the system, whereas people of Native American or African descent were given little to no privileges and legal rights. As a colony, Spanish America was heavily segregated into citizens with excess power and wealth; and peasants facing social injustice and poverty on a daily basis. By upholding such a system through the law and Catholic missionaries, who indoctrinated many with the idea of submission being a virtue, the democratic right to freedom was no longer existent. Across the border in Brazil, the Portuguese oppressed the natives of the land in an even more abysmal fashion. Many natives and Africans were subjected to slavery, and stripped of all rights. Under the law established in 1545, slaves were forbidden to have proper housing - a regulation belittling slaves to a standing less than that of animals. This immoral stripping of rights and cultural identity can barely be regarded as tolerable, let alone democratic.

Although it cannot be said that democracy was not an idea present during the 17th century, it was certainly not accomplished as the form of government in any nation at the time. Components of democracy, such as the will to rebel against oppressive authority, and the consideration of lower social classes, were definitely exhibited, though at the cost of deficiency in religious tolerance, or maintaining course on a path to greater change. Only by unifying these concepts and creating a ruling power that justly addresses the freedom and rights of all citizens, can democracy truly be achieved. Democracy constitutes more than just the simple election of rulers, and active rebellion.

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14 Wiki on Spanish America
15 Wiki on Spanish America
16 Wiki on Brazil
Ultimately, it was the enforcement of social status, religious persecution, lack of egalitarianism, and regression to convention that prevented nations in the 17th century to shape democratic governments.
As President Barack Obama claimed in 2012, “we’re a nation that believes in the Second Amendment.”\(^1\) While many norms and ideals of America grow stale or lose relevance with the passage of time, the Second Amendment has remained untouched since the Bill of Rights’ ratification. The amendment, from its confusing punctuation to its incorrect grammar, has proved exceedingly hard to interpret today, and thus exactly what the Founding Fathers intended has sparked great debate. The mention of “militia” makes it tempting to assume firearms should be protected only within a governmental army. But, on the other hand, “the right of the people” suggests that every citizen has an automatic and unalienable right to individual gun ownership. When attempting to understand the amendment, it is important to remember the time period during which it was written. The post American Revolution fear hung over the conversation at the Constitutional Convention and brought with it the fear of an overbearing tyrannical government, like Britain, again intruding on the lives of citizens. And so was born the Second Amendment, granting the people a right to their weapons in order to promote citizen defense from oppressive standing armies.\(^2\) But this work seeks to emphasize the importance of context, of interpreting the amendment with relevant facts and contemporary advances in mind. The Founding Fathers originally intended for the Second Amendment to grant the universal individual right to gun ownership for the purpose of preventing tyranny, but given the modern advances in citizen protection through a police force and

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the statistically detrimental effect of unregulated guns on society, this original meaning must be reevaluated in present-day United States.

Since the 1776 declaration of the United States as an independent nation up until the 1960s, guns’ role in society as defined in the Second Amendment had faced little controversy, with courts consistently upholding that American citizens had the right to firearms only if supporting a militia. In *United States v. Miller*, for example, the Supreme Court concluded in 1939 that because defendants Miller and Layton were not aiding a well-regulated militia, they did not have a right to the firearms they possessed. But as time progressed, the amendment became increasingly interpreted as individualistic: that the law protects an individual’s freedom to firearms. In 2008, the Supreme Court overturned its 1939 decision by holding that respondent Heller, in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, had a right to possess a firearm unconnected with a militia. The court substantiated this defense largely with the reasoning that the Founding Fathers intended for the Second Amendment to grant firearms to all. Another main point of evidence for the case was that guns, used in the form of self-defense, are necessary for the protection and safety of citizens. Although the court appears to have gathered appropriately the vision of the Founding Fathers, the immense passage of time since the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791 has brought advances in the form of citizen safety and protection that failed anticipation.

Contemporary historians often advocate for one of two popular interpretations: either the Second Amendment protects a militia’s right to bear arms, or it protects the people’s right to bear arms. On one side of the spectrum, for example, gun control lawyer Stephen P. Halbrook labels

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“the right of the people to bear arms’ as a fundamental liberty,” arguing that individual gun rights be promised to all. While many scholars do take the side of one of the two extremes, some seek to find a middle ground that incorporates these into one interpretation. Michael Waldman, NYU Law School’s President of the Brennan Center for Justice, offers an explanation that does both of these parties partial justice when he asserts that the amendment “protected the individual right to a gun to fulfill the duty to serve in a militia.” What these historians lack, though, is the ability to form the next step after developing their opinion on the Founding Fathers’ intention. Scholars study thoroughly the origins of the Second Amendment, but fail to develop a modern interpretation in order for the amendment to coincide with present-day America. In order to update the meaning of the Second Amendment to make the most sense in today’s society, we must be able to recognize why this original intention has become out-of-date by starting from the commencement of the United States as an independent nation, and interpret its meaning further in a way that agrees with the present.

The years leading up to and including the American Revolution mark the beginning of the ideals expressed in the Second Amendment. Countless well-known conflicts between the American colonists and the British standing army in the early 1770s, such as the Boston Massacre and later the Boston Tea Party, culminated on April nineteenth, 1775, to produce the start of the war with England. On that day, at the battles of Lexington and Concord, an estimated four thousand citizens rose from their homes to defend their country as an independent nation. Saul Cornell, a Chair in American History at Fordham University and one of the nation’s principal scholars in constitutional law, writes, “If a standing army symbolized tyranny, a citizens’ militia was its antithesis, embodying

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virtue and liberty,”9 to emphasize the importance of citizen defense against the federal standing army. It was the widely accepted norm in America to be called upon as a colonial townsman to fight against one’s own federal army: the army of Great Britain.

With the mother country as the war opponent, America as a whole antagonized the federal government as overbearing and tyrannical. Historian Saul Cornell reminds, “The Second Amendment was drafted and ratified by a generation of Americans who feared standing armies and had witnessed a systematic policy to disarm their militias.”10 Furthered by Professor of History Joyce Lee Malcolm, “the army was considered a threat to liberty,”11 and patriots sought out ways to protect themselves against their own government. Founding Father John Adams reinforces the eighteenth-century ideal of universal gun rights as a form of self-defense when he wrote, “an Englishman’s dwelling is his castle… (Every person) shall enjoy in his own dwelling House as complete a security, safety and Peace and Tranquility as if it was… defended with a Garrison and Artillery.”12 In one final example of the American fear of concentrated federal power, Noah Webster attested in 1776, “before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed.”13 Webster’s statement addresses the idea of citizen defense from Britain through the possession of firearms. This context, the threat of tyranny and the widespread colonial fear of such oppression during the time of ratification, cannot be overemphasized.

Born from this fear was, in the words of Joyce Lee Malcolm, “the intention… to guarantee citizens the means of self-defense”14 through the use of firearms. After the Revolution had been

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won and the Bill of Rights was being configured, many leaders of the new nation expressed their vision for individuals to possess arms. Founding Father Patrick Henry explicitly stated, “The great object is, that every man be armed”\textsuperscript{15} during a discussion of the Bill of Rights. In another example, coming from the collective point of view of a state government, New York’s 1787 document to the federal government comprised of propositions for the work-in-progress Bill of Rights requested, “that the people have a right to keep and bear arms.”\textsuperscript{16} On top of this, the New York State constitution in the 1770s defended gun ownership as a constant necessity for the defense of the state and its people.\textsuperscript{17} While one cannot assume that the entire nation was in complete agreement, the records of many political leaders calling for such universal gun ownership strongly suggest that eighteenth-century America envisioned a country bestowing upon every citizen the right to a gun.

The Founding Fathers lived in a generation that narrowly escaped tyranny and intended to put great effort into preventing the national government from once again gaining that kind of overbearing power. This is especially evident in the Third Amendment. By prohibiting the inhabitation of federal soldiers in the homes of citizens, the amendment shows a clear attempt to protect American citizens from their own government. The New Yorker connects the Second Amendment as “made in the same spirit as the Third Amendment.”\textsuperscript{18} Allowing every citizen to keep a gun in his home, for the purposes of both self-defense and joining the militia on the battlefield if called upon, served to the Founding Fathers the purpose of subtracting power from the federal government and thus ensuring the absence of tyranny.

\textsuperscript{15} Elliot ed., \textit{Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution}, vol. 3, at 386.
Due to this dread of tyranny and “long standing prejudices against a select militia” as far too similar to a federal standing army to be democratic, each American state utilized an organized colonial militia during the Revolutionary era.¹⁹ Not overwhelmingly potent and comprised of ordinary citizens, these militias were able to keep a check on the power that the federal army exerted over the people. “Colonists who bore arms did not act as isolated individuals, but rather acted collectively for the common defense,”²⁰ states Saul Cornell, describing guns during the Revolutionary era as widespread and key to citizen protection. The militia embodied the eighteenth-century ideal of all citizens carrying their own firearms to fight against their own government, and thus the ideal of the individual right to bear arms for all.

The duty and expectations of the militia is captured especially well in the common role of minutemen, who made up roughly one quarter of the entire American militia. “Minutemen” were members of the militia who were expected to be on the battlefield just moments after the sound of an alarm. During the 1750s French and Indian War, Samuel Thompson, a militia officer in Massachusetts, wrote in his journal, “but when our men were gone, they sent eleven more at one minute’s warning.” Take the 1775 battles of Lexington and Concord, for another example. On Paul Revere’s famous Midnight Ride the night prior, he set off a series of alarms that spread through the towns of Massachusetts, alerting minutemen to grab their muskets and run out to battle. The minuteman’s primary duty was to be timely and prepared, a duty that could only be fulfilled with a firearm always on hand.²¹

During the eighteenth century, the widespread ownership of firearms made sense for the protection of citizens from the oppressive standing army, as shown in the duties of minutemen as

well as regular militiamen. But a key protection service that eighteenth-century America lacked was the police force, the absence of which creating the demand for a citizen militia to supply necessary defense to the people. It was not until 1833, in Philadelphia, that the first organized police force was introduced to the United States. The facility quickly spread to the rest of the nation, with New York creating the New York Police Department in 1845. This organizing of police offices in the nineteenth century marked the transition from the use of militias for common, everyday defense, to protection of the people by local police forces.\(^\text{22}\)

Historian Saul Cornell writes, “in an age without police forces, the militia was essential for the preservation of public order and also protected Americans against external threats.”\(^\text{23}\) But because the police force is now what regulates public stability and defends every-day safety of citizens, twenty-first century policemen resemble the eighteenth-century militiamen. With more than 12,000 local police offices and approximately 600,000 full-time policemen, the modern police force offers citizens strong, on-demand security.\(^\text{24}\) The police have a duty, like minutemen of the Revolutionary era, to be armed and ready to protect the people at the sound of an alarm. If policemen supposedly fulfill the role of citizen defense, widespread gun ownership may not be as necessary today as it was in eighteenth-century America.

A refute to this claim exists in one of the previously mentioned conclusions in the case of *District of Columbia v. Heller* that guns give citizens the ability of self-defense, a right necessary in addition to the protection given by the police force. But substantial contemporary evidence works against this claim, showing that guns are in fact used overwhelmingly for purposes other than self-


defense. Statistical proof shows firearms’ largely negative effect on society, often resulting in unjustified injuries and fatalities.

The National Rifle Association in 2011 flaunted an unsubstantiated national average of 2.5 million incidents of self-defense by firearm per year. This announcement prompted the Violence Policy Center (V.P.C) to check the validity of the NRA’s data. Soon after, the V.P.C found through the Bureau of Justice Statistics that out of 8,275 firearm homicides in 2010, only 230 were recorded as “justifiable homicides” of self-defense.\(^{25}\) In another example, as of March 17, 2015, this year has seen 8,662 documented incidents involving the use of a gun. Of these incidents, a mere 244 were instances of defense, leaving the rest to be categorized among accidental shootings, unjustified deaths, and unjustified injuries, and thus disproving the argument that guns are used overwhelmingly in incidents of self-protection.\(^ {26}\)

Modern guns have not only proven to be used primarily for means other than self-defense, but also have tallied up extremely high fatality rates, thus negatively affecting the safety of citizens. Throughout the country, the vast majority of murders – nearly 3 out of 4 – are caused by the use of a firearm.\(^ {27}\) In addition, a top four leading cause of death for all Americans aged anywhere from one year old to thirty-four years old is homicide by firearm, as recorded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2012.\(^ {28}\) The death toll collected by guns makes the firearm’s harmful effect on society difficult to ignore.


Stephen P. Halbrook claims that the Second Amendment accomplished what it was ratified to do: prevent tyranny in the newly formed independent America. If this result was indeed the intention of the Founding Fathers, it would be truly challenging to deny its success given the free, democratic America that exists today.29 It is true that the modern United States has triumphed in avoiding an oppressive federal government, but I ask if the individual right to guns for all citizens, on a spectrum of tyranny to anarchy, lands the nation too far on the side of anarchy. Causing tremendous fatalities and injuries annually, extensive firearms in the hands of citizens without sufficient regulation from the government have demonstrated to produce extremely negative effects on society. For the purpose of self-defense, Americans now have the strong protection of the police force that the nation lacked in 1791. Citizens today are no longer expected to awaken at the sound of a midnight alarm, grab their muskets, and hurry out to the battlefield. Context is inordinately significant and the Second Amendment must be applied with relevant facts and modern advances in mind. With the highest gun ownership rate worldwide, the United States now appears to lack appropriate federal regulation of firearms.30 There has long existed an American fear of tyranny, but it may be time for the nation to fear anarchy instead.

# 10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States – 2012

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
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<th>65+</th>
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Data Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC.
Prepared by: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC using WISQARS™.
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Ellen O’Brien ’16

The Invisible Impact

History shapes a country in ways that we often fail to acknowledge or even recognize. The polarizing history of African-Americans in the United States and the lingering racial prejudices of whites have fueled racial tension that has existed since the founding of our country. Racial tension stems directly from a bloodless battle for power, whether in regard to the idea of white supremacy or justice for blacks. Guns have played a role in racial conflict, as guns are seen as a way to gain power and control. This battle for control has trickled down through history, as the ongoing debate over the interpretation of the Second Amendment is also a fight for power, with outspoken gun-rights supporters looking to gain superiority over liberal gun control advocates and vice versa.

Throughout history, the reason for gun ownership has varied. Although a change in reason for owning a gun over a period of 200 years is expected, poll data from the Pew Research Center collected from 1999 and 2013 shows us that in 2013 48% of Americans owned a gun for protection vs. only 26% of Americans in 1999.1 This rapid spike allows us to pose the question: what caused an increase of the number of owners naming protection as the top reason for owning a gun over a period of just 14 years? One way to examine this progression is through a deep investigation into the racial roots of America. Therefore, by drawing upon racial issues and tensions throughout the past 200 years, race will be identified as a key factor in impacting citizens’ interpretations of the Second Amendment.

Guns, power, and race intersected early on in the history of the United States. Guns, as essential as food, water, and shelter to the original settlers, were used to hunt, as well as to protect the settlers against Natives. These dark skinned men, with piercings and tattoos foreign to the

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settlers, were immediately viewed as a threat to the settlers who had come to the New World looking
to start a new life. However, settlers were able to use their guns as a way to demonstrate power over
the Natives. Similarly, the Natives saw guns as a way to dictate their power over other tribes, and
were eager to trade with the settlers in order to acquire these weapons of destruction.2 Whites began
to form the mindset that guns gave them the ability to have control over racial groups, a mindset
that was also employed later on in their relations with blacks.

Guns were powerful tools not only in relations with the Natives, but also in the Transatlantic
Slave Trade. Leaders of various African tribes would give prisoners (who would later be sold as
slaves) to traders in exchange for guns.3 Similar to the Natives, the African tribes saw guns as tools
that could be used to ensure power and dominance over other tribes. Early on in the history of
slavery in the colonies, the Revolutionary War provided an opportunity for enlisted slaves to not
only win freedom for America, but also win their own personal freedom from bondage. Although
slaves were permitted to serve alongside the colonies’ militias in the preliminary battles, Congress
later prohibited blacks from serving in the militia.4 However, after the colonial governor, Lord
Dunmore’s proclamation that any blacks that elected to serve with the British army would be
granted freedom from bondage, the colonies decided to allow free blacks to enlist to serve in the
Continental army.5 Since the war provided an opportunity for blacks to fight for their own freedom,
the weapons that enabled them to fight were seen as instruments of empowerment, instruments of
freedom.

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http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/africanpassageslowcountryadapt/introductionatlanticworld/trans_ atlantic_slave_trade.
http://video.pbs.org/video/2233128518/.
Speculation has arisen in recent years that the Second Amendment may have been passed at the pleading of Southern plantation owners who were afraid that the federal government would use its power to disarm Southern state militias, leaving Southern plantations susceptible to slave revolts. While we will never be able to really know whether this impacted the adoption of the Second Amendment, we do know that the Southern states were constantly pushing to preserve slavery in any way possible, evident from the Missouri Compromise and *Scott v. Sandford.* The lives of slaves were strictly regulated, with owners often restricting what they could own and how they could spend their free time. Although slaves were strictly prohibited to be in possession of any type of firearms, some plantation owners in Georgia permitted their slaves to have a gun during the workday in order to fend off birds from the crop. However, these slaves were required to return the gun at the end of the day and weren’t allowed to carry a gun unless they had been issued a permit. White plantation owners constantly feared slave revolts and took to extreme measures in order to ensure that slaves wouldn’t be armed, as they knew that as soon as slaves acquired guns, the end of slavery was inevitable. Blacks and guns quickly became a lethal combination in the minds of Southerners.

The fear of slave insurrections led by both black and whites lingered in the minds of Southerners. They quickly responded to their fear by tightening restrictions on slaves on plantations, as well as taking up arms as a way to protect themselves against potential slave revolts. Southerners had fearfully watched the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution in 1790, when a series of slave revolts broke out that were inspired by the Declaration of Rights of Man issued in 1789. The Haitian Revolution proved to the world that slaves, with the right inspiration, had the ability to fight for

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7 *Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1856)
their own freedom. Just a year later, Gabriel, a slave inspired by the American Revolution and the Haitian Revolution, planned one of the largest slave uprisings in Virginia that if successful, would have threatened the entire institution of slavery.\textsuperscript{10} Dubbed Gabriel’s Conspiracy, the plan ultimately failed but the fear that had been instilled in plantation owners during the Haitian Revolution grew, as a slave revolt closer to home became a true possibility. In addition, Nat Turner’s Rebellion in 1831, which resulted in the killing of over 50 whites, increased the fear that already lay in the minds of Southerners, following the Haitian Revolution and Gabriel’s Conspiracy.\textsuperscript{11} This fear contributed to the tightening of restrictions on blacks with the Dred Scott decision in 1856,\textsuperscript{12} which looked to control the entire black population by making white supremacy a true reality.

However, The Dred Scott decision, in retrospect, may have been one of the best things that could have happened for the anti-slavery movement at the time. The decision, which proclaimed that all blacks, regardless of whether they were slaves or free, were not considered residents or citizens of the United States and, therefore, had no Constitutional rights, sparked an outrage among Northerners and created a mass of support for the anti-slavery movement. A recount of the decision from the anti-slavery newspaper, \textit{Anti-Slavery Bugle}, “Judges make the very best of our very bad bargain with the slaveholders,”\textsuperscript{13} demonstrates the disagreement toward the decision felt by many Northerners. Benjamin Robbins Curtis, one of only two justices to disagree with the decision, illustrates in his dissent the inaccuracy and lack of consistency in the decision, lamenting about the irrelevancy of the plaintiff’s country of origin in regard to the definition of a citizen of the United States, as found in the Constitution.\textsuperscript{14} By declaring blacks to not be citizens of the United States, the Supreme Court took a clear stance against the arming of blacks. This decision also spoke to the

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Scott v. Sandford}, 60 U.S. 393 (1856)
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Anti-Slavery Bugle} (New Lisbon, OH). "The Decision of the Supreme Court." March 21, 1857.
\textsuperscript{14} U.S. Const. art. I, § II.
interpretation of the Second Amendment during this time period. By not allowing blacks to own or carry guns, the Supreme Court had directly associated the right to bear arms as a right of citizenship. Slaves began to see the right to bear arms as a right of a freeman.

Although Southerners had looked to eliminate any power that slaves could potentially gain by denying them citizenship with the Dred Scott decision, John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859 showed plantation owners that they now had to fear the capabilities of a new emerging group, Northern abolitionists. Although John Brown’s raid at Harper’s Ferry was ultimately unsuccessful, he demonstrated to plantation owners that Northern abolitionists threatened the existence of slavery and were willing to die for their cause. John Brown’s plan to raid the arsenal at Harper’s Ferry relied on local slaves joining the attack and fighting along side them. However, although no slaves responded to the call, John Brown proved that Northern abolitionists had ideas of slave revolts and armed slaves in their head.15 Through at odds with each other, the North and the South had seemed to arrive at one agreement: if armed, slaves would have the ability to dismantle the entire institution of slavery. Southerners were immediately reminded of this with John Brown’s raid, which showed them that a group possessing the ability to stir up anger and resistance in slaves existed in the United States.

Two short years following John Brown’s raid, the Civil War began. Close to 200,000 blacks fought as Union soldiers, donning uniforms of blue, while others were forced to fight alongside their owners in the name of the Confederacy.16 Violence, in this case, was the only answer for the Union who was desperate to keep the South a part of the United States. Blacks became armed, many for the first time, and saw the immense power that a gun held. However, after the end of the Civil War

and the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment, Southerners were unwilling to offer to former
slaves the full rights of citizenship that they themselves had. Southerners looked to preserve white
supremacy with the implementation of black codes, which looked to “restore slavery in all but
name.” The black codes disarmed blacks and left them defenseless against the lynchings that had
become far too common across the South. The Union had worked to prevent this immediately
following the end of the Civil War with the creation of new state constitutions in the South that
clearly described that all citizens, regardless of race, deserved equal rights. The Mississippi
Constitution, passed during this time, provided an interpretation for the Second Amendment,
describing that all citizens had the right to carry arms for the purpose of self-defense, alluding to the
right given to all citizens by the Second Amendment. However, Southerners ignored the
Constitutions that the Unions had forced them to implement in order to re-enter the Union, and
refused to give equal rights to black citizens. Blacks became even more susceptible to lynchings and
abusive, violent behavior inflicted upon them by whites. One can speculate that the Fourteenth
Amendment was passed in order to give blacks the ability to defend themselves against abusive
whites, while others claim that it was to give blacks the ability to join the state militias. The
Fourteenth Amendment interpreted the Second Amendment, as it defined the purpose of the
citizen’s right to bear arms as a way of self-defense instead of being to serve the militia. The debate
over the Second Amendment had started to inch its way into the center stage as a result of the
prohibition of slavery.

The views held by whites in the South during the era of Reconstruction remained through
the Civil Rights Movement. Blacks were still viewed by whites as a lesser race, a race incapable of the

17 U.S. Const. amend. XIV.
18 See Fn. 16
19 Black Code of Mississippi, Miss. Code Ann
20 Miss. Const. art. I, sec. XVI
21 See Fn. 16
same intellectual abilities as they. Separate but equal was a term used by the Supreme Court in order to justify the separation of blacks and whites in restrooms, at water foundations, and on buses.\textsuperscript{23}

From the time following Reconstruction to the start of the Civil Rights Movement, a period of close to 100 years, tensions and separation between blacks and whites quietly continued in the South until \textit{Brown v. Board of Education},\textsuperscript{24} which overturned \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson},\textsuperscript{25} and deemed segregation in schools unconstitutional.

Debates over gun control and regulation vs. gun rights began in the time surrounding the Civil Rights Movement. The Klu Klux Klan, known for its white, hooded figures who committed violent acts against various ethnic and racial groups, was one of the first groups to support gun control, in order to try and keep guns out of the hands of blacks.\textsuperscript{26} On the flip side, the Black Panthers, a group composed of gun-rights advocates, looked to use guns as a way to achieve their ultimate goal of racial equality. The Black Panthers, who “launched the modern gun-rights movement,”\textsuperscript{27} proudly carried their guns and rifles in support of minority groups having the ability to protect themselves against white, specifically police, brutality. The Black Panthers carried loaded guns and were outspoken in their belief of their right to carry such weapons. In response to the fear that had arisen as a result of the Black Panthers, gun control bills began to emerge in California. Don Mulford, a state assemblymen, constructed a bill that would ban any citizen from carrying a gun in any city in California, in order to eliminate the power possessed by the Black Panthers.\textsuperscript{28} During the Civil Rights Movement, the question of gun control and regulations placed on gun owners came into view for the first time in American history.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson}, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)
\textsuperscript{25} See Fn. 23
\textsuperscript{27} See Fn. 26
\textsuperscript{28} See Fn. 26
The National Rifle Association began to emerge as a voice in the fight over gun regulation and gun control during the Civil Rights Movement. The National Rifle Association originally began as a small organization geared towards supporting the gun-rights of hunters. Following the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, Congress looked to restrict the ability of citizens to acquire guns and rifles through mail order with the 1968 gun bill.\(^\text{29}\) At the time, although the National Rifle Association didn’t agree with the bill, they were not very outspoken about their opposition.\(^\text{30}\) However, in 1977 with new leadership, headquarters and mission statement, the National Rifle Association defined itself as an organization that wanted to protect the Constitutional right of all citizens to keep and bear arms.\(^\text{31}\)

Members of the National Rifle Association have attempted to use the revered leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr., as a way to gain support for gun-rights. The National Rifle Association directly cites Martin Luther King Jr.’s application for a concealed gun as evidence that he was a supporter of gun-rights. However, members of the peaceful Civil Rights Movement were in favor, not surprisingly, of being peaceful. Martin Luther King Jr. was later quoted stating that he believed that “arms were not the solution” in his fight for social justice.\(^\text{32}\) However, Martin Luther King Jr.’s application for a concealed weapon was in fact, for purposes of self-protection, demonstrating that although he wasn’t a supporter of guns, he did interpret the Second Amendment as a right of all citizens to bear arms.

In the past few decades, the National Rifle Association’s list of enemies has grown rapidly, as it disagrees with any organization or group of citizens that wants to impose any kind of gun


\(^{31}\) See Fn. 30

restrictions or regulations. In order to rival the growing list of strong gun control advocates, the National Rifle Association has attempted to recruit more minority and ethnic groups to become members. However, African-Americans are some of the strongest supporters of gun control.

Blacks living in the poorest sections of major cities are constantly forced to deal with the threat of gang violence. In a speech to a mainly African-American audience, President Bill Clinton spoke of the horrors of gun violence, “I did not live and die to see 13-year-old boys get automatic weapons and gun down 9-year-olds just for the kick of it.” African-American parents want to keep guns out of the hands of their children, who are constantly being lured into the violence by peer-pressure to join gangs. African-Americans interpret the Second Amendment as something that has torn apart communities and made violent beings out of innocent children. Between May 16, 1999 and June 14, 1999, just a mere 28 days apart, there was a 12% increase in the number of blacks who supported gun control. Two major events happened between these two dates: the passing of the juvenile crime bill and a shooting at Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia. One portion of the juvenile crime bill sets aside $1 billion annually that would serve to expand juvenile crime prevention programs, as well as implement stricter enforcement against juvenile crimes. The shooting at Heritage High School occurred in Conyers, Georgia, which has a large African-American community. By supporting gun control, African-Americans saw themselves not as citizens against gun rights, but as parents looking to protect their children.

33 See Fn. 30
The recent events in Ferguson and New York have sparked a debate across our country about race and police brutality. The majority of police officers are armed, as their job is to keep communities safe and secure. In order to keep a community safe, police officers must confront and carefully watch for suspicious persons who pose a threat to security. In the cases of George Zimmerman, Darren Wilson and Daniel Pantaleo, all police officers or a neighborhood watch officer, they believed that they were protecting their community when they shot at a young, black man. The racist roots of our country, soaked in the institution of slavery and early dealings with Native Americans, have remained in the minds of whites. Whites fear the young, dark-skinned man, seeing him as a threat to society. Whites’ perception of those of a different race has caused them to run to their guns and their advocacy of the Second Amendment. Guns are perceived as the sole solution to whites’ fears, a way to protect themselves against the “bogeyman,” 40 the black intruder.

Following Ferguson and New York, more blacks are supporting gun rights than have in the past 20 years. 41 Blacks see the need to arm themselves in order to prevent police brutality. This need for protection against law enforcement officers dates back to a time of Jim Crow laws, and black codes, when police officers were seen as the enemy instead of the protector. The gun is seen as a way to fight back, a way to not surrender to racist injustice. How is one able to protect himself against racist officers who are issued a gun by the government? With a gun. Guns are seen as the tool of empowerment that allows one to fight back.

We have become a population of pro-gun advocates. Even though supporters of gun-rights do not make up the majority of African-Americans, the number of those in favor of gun-rights is rapidly rising. 42 Reminders of past struggles, of racial conflict, have led more blacks to support gun-

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42 See Fn. 41
rights, as a way to protect themselves in a world where they are unable to rely on law enforcement for protection. Whites see weapons of violence as the solution, the only way to protect themselves from the other race. Their fear of “the bad guys” has impacted their interpretation of the Second Amendment as a Constitutional right to bear arms. We’ll never really know the intentions of our Framers in the writing of the Second Amendment. We’ll never know whether they intended for blacks to eventually be able to bear arms with the abolition of slavery, or whether they expected the government to impose restrictions on gun owners. However, our interpretation of the Second Amendment that stands today, one that gives citizens the right to bear arms, is one that has been directly impacted by the racial tensions and conflicts of our shameful past.
Bibliography


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Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 (1856).


U.S. Const. amend. II.

U.S. Const. amend. XIV.

U.S. Const. art. I, § II.


Mia Edelson ‘16

Eleanor Roosevelt on Women in the Workforce through Mass Media during the 1930’s and 1940’s

“There is no doubt that we women must lead the way in setting new standards
of what is really valuable in life.”¹

On May 7, 1935 Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to Amelia Earhart. She recounted “A girl by the
name of Miriam DeLaye, 3116 So. Compton Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, has written to me, saying
that she wants to learn to fly. Is there any school to which she could go and earn part of her expen-
eses, and is there much chance for girls pilots at the present time?”² This simple letter, part of a sub-
stantial collection of Eleanor Roosevelt’s correspondence to all friends, relatives, colleagues, and
other figures, provides great insight into the life of Eleanor Roosevelt. Eleanor Roosevelt experi-
enced evolution in her thoughts on women’s rights throughout her life; her opinions adapted as she
grew older and her surroundings and positions changed. Eventually, she became immersed in the
struggle for women’s rights. Using multiple media outlets, the First Lady maintained a strong con-
nection to women in the nation, ultimately acting as an unparalleled advocate. Because of this work
she did later in her life, Eleanor Roosevelt served as a role model who imparted a message that con-
tinues to be relevant today.

In order to better understand Eleanor’s ideological journey, one must first understand the
start of her story. Eleanor Roosevelt’s life began in New York in 1884. After losing both her parents
at the age of ten, she attended the Allenswood School in London. She returned to New York in

1902 and was engaged to Franklin D. Roosevelt the following year. The two were married by 1905. Five years later, Franklin, now a state senator, relocated his family, which included three young children, to Albany.

During this period in her life, Eleanor was detached from the women’s rights movement. In 1911, Franklin D. Roosevelt publicly supported women’s suffrage. Surprisingly, Eleanor Roosevelt did not feel great concern for this issue. In fact, she admitted that she had “never given the question serious thought” and “took it for granted that men were superior creatures and still knew more about politics than women.” She then identified as a suffragist solely because her husband did. Simply put, Eleanor Roosevelt was stuck in the shadows of her husband.

Eventually garnering new acquaintances and experiences, Eleanor Roosevelt emerged as an important player for women’s rights, and did so with women in the workforce in mind. In October of 1919, Eleanor Roosevelt first became involved in the effort to improve working conditions for women. She attended the International Congress of Working Women in Washington. Her colleagues there included Margaret Dreier Robins, president of the Women’s Trade Union League at the time, and union activists Rose Schneiderman, Leonara O’Reilly, along with others. Inspired and influenced by her allies, Eleanor Roosevelt supported similar endeavors from then on. Specifically, she joined the American Newspaper Guild, a labor union, in 1936 and “had her union card in her wallet when she died in 1962.”

Eleanor’s encounter with a greater platform for involvement further heightened her motivation to promote women’s rights. In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States and Eleanor held a prominent position as First Lady. Eleanor Roosevelt was known for her advocacy and involvement in various social issues, including women’s rights, and she continued to support working women throughout her life.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 258.
7 Ibid., 259.
States of American, and Eleanor Roosevelt became the First Lady. Eleanor Roosevelt differed from past First Ladies because she capitalized on the availability of different media outlets. On March 6, 1933, only two days after FDR’s first inauguration, Eleanor Roosevelt held her first press conference. Within the next twelve years, she would conduct 347 more. These meetings were comprised of journalists and writers for popular newspapers; yet, the professionals that attended were all women. Specifically, Eleanor Roosevelt invited upwards of thirty-five female writers for society and women’s pages. During these press conferences, Eleanor Roosevelt prohibited the publication of any direct quotes unless done so with specific permission; however, historians recently discovered transcripts written by two newspaper women, Martha Strayer and Bess Furman Armstrong, that present new information about the conferences.

Mrs. Roosevelt described many motivations that led to organizing the conferences. First off, by only admitting women journalists, Eleanor Roosevelt forced newspapers to hire women. She was conscious of the unfairness experienced by women journalists, often at the hand of male editors, and sought to remedy this injustice. Secondly, as stated by Maurine Beasley, Eleanor Roosevelt “wanted to provide a mechanism for women journalists to serve as a conduit of information from the White House directly to the nation.” Her hope was to increase awareness of and interest in women’s issues. It is widely accepted that Eleanor Roosevelt announced to the reporters at one of the earlier conferences that “I feel that your position as I look upon it is to try to tell the women throughout the country what you think they should know. That, after all, is a newspaper woman’s job, to make her impressions go to leading the women in the country to form a general attitude of mind and

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10 Ibid., 700.
11 Ibid.
thought.”  

Eventually, Eleanor Roosevelt hoped to heighten women involvement in a larger public sphere and to augment the goals of women in the nation.

Eleanor Roosevelt’s steadfast resolve is evident through her incessant decision to exclude men from these press conferences, despite facing much criticism. Not only was she was accused of “coddling” the women by Delbert Clark, who was high up in the ranks of the New York Times, but the relationships Eleanor Roosevelt formed with the newspaper women were further scrutinized. Male onlookers decided that because of the close relationships formed, the reporters “protected her from adverse publicity, weakening their own reportorial objectivity.”  In addition, the opposition claimed that these conferences did not produce worthwhile news, only paltry gossip. And, finally, Eleanor Roosevelt received personal attacks by those who felt that it was undignified and improper for a First Lady to hold any sort of press conference in the first place. Even so, Eleanor Roosevelt pressed on and continued with her objectives.

Eleanor tried to focus on the issues she saw as being significant and influential. Actually, to the surprise of many women, Eleanor Roosevelt did not focus discussion on her wardrobe. In fact, when asked about being a top “ten best dressed women of 1934,” Eleanor Roosevelt responded with just these two sentences: “Was I? I didn’t know it.”  Instead, she centered on topics more significant to the role of woman in society. Sometimes, Eleanor Roosevelt arranged for prominent women like Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, Mary Beard, a historian and editor of The Woman Voter, and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, a Chinese political figure, to talk with the reporters, hoping the newspaper women would amass greater “pride in their sex” and that this pride would be reflected

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14 Beasley, ”The Press Conferences of Eleanor.”
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
in their writing. Eleanor Roosevelt even discussed pending legislation to emphasize to women that their “interest could be translated into legislation.”

Women in the workforce was a recurring theme brought up in many conferences. For example, on May 4, 1939, Eleanor Roosevelt expressed strong opposition to state bills that would stop the employment of married women. “We like many other nation today are facing a possible change in the status of women,” she stated. “It is of great moment to us not to let this happen.” To further promote this cause and bring more attention to women in the workforce, on May 15, 1936, Eleanor Roosevelt detailed her plan to host inmates of the National Training School for Girls, a reformatory for African American women within the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. Again, she highlighted her support of women having the ability to work. “The place has had no program to fit the girls to earn a living except doing the work on the institution,” she lamented “they need much more than they are getting.” These press conferences were one way in which Eleanor Roosevelt took advantage of mass media and spread her belief in the right for women to work.

Eleanor Roosevelt not only held press conferences but she wrote almost thirty books throughout her life. She began in 1932 with both Hunting Big Game in the Eighties: The Letters of Elliott Roosevelt, Sportsman and When You Grow Up to Vote, and ended with her last book Tomorrow Is Now. Her books functioned as additional vehicles that spread her thoughts on a variety of topics. One, It's Up to the Women, seems to have been greatly anticipated. The Chicago Daily Tribune, Daily Boston Globe, and The Washington Post all announced on January 4, 1933 that Eleanor Roosevelt intended to write it. Later that year, the book was officially reviewed. A Los Angeles Times review included

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
Eleanor Roosevelt’s own thoughts on the publication of the book. “A great many people have written and could write on the subjects on which I have written much better than I. But it does represent what I feel and think. I hope it may be of use to women who are interested enough to read it.” The reviewer followed this with, “The ‘subjects’ of which Mrs. Roosevelt spoke are so numerous it hardly seems possible they could be compressed into 263 small pages - budgets, recreation, child-rearing, careers, marriage, divorce.” It is clear that Eleanor Roosevelt had much to say, and that others were paying close attention. Rose C. Feld wrote a similar review for the New York Times. Most notably, Feld commended Eleanor Roosevelt’s chapter about women in industry.

It is brief, but succinctly she emphasizes some of the very real evils of the situation… “Great efforts,” she writes, “have been made to make working women realize the necessity for union organizations, but very little result in the way of actual organizations can be seen.” She questions the motives of women who accept lower wages on the ground that, at worst, the working period of the average woman is a temporary one, with marriage as its final escape. What, she asks, and the answer is implied, will this do to labor as a whole, to men who work and to women who continue working to the end of their lives?

In this passage, Feld succinctly explained the ideas Eleanor Roosevelt presented about women in the workforce; the First Lady promoted solidifying union organizations for women and criticized women who hindered others that intended to work after marriage. These ideas that Eleanor Roosevelt imparted were fully supportive of women having careers, and because her writings were so widespread, her positive message influenced many working women. In addition to books, towards the end of 1935 and the beginning of 1936, Eleanor Roosevelt started writing her own column.

24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
“My Day,” Eleanor’s public “diary,” was first published in approximately twenty newspapers. Within a year of publication, this number tripled to sixty. Eleanor Roosevelt valued her column because it expanded her title past “the wife of a politician,” established another connection between her and the American people, and further fostered the development of her own following.

She used her column to comment on the status of women in the nation, especially women in the workforce. However, it is widely acknowledged that the columns Eleanor Roosevelt wrote during the first couple of years are more superficial and not as deep and controversial as those she wrote after 1938. Allida Black, the Director and Editor of The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers and Research Professor of History & International Affairs at The George Washington University, clarified that “Eleanor was worried about being too political in the columns at first.” This hesitance is visible in the column she wrote on July 24, 1937. She discusses the Economy Act of 1932. Part of the New Deal, the Economy Act of 1932 forbade spouses from both holding federal jobs. The act was implemented in reaction to a large increase in the "proportion of the workforce made up of women." As a direct result, many female civil service employees lost their jobs. She began her consideration deciding that the act was most likely necessary when it was ratified, but that period of “emergency” in the American economy had almost come to an end. She does not take a definitive stance against the act. In her second paragraph, Eleanor questioned, “who is to say whether a woman needs to work for the good of her own soul outside her home? Many women can find all the work they need and all the joy they need and all the interest they need in life in their own homes and in the volunteer community activities of their environment.” Including this almost works to support

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30 Roosevelt, Her Acclaimed Columns, 1936, 66.
the bill. Finally, Eleanor pondered, “I wonder if we are not going to feel more respect in the coming years for the women who work and give work to others, than for the women who sit at home with many idle hours on their hands.”31 These thoughts do not convey the authoritative and motivational attitude one would expect from a women’s rights leader. However, the act was repealed that year.

Only two years later, Eleanor Roosevelt began to spread more proactive opinions. By June 16, 1939, Eleanor Roosevelt had taken a “stand that married women should be allowed the privilege of working.”32 Not surprisingly, readers had written to her expressing much disapproval of this conviction. She allocated a portion of a “My Day” article, specifically, one that also considered representation of women within politics, to reply to her opposers. Many of those who wrote to her argued that a woman should not work unless her salary is absolutely necessary to the survival of her family. In turn, Eleanor Roosevelt reasoned that it is unfair to regulate one distinct group’s ability to work because that allows for the regulation of other groups, like men who have already acquired a certain wealth or children whose parents can support them. Finally, Eleanor definitively declared, “It seems to me that it is the basic right of any human being to work.”33 This bold statement explicitly communicated her position at this time on women in the workforce to all of her readers.

It is difficult to discern the exact influence Eleanor Roosevelt, her press conferences, books, and columns had on women at the time. A New York Times article, written on April 12, 1940, supplies historians with some insight. The author initially acknowledges a noticeable change in society. Women once harbored dreams of becoming an actress or singer, but these goals have been replaced by 1940 with aspirations of marriage, better jobs, and the ability to travel and study.34 The article then details the 16th biennial national convention of the Young Women’s Christian Association of

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 127.
33 Ibid.
the United States. Mrs. A. G. Anthony of Boston, a former faculty member at Sarah Lawrence College and research worker for the Social Science Council of Columbia University, reported to the 4,000 women in attendance on this new “‘average’ American ‘white-collar’ girl.” Specifically, after surveying 60,000 members of the Y.W.C.A. business and professional girls’ club, A.G. Anthony found that

the average American business girl is 25. She has been working approximately five years after graduation from high school and business college...She reads the newspapers every day...Reader Digest, [and] Life and women’s magazines...She is becoming interested in unions. She wants to know what is wrong with the economic system; why surplus and dire want can exist at the same time.

Most importantly, this type of woman cites Eleanor Roosevelt as one of two “public characters she most admires,” the other being her husband. When this article was published, Eleanor Roosevelt had been First Lady for roughly seven years, and the trend identified in this article may reflect the changes Eleanor Roosevelt intended to promote.

Many female scholars, writing since Eleanor Roosevelt’s death, recognize Eleanor Roosevelt as an influential figure. Maurine H. Beasley, a professor of journalism at the University of Maryland, believed that Eleanor Roosevelt’s “willingness to use her position to simply discuss public policy was revolutionary” and that she herself changed the responsibilities of the First Lady. Betty H. Winfield, a specialist in political communication and mass media history and faculty member at the Missouri School of Journalism, referred to Eleanor Roosevelt as an “advocate for other women, whether for jobs in the administration or in journalism,” making her a role model in her own right. Yet,

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35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
Joan Erikson, a distinguished psychologist, created an even deeper understanding of Eleanor Roosevelt.

For almost twelve years Eleanor Roosevelt was the First Lady of the land, the wife of the President of the United States. In truly growing into the role of her great husband’s wife, she found her stature as a citizen and a leader...The historical setting both challenged and supported the development of her unusual potentialities, and her position gave her scope to fulfill them in a grand manner.40

Joan Erikson acknowledges that Eleanor Roosevelt was greatly affected by her surroundings. This impact is seen in Eleanor Roosevelt's apparent growth through different stages of her life. Nevertheless, Eleanor Roosevelt’s progress resulted in her being a strong leader. In On My Own, the final volume of her autobiography, Eleanor Roosevelt does not overlook the importance of women as leaders. She presses, “We must regain a vision of ourselves as leaders of the world. We must join in an effort to use all knowledge for the good of all human beings.”41 It is almost irrefutable that Eleanor Roosevelt did just that, and she led women to find their place in the workforce.

Eleanor Roosevelt’s fight is not over. The women’s rights movement has progressed; the 1960’s and 1970’s witnessed gender equality escalate to the forefront of national news.42 During that period, the movement officially boomed. The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963 and in 1973 the Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade legalized abortion. Now, Eleanor Roosevelt’s message remains relevant. Sponsored by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Beijing +20 campaign currently discusses women in the media. This campaign is deemed necessary by feminists because “behind the scenes, men still occupy 73 per cent of top media management positions, according to [a] global study spanning 522 news media organizations.”43 “Female representation in newsrooms has budged very little since 1999,” in fact, the percentage of

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41 Ibid., 801.
42 Foner, Give Me Liberty!, 987.
women newsroom staff has decreased.44 And, at the three largest national newspapers, there are four times more male columnists than female.45 This unjust gap reduces the input women have on their image in the media; “research spanning more than 100 countries found that 46 per cent of news stories, in print and on radio and television, uphold gender stereotypes. Only 6 per cent highlight gender equality,”46 and women are consistently sexualized in the media.47

Eleanor Roosevelt used mass media to motivate women to find successful careers, not to reiterate gender stereotypes or to exploit women in advertisements. She recognized the many benefits of the media in order to encourage women in the nation. Today, women are realizing this once again, and are working to reclaim their image in the media. As part of the campaign mentioned previously, Erin Burnett, a CNN anchor, stated, “Women lead families, communities and countries, Yet every day women are silenced, sometimes violently. Each woman’s voice in journalism is a victory against forces of oppression. Each woman who speaks gives voices to many and inspires countless girls to believe they can change the world.”48 It is time for change once again; it is time to improve the image of all women in the media, and to encourage women just as Eleanor Roosevelt did.

45 Ibid.
46 "Media leaders and journalists," UN Women.
Bibliography


An American Highway Journey:
United States Road Policy and Culture from the Colonial Era to 1956

Debates over having an active or an inactive federal government have existed in American politics since the Constitutional Era. Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson both disagreed on whether or not to have the federal government directly interfering with the lives of a nation’s citizens. The arguments and policies concerning road development are perfect examples of topics that have arisen from such debates. Road development, although something that seems essential to such a politically progressive and developed nation such as the United States, has never really been intuitive to the federal government. In fact, the federal government barely dealt with any highway concerns from about 1840 through the beginning of the First World War. Such a trend highlights the stoicism of most nineteenth century American politicians. However, beginning with the Progressive Era and the development of the automobile, policymakers began to become more open to funding highway development and taking an active role in the bettering of the lives of their citizens. Both the lack of technology and an American political indifference towards road development combined to create the lack of a highway system before the beginning of the 20th century. Such a concept reached its climax in 1956, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, which initiated the development of the Interstate Highway System. Although a majority policymakers up until 1916 were terribly indifferent to American road concerns, policymakers, despite a few exceptions, did not truly become interested in funding American highways up until the development of three concurrent trends: the Progressive Era and

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the rise of liberalism, the influence of the automobile, the rise of the United States as a global superpower, and the creation of a more developed and unique image of American exceptionalism in the sector of transportation.

**Early American Roads: Weak Federal Government and Backward Technologies Lead to Poor Conditions**

American road development did not truly take off until the after the American Revolution. Before the Revolution, coastal roads were used almost exclusively for either stagecoach or postal services. It was not as if advanced highway systems were unknown to the Americas, as the pre-Colombian empires of the Mayans and Incas were known for their advanced systems of roads and highways. Regardless, in colonial America, local roads were the responsibilities of local governments, and most New England local governments had town officers serve as highway surveyors. Before, during, and for many years after the Revolution, the main systems of American transportation were waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound, Hudson River, James River, and later during western expansion the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Yet, roads were still in existence, yet most were not suitable for wheeled transportation. The ones of the western frontier near the Appalachian Mountain Range were rarely suited for horseback, and were used primarily by a large network of fur-traders. A notable example of such a road was the Wilderness

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4 Ibid., 3.
Path, founded by Daniel Boone during the 1770s. Furthermore, it was not as if Native Americans had neglected to create roads for themselves prior to European contact; British colonists and eventual Americans often took advantage of a number of “Indian Trails”: narrow, animal-trodden paths that were most suitable for foot travel. There were a small amount of roads that surrounded American centers of commerce such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, yet even they were poorly suited for the wheeled transportation. These roads were minimal in existence, and while some of them were made with stone or gravel, the majority of them were improved only enough so that there were no tree stumps or other immovable objects in the path, rendering them useless during the winter and early spring. The majority of nationally recognizable roads were used for military purposes, and included Braddock’s Road and Pennsylvania Road. Both roads were implemented to assist General Washington’s British Army during the French and Indian War. Washington recognized how much good roads could aid his military, and often pushed for the establishment of an improved military road in his home state of Virginia, instead of “through Maryland”, as Braddock’s Road did. Despite a few attempts from local policymakers to better the roads, roads before the revolution were the responsibility of the citizens themselves, not surprising considering the weakness of the federal government. Aside from these notable and few exceptions, the majority of roads during this period were poorly funded and undervalued, and therefore less advanced and useful.

Although road production before and during the revolutionary period was less than advanced, America did see a few advances in vehicular technology. In 1750, the Conestoga Wagon,
primarily designed for carrying large amounts of goods, was invented Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Well adapted to the bumpy terrain and heavy amount of cargo it had to endure, the Conestoga Wagon traveled American roads for decades. In later decades during the 19th century, this wagon would develop into so-called “Flying Machines” in the mid-Atlantic region that included states like New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania; these carriages traveled significantly faster than their predecessors and could make it between New York and Philadelphia within a day and a half. It must be noted that, while there were some natural and necessary technological advancements during this period, in general, technological backwardness had a significant impact on American policymakers and their passive attitudes towards roads. Neither less-than-advanced technology nor pure indifference were the sole factor in keeping American road infrastructure from developing during the 19th century; rather, both of these factors, along with complaints from American citizens, were able to combine in codependence to precipitate a general lack of solid roads throughout the American lifestyle.

After the Revolution and into the 1800s when the American economy very slowly started to break away from that of Great Britain, the amount of roads that were taxed by private companies, and eventually by state governments, grew extensively. Even so, it is quite strange how apathetic most American policymakers remained toward road development even as the power of the federal government continued to balloon. Nonetheless toll-roads became a popular trend during this era, and were widely referred to as turnpikes. They were referred to as such because the tollhouses were literally constructed by having a log “pike” in the road and it would turn when the toll was paid.

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9 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 13.
Turnpikes were first implemented by English descendants in the 14th century and had been established in Great Britain since, but were not established in the United States until after the American Revolution was completed. In 1785, the proud state government of Virginia took the initiative in establishing the first turnpike in America funded by either private companies or the government. It must be recognized that although turnpike production would eventually fall into private hands, the state governments constantly regulated them. Other toll-roads or turnpikes began to sprout up across the country up until and through the turn of the 18th century. Boston Post Road, whose name still exists today, was an early toll road that ran through the New Haven county of Southern Connecticut and connected Boston and New York. With many Americans still leery and skeptical of government power, the turnpike production quickly became a private enterprise subject to state regulation, but the term itself came to be used to exclusively describe privately funded roads.

As the Market Revolution developed and corporate America began to establish itself, the industry of constructing turnpikes became a staple of the early corporate world. Turnpikes continued to be the premier source of transportation for American citizens during the early 1800s. A map of highways in 1825 showed a large amount of turnpikes in both the North and South, a surprising notion considering the apparent technological unsophistication that characterized the south throughout the 19th century. The development of turnpikes soon became a minor interest of the federal government; with many roads unimproved in years and with many citizens calling for the

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13 Ibid., 1.
14 Ibid., 1.
15 “Turnpike”, 1.
establishment of federally funded roads, the government finally responded. Along with the establishment of many smaller roads, the federal government sought to additionally initiate a larger turnpike project. A leader of the ideology of internal improvement was Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, whose American System included provisions on internal road improvements. The federal government also sought to improve roads by providing land grants to build highways in the Midwest. The 1820s saw three land grants given by the federal government to construct roads in Indiana and Ohio, and trails in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Oregon. Nonetheless, turnpike production remained primarily relegated to private companies. The National Road, also known as the Cumberland Road, was a rare exception. A precursor to the large interstates of the 20th century, the National Road was one of the most immense government projects of the early 1800s and had complicated political consequences and minimal effects on the American people.

The National Road: An Anomaly During an era of Highway Indifference

The story of the National Road begins in 1802 during the Jefferson presidency, when the power of the federal government mysteriously ballooned under the hands of a supposed “strict constructionist”. Nonetheless, in 1802 Congress approved a motion to put 2% of Ohioan state funds to make a road connecting Ohio to the Atlantic. In 1805, Congress specified a coastal location for this road: Cumberland, Maryland. Yet production went dead until after the War of 1812. The war showed how America’s roads were not suited for fighting in wars. Communication and transportation of troops and weaponry was so difficult, hindering, and monotonous that it is

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17 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 20.
19 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 18.
difficult to comprehend how American patriotic sentiment developed extensively following the War of 1812. Even so, the construction on the road began in 1816 and was completed in 1818, an example of how American production methods improved as a result of the oncoming Market Revolution. The road continued to expand across the Midwest until it reached as far as Indiana and eventually Illinois. Eventually turned into U.S. Route 40, the original road was sixty feet wide and had a firm gravel surface.\textsuperscript{20} Railroads, the biggest opposition to the development of highways, entered federal politics as early as 1838, and encouraged the government to develop a railroad in Illinois to extend the National Road instead of actually expanding the road. Although used for commercial and migratory purposes, the road’s potential development was hindered by political divisions, a trouble that always seems to accompany road development. More conservative presidents such as James Monroe used veto power to stop federal infringement on states’ rights by National Road development. Consequently enough, other turnpikes suddenly were controlled by the state governments, and private turnpike companies such as the Lancaster Turnpike Road company fell into shambles, as most travelers shifted to railroads, and the few travelers that did use the roads rebelliously refused to pay toll.\textsuperscript{21} Private companies just lost interest, and corporate interests quickly shifted to the development of railroads, and they would stay there for the latter part of the nineteenth century. The National Road and some other turnpikes remained somewhat significant, however, railroads and canals seemed to take over the transportation scene, and continued to do so through the Civil War and into the 1870s and 80s. Yet, even railroads were not the biggest obstacle to road expansion. Monroe’s veto, mentioned above, was terribly detrimental to the overall development of an American highway system. His veto of an increase in tolls on the National Road

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{21} America’s Highways 1776-1976, 15.
mysteriously set precedent for almost a century of inactivity in the road sector. The veto spoke for an era; it recognized how apprehensive even the highest ranking official in the nation can feel about transcending the powers granted by the Constitution. To Monroe, and to most policymakers of the era, the right of the federal government to fund internal improvements such as putting tolls on the National Road “does not exist” according to the Constitution. Thus, the states reclaimed the brunt of road regulation after the 1820s.

**Federal Road Development from the 1830s to 1916, or the lack of**

It would take a technological revolution in vehicular technology to bring a rebirth to the idea of highways. Although highway production was impeded by other transportation developments, some elements of the highway remained essential to American society. Western expansion, although after the Civil War dependent on railroad development, was initially fueled by the development of Wagon Roads. Manifest Destiny seemed to include a provision on highways and roads being divinely predestined to reach the Pacific along with American society. Wagon Roads were much more versatile and economic than early railroads, and canals needed government funding. Thus, small families of western expansionists were dependent on trails such as the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails. Jefferson’s yeoman farmers were seemingly dependent on turnpikes and roads. Roads were essential to small farmers in the South and the West who were not wealthy enough or fortunate enough to either send their crops to a waterline or a railroad station or to live near one. This divide

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24 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 20.

25 Ibid., 20.
between farmers and railroads set precedent for the Populist battle against railroads during the 1890s. Another reason as to why roads remained somewhat significant during the postwar years was that the wealthy were not originally so accustomed to the idea of traveling with other people on railroads. The upper class still enjoyed traveling in coaches on roads, which was a big reason why the automobile was so successful within the upper class during its early years.26 Another expansion and long awaited reform in road technology during “The Dark Age of American Roads” of 1865-1900 was in sight through The Good Roads Movement.

Although Civil War transportation, at least considering the Union Army, was mainly completed through railroads, road complaints after the Civil War were numerous. Although the federal government seemed to help with developing military roads for the west, specifically in the Pacific Northwest, they did not seem overly interested in aiding civilian traffic on poorly maintained roads. Washington D.C. essentially left the states and civilians out to dry whenever the topic of roads was on the table. Bayard Taylor, an American poet and traveler, noted two years after Lee’s surrender that the federal government has behaved in “the most niggardly manner” towards road funding and that the government should spend “millions of dollars annually” on developing roads in the trans-Mississippi West, specifically.27 However, the late 1800s push for road improvement came from an interesting cult-like group: the League of American Wheelmen. Their cultist characteristics derived from their constant traveling around the country as a group. Developed in Rhode Island in 1880, the wheelmen formed because of the new influx of bicycles into American culture. The bike had such an influence on American culture that by 1900, there were 4 million being used throughout

26 Rae, The Road and the Car in American Life, 22.
the states. 28 Cyclists quickly formed their own cultist wing, and they praised the new vehicle not only for its merits in transportation but also for its ability to engender invigoration and exhilaration within its riders. A nation-wide phenomenon, the cyclist movement sought to connect humans with nature, especially in the ample and beautiful outdoor landscape of the west. 29 In response to the national trend of poorly-maintained roads, the wheelmen campaigned aggressively for government funded road improvements, but the federal government still remained leery to intervene. However, the wheelmen shrewdly used the press to expose the terrible condition of American roads. 30 They often used the press to call for more manpower to help them spread the word of Good Roads. 31 Although the wheelmen failed in making the cycle America’s most popular vehicle, they succeeded in bringing the problem of road conditions to the eyes of the general public. Their ideas brought about the Good Roads Movement, a crusade that sprouted from I.B. Potter’s magazine, Good Roads. 32 The Good Roads Association and many other movements after it were groups composed of state representatives that met to solve the road problem that the nation still faced. Aided by a coalition of angry farmers known as the Populists, the Good Roads movement was sure to have some success in its rural districts. Although roads still remained unrefined on the dawn of the 20th century, the topic of road improvements had been brought into national discussion. Therefore, although the wheelmen struggled to get the attention of the federal government, their beliefs and complaints would be readily taken up by highway policymakers in the 20th century. As mentioned

28 Ibid., 151.
29 Winther, The Transportation Frontier: Trans-Mississippi West, 152.
30 America’s Highways 1776-1976, 42.
32 America’s Highways 1776-1976, 43.
Before, it would take a vehicular revolution to really impact the condition of roads in the United States.

Although 1890s road reforms were small relative to what they would become during the 1900s, they set precedent for what the federal government would do when it finally decided to implement a national highway system. The rebirth of the highway that essentially began in 1916 was fueled by two major influences: the first being state government’s willingness to take action in road improvements, and the second being the new invention of the automobile.

The Gilded Age of American politics was characterized by inactivity in almost all major sectors of American life. Presidents during the 1880s and 90s took little interest in aiding their citizens. However, the turn of the 20th century saw a change in mindset that would last for decades. With the beginning of the Progressive Era in response to urban atrocities and other problems in different areas of American life came a group of politicians, both at the federal and state level, who sought to better the lives of their citizens. With highway development, however, the states continued to valiantly take the lead. In terms of state government action, New Jersey took the lead in providing aid for local highways in 1891. Massachusetts adopted a similar provision for road-aid, and in January of 1894, they rationalized such aid would benefit the well being of the public. A new era of government was on the rise in America, an era that believed it the right of the government to actively interfere with the lives of its citizens so that their lives may be bettered. This idea was essential to the Progressive Era and the rise of liberalism, thus it was essential to highway production during the early 1900s. The states continued to take the lead, and by the end of World War I every single state had some sort of organization for highway improvement. However, on the federal

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government did establish the Office of Public Road Inquiries (OPRI) that sought to at least recognize public problems with poorly-maintained roads.\textsuperscript{35} They took direct control of road funding. With the concept of road improvements making advances in the political spectrum, the automobile would provide the social and technological juice that highway improvement needed to make a lasting impression on American society.

Not only did the automobile provide a social backing for the potential highway system, but the Populist movement did as well. Farmers wanted roads to be improved so they could sell their crops for a low fee. They longed for the day that road improvements would not depend upon local taxes, but rather upon federal and state funding.\textsuperscript{36} The Populists further aided the fight for better roads by way of their vehement opposition to railroads. In fact, in the Populist Party Platform written in 1892, the Populists base their existence off of a belief that “the government should own and operate the railroads in the interests of the people”.\textsuperscript{37} The motor vehicle, however, was probably the most important technological tool in influencing the federal government to fund highways. The dual impact of both indifference and technological backwardness ceased to exist as a result of this new vehicle, and therefore indifference towards roads in American politics evaporated and a new sense of road-fueled action took its place. Many early automobile pioneers such as Alexander Winton, Roy D. Chapin, and the Apperson Brothers drove their prototype automobiles across America’s horrid roads and cringed with disapproval as they realized that their automobiles would not sell if road conditions were not improved. Early roads were horribly suited to the automobile,

\textsuperscript{35} America’s Highways 1776-1976, 47.

\textsuperscript{36} Rae, The Road and the Car in American Life, 34.

and many early cars often got stuck in the mud.\textsuperscript{38} Even so, as the American public, especially the wealthy, likened up to the idea of the automobile, the need for better roads was even more important. And when Ford released his Model T, the fate of American roads was destined for greatness.\textsuperscript{39} Yet, it would take an economic boom to really see the automobile’s potential.

**Rebirth: A New Era of Federal Highway Policymakers and their Influences**

The Progressive Era of the first decade of the 1900s saw Congress finally open up to the idea of highway funding. As other Progressives saw urban decay and believed the government responsible to fix it, highway developers saw repeated decay in transportation and began to try to fix it. In 1902, Congressman Walter Brownlow of Tennessee called for the creation of the BPR (Bureau of Public Roads).\textsuperscript{40} His bill failed, but his vision would live on. As the government became more and more involved in aiding its citizens during the Progressive Era, and automobile manufacturers and consumers continued to press for federal roads, the federal government ended its almost decade long hiatus on funding federal highways. The first piece of federal legislation concerning road funding since the National Road of the 1820s and 30s, the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 finally realized the dreams of road funding so many American citizens had longed for. All of the sudden, the apathetic policy makers of the previous 100 years had been graciously washed away, and a new era of active, determined, and well-informed yet disagreeing policymakers was on the rise. The question was now that the federal government had decided to provide aid, should it go even farther as to create a system of internal highways for transportation? Both the automobile revolution of the

\textsuperscript{39} Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 35.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 35.
1920s, the increased military production as a result of World War I, and increased railroad traffic congestion contributed to the answer to this looming question. The answer was yes.

Cars experienced a revolution during the Roaring 1920s. By 1929, automobile production reached its all-time peak: 5,294,087 units per year.41 Not surprising, then, was the ever pressing need for more roads that arose during the years leading up to the beginning of the Great Depression. A lot of the push came from automobile producers like Henry Ford, who was often active in car politics. The 1920s not only saw in increase in federal road funds, but a better sense of knowledge from government officials in terms of how to most efficiently create new roads and improve the old ones. They realized that the automobile and its high speeds could not adapt to the present system of roads. Route 66, a major route for western travelers, proved that a high speed highway was beginning to become essential to American culture. Although asphalt was already being used to build roads, the car simply did not fit into the logistical highway layout of America. Thus, with the Federal Highway Act of 1921, the federal government finally decided to create an arterial network of highways to fit the nation’s new automobiles.42 Yet, it would take decades for such a system to be realized, for in the year that the aforementioned act was signed into law, the idealized arterial network of highways made up only 7 percent of American roads and streets.43 While the automobile industry continued to boom, most local and state governments sought to pave more of the older roads so that the automobile could better adapt. With highway builders lacking capital to create their roads, the automobile industry provided an excess of capital that allowed some early highways to be built, along with a new tax on gasoline. An example of an early automobile freeway is Connecticut’s Merritt Parkway, built to help automobiles traveling from New York to Boston or Boston to New

41 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 44.

43 43 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 61.
York avoid the traffic, poor physical conditions, and high rate of fatality on the Boston Post Road. Begun in 1926, the parkway was finished in 1937, and its fatality rate soon became four times less than that of the Boston Post Road.44 This was one of the first modern highways. The technology was there for the federal government to take the leap and finally execute its plan for an arterial system of highways. The rise of progressive liberalism and a new American super product in the automobile had finally caused highway policymakers to wake up. Liberalism and roads surprisingly intersect at their cores; progressive liberalism’s basis was to improve the lives of those middle-lower class citizens who would benefit from government spending and innovation. Therefore, early liberals like FDR had special affinities for the development of road infrastructure that coincided with their active efforts to better the lives of all American citizens, including those who had been marginalized and disadvantaged by the lack of developed highways and roads. Liberals live for social services; and in the beginning of the 20th century, roads were one of many elements of American society that needed spending and improvement. Liberals are also modern at heart; and the lack of advanced transportation infrastructure is essentially the opposite of modern.

However, road improvements and automobile production slowed down during the 1930s, as the Great Depression created a lack of funds for road improvements and the automobile industry took a hit as well. Originally, highway production was also slowed down as a result of President Roosevelt’s efforts to center federal deficit spending on local roads and streets.45 Although automobile production during the 1930s decreased, the influence of the automobile on American culture increased, and thus it became very apparent to FDR at the end of 1930s that funding an arterial system of highways was needed and could assist his Second New Deal. He proposed his

44 Ibid., 79.
45 Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life*, 75.
ideass to Congress, and his typically conservative opponents denounced his plan for six inter-regional highways as a continuation of his “New Deal jitterbug economics”. Roosevelt also saw the need for these highways as essential to national defense, especially during the onset of the Second World War. Roosevelt even looked forward to the postwar era, and believed that a highway system could create jobs for soldiers once they returned to the states. The BPR assisted Roosevelt with his presentation about his six highway idea, but Congress was divided. Thus began a period in which the only impediment to drastic highway development was political entanglements.

As mentioned before, ardent conservatives were a formidable opponent to highway legislation. But perhaps the biggest opponent to highway development was the fact that there were so many different people arguing about where to allocate funds and who would benefit the most. The new influx of truckers and state and highway engineers both wanted highway expansion, but their differences in visions prior to the war insured that the highway system was not realized. With Roosevelt and Congress frozen on road repairs, and World War II on the doorstep, road construction would take a back seat from 1941-1945. Nonetheless, once the war was over, competing interests would somehow compile together to formulate a singular idea for the American highway system, and President Eisenhower would be the man to finally realize it.

Not surprisingly, the war exposed America’s lack of transportation infrastructure. Nonetheless, President Roosevelt believed he could win the war without such infrastructure, and he was right. But in 1941, he did designate a group of seven people to plan highways for when the war was over, a committee known as the Interregional Highway Committee. They oversaw highway

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47 Ibid., 1.
production during and after the war. They contributed to the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, which maintained the status-quo in terms of how to fund highways, but did propose the creation of a 65,00 km Interstate Highway System to be created in connection with state governments. Yet, even as the economy prospered after the Second World War ended, highway production was still hindered by political entanglements. Congress disagreed on which model of an Interstate Highway System to actually use, and if such a system should be uniform throughout the entire country. From 1945-1952, highway planning was almost completely destroyed by political procrastination. So many different interests were still competing against each other; state planners, truckers, motorists, engineers, and laborers all had different visions for the highway. Yet, they all wanted a highway. Although the Korean War somewhat impeded highway construction at the beginning of the age of affluence, the election of President Eisenhower was what the highway movement needed.

**Eisenhower and the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956: The Icing on the Cake**

President Eisenhower had been familiar with highways for many years. As an experienced general, he participated in numerous motor convoys during World War I. He thus saw the merits of an interstate highway system. He was also influenced by his travels during the Second World War, in which he was introduced the the German autobahn. Established in the 1930s during the height of Nazism, the Autobahn was a system of high-speed highways that was intended to create jobs for the German people. Eisenhower took a likening to such a system after the Allies had invaded Germany, and realized how much an advantage the Germans had had as a result of such a system.

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Although originally preoccupied with minor economic issues and tying up the war in Korea, the Republican Eisenhower in 1954 made it clear that he would be directly addressing the nation’s highway problems, and he did so with Congress in 1954 with the fifth Federal Aid Highway Act in 1954. Yet, Congress still did not want to tip the balance of competing interests, and it still struggled to decide whether to base highway production based off of population or distance. Urban engineers would prefer population, whereas rural engineers would prefer distance. Regardless, Eisenhower continued to push, and Vice President Nixon gave a speech for an absent Ike in the summer of 1954 at Lake George that called for an alliance between the states and the federal government in order to construct the highways. Eisenhower handled the crucial financial aspect by creating the ironically named Clay Committee which would handle the financials of creating his imagined project (no, this was not named for 19th century Senator Henry Clay, but rather for engineer Lucius D. Clay). The Clay Committee did not have to do that much work, and in 1955, the stage was set for the establishment of a large interstate system, but the Clay Committee still battled political tensions. The Senate rejected the Clay Committee because it called for too much direct federal funding, and it approved the Gore and Fallon bills, which were collectively more conservative. There was still high controversy over where to put the funds.

The government finally found a way to change and end the political stalemate that had characterized highway politics during the 40s and 50s. There were two keys to what caused the bill to finally pass legislation: firstly, the new bills called for a comprehensive, concrete three year plan to build the highway system, a big change from years of poor planning, and secondly, in the way that funding was apportioned. For all those who wanted the funds to be apportioned based on different

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criteria, a strange agreement was reached: two-thirds of highway funding would be apportioned based on population, one-sixth based on roadway length, and one-sixth based on land area.\textsuperscript{55} Many people were satisfied with such a provision, a satisfaction unseen during the zenithal era of highway political debate. After months of debate, The Federal Aid Highway of 1956 was passed in April of 1956. Its premise was simple. It federalized highway building while simultaneously keeping the interests of many different groups in mind.\textsuperscript{56} It planned to establish a system of 41,000 miles of highway over the next ten years with 27 billion dollars of funding.\textsuperscript{57} The plan was mapped out two years later, a beautiful system of highways that gloriously connected the nation together.\textsuperscript{58} Although not completed for decades, the Interstate Highway System was continually developed throughout the following decades, and the final highway built that had been planned in 1956 was completed on I-70 in Colorado in 1992. The system continues to expand to this day. At long last, American roads had the federal backing they needed, thanks to Ike.

\textbf{The Culture that both Impacted and Resulted from the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956}

Although the politics surrounding the act are extremely important, the development of American identity and culture that surrounded the act is even more important. However, the ethnically prejudicial atmosphere of the time period in which the Interstate Highway System was engendered must be recognized. Highways, although the brain-child of a predominantly white group of males, had a tremendous impact on all Americans, particularly the minorities whose communities

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{56} Rose, \textit{Interstate: Express Highway Politics}, 99.
and neighborhoods were trampled upon by Eisenhower's project as a result of their complete lack of political representation prior to the 1960s.\textsuperscript{59} In addition, there were various major changes in American identity and policy that permeated the climate in which this act was passed. Firstly, the act was passed within a powerful epoch of American commercialism that characterized the 1950s. As highways developed, traditional small businesses that had lined previous American highways became increasingly obsolete, and large corporations such as McDonald's, Howard Johnson and similar franchises began to swoop in and dominate the highway landscape.\textsuperscript{60} Along with the commercialism came a new sense of tourism. Without the Interstate Highway System, the gigantic industry of American tourism would never have developed. It was not surprising that such an industry was able to develop in such a superficial decade. Secondly, the roads developed the idea that America was a nation of hustle and bustle, a nation whose figurative limits of prosperity were exemplified through the establishment of a 40,000 mile highway system. The roads represented how, as a Ford ad in 1951 put it, America's wheels “move on endlessly, always moving, always forward”.\textsuperscript{61} Such a concept would become essential to American identity. Thirdly, the highway unified America in terms of transportation economy and was able to help to initiate the country’s simultaneous diversification and unification. Along with the aftermath of World War II, Interstate Highway development precipitated American diversification, as certain groups that were familiar to one area suddenly sprouted up in another.\textsuperscript{62} For example, Bostonian Italian immigrants who had either been forced to move by the war or used the highway system to explore more opportunities suddenly created communities in the American Southwest. Unification and Americanization also seemed to oddly

\textsuperscript{60} Phil Patton, \textit{Open Road} (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 188.
\textsuperscript{61} Patton, \textit{Open Road}, 188.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 188.
accompany this trend. Sectional discrepancies based on transportation were now suddenly starting to disappear, and now the entire country was influenced by the same transportation system. Also, the construction period of the entire system of Interstates had a duration of 40 years, a significant period of time to be spent on a singular project.63 And from a conservationist perspective, the Interstates often readily separated American citizens from the numerous waterways that were central to their natural landscape and lifestyle.64 Furthermore, the Interstate system alienated once somewhat relevant small towns and boosted the economies of other more fortunate ones.65 And, the automobile’s impact on American culture would never have been so large without this network. Yet, the value and importance of this network of wide strips of pavement has often been overlooked by the average American citizen.66 All in all, American culture surrounded and was undoubtedly changed by the establishment of the Interstate Highway System.

There are two major aspects of American identity and culture that the story of American roads seems to touch on: technological advancement and expansion and unification. Firstly, with regards to technological advancement and expansion, the early 1900s combination of both the Progressive Era and technological advancements in transportation came an unbreakable bond between government and transportation technology. Such a bond has drastically affected the American road landscape, and American roads have become a key part of the American identity. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 set forth a world viewpoint that America was a country of hustle and bustle, a country with a complex transportation system constructed to fit the needs of its constantly moving citizens. America is definitely one of the planet’s most forward and innovative

64 Ibid., 10.
65 Ibid., 12.
thinkers when it comes to transportation. However, it is not as if the ideas that are rooted in road building suddenly came about in 1916 during the Progressive Era and the rise of the automobile. Rather, the core idea of unification that the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 is subtly built on has been a part of American culture for decades. Although America is a conglomeration of diverse states with their own private interests, the states are united. And establishing a 41,000 mile highway system that encompasses the country is bound to engender unity between the states. Eisenhower emphasized the unifying effect of the Interstate Highway System with his quote, “Together, the united forces of our communication and transportation systems are dynamic elements in the very name we bear - United States. Without them, we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts”.

The “Join or Die” snake publicized by Ben Franklin in 1754 had finally been actualized. And even if railroads had revolutionized American transportation and connected the American people, the highway system did the same at a much higher level; it was more personal, more accessible, and much more present in daily socioeconomic lifestyle. The highway system was necessary for the United States to become not only a model economic power for the rest of the world, but also the image of a successful Western nation. Although it precipitated environmental and urban decay, the highway system changed the lives of the everyday American citizen. Sadly enough, they had little impact on the farmers who had so eagerly supported their existence, as by the 1950s agriculture was no longer a major American industry. Nonetheless, without the highway system, American citizens would never know the road trip; they would never know what it feels like to spend a week on I-90, to take the trip from Boston and the evil tolls of the Mass Pike all the way to Portland, Oregon; they would never be able to get from Middletown, CT to Hartford, CT in 20 minutes. American highway commercialism, although negative in some ways, has become a huge industry to many

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businesspeople, both small and large. Yes, the system obviously had adverse effects, including increased traffic and environmental decay. But to denounce the system merely for its basis on deficit spending is ridiculous, for the direct effects that road building has had on American culture, identity, technology, accessibility, and most importantly, unification, are undeniably invaluable to the American citizen.

Although highway politicians until 1916 did not find much interest in developing highways to say the least, after 1916, the influence of the Progressive Era, the establishment of the automobile, and a new American culture contributed to the climax that was the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. Furthermore, a new American culture was able to form out of the act, as the previous culture continued to develop. Despite the fact that America would still endure numerous issues as a result of the new Interstate Highway system, the new system was a completion of decades of work; work that was done to counteract the century of federal indifference towards highway and road expansion. The story of American road-building, although slow and often disappointing for the first 175 years or so of the nation’s existence, has an amazing climax: The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. Eisenhower’s contributions to this act cannot be overstated, and rightfully so, in 1990, President Bush renamed the system after Eisenhower. 68 Within an era of intense liberalism, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 drastically altered America’s transportation landscape like no other federal piece of legislation had ever done or would ever do. Although a significant deficit to the federal government and a lot more expensive than State highways, Interstate Highways funded by the federal government were an initiative America needed to take. The incongruous juxtaposition of advanced government and primitive transportation that had characterized America since the end of

the revolution had finally ended. And after the completion of this extensive project in 1992, the potential successes of American transportation development still remained endless.
Bibliography


On May 5, 1788, a week after Maryland became the seventh state to ratify the Constitution, the city of Baltimore held a pageant in celebration of the written document. Some members of the printing trade paraded as Mercury and distributed the Constitution to their fellow Baltimoreans, alluding to its divine origin using a classical literary reference; other printers carried “American Productions”—written works that symbolized the roles played by printers in the ratification debates of 1787 and 1788, at least according to the printers themselves.\(^1\) Other trade groups took place in the parade, turning the event into a scene reminiscent of trade guilds’ celebrations in England; nevertheless, the printers were the undisputed center of attention. Combining this ancient tradition with the festivities surrounding the new nationhood, the early American printers established themselves as a deeply engrained, legitimate part of the new republic’s identity, ironically doing so in ways that were evocative of British culture. The prominence of the printers at this pageant and the importance of a literary allusion in the interpretation of this event indicate that literacy had become an integral part of most Americans’ values by the time of the Constitution’s ratification; similarly, the equivalence between Federalist publications and a national printing trade suggests that many intellectual Americans came to see the propagation of ideas as another national principle. From this perspective, it seems apparent that the ability to read and the free distribution of information both played invaluable roles in securing the ratification of the Constitution. Left out of this picture, however, are the numerous Constitution burnings hosted by dissenting Anti-Federalists throughout the country following ratification.\(^2\) These malcontents’ decision to express their dissatisfaction by

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challenging the power of the written word reveals the extent to which literacy shaped Americans’
views at this time—the only way to circumvent the influence of printers was to destroy their
creations. The Anti-Federalists’ obsession with the written word, similar to that of their Federalist
counterparts, disproves the notion that literacy—in all of the various meanings of the term—had a
uniformly positive or negative effect on either side of the ratification debates.

Examined carefully from both sides, the issue of literacy and the Constitution takes on a far
more nuanced interpretation than previous scholars have accorded it. The use of printed
communications in the ratification debates of 1787 and 1788 produced and evoked the conflicting
trends of the democratization of information, the development of a national cultural identity based
on American literature, and the legitimizing power of the written word. Among these effects of
literacy, the first and the second often—though not always—challenged the Federalist and Anti-
Federalist bodies of thought, respectively, while the legitimizing power of the written word provided
the Federalist perspective with practical validation but illuminated a logical flaw. Furthermore, due
to the prevalence of non-printed forms of literacy (for instance, sermons in church), these effects
did not limit themselves solely to the intellectual community, but rather spanned all of American
society, both literate and illiterate. Taken together, these impacts suggest that the relationship
between literacy and the Constitution was neither unilateral nor uniform, but instead a complex web
of causes and effects whose analysis can help us better understand the nature of the most influential
and controversial document in the United States’ history.

Background

In order to be interpreted properly, these trends must be understood within the context of
several other aspects of the era in question: the status of the printing press in the United States and
the history of the Constitution. By the time of the ratification debates, printing had already been an
integral part of the American colonies for about 150 years—ever since the foundation of the
printing press at Cambridge in 1638. Massachusetts remained the largest producer of printed works until about 1760, despite the restrictive limitations placed by the local government, with other colonies developing smaller printing presses in their capitals. Throughout the latter half of the 1760s and the 1770s, newspapers began to play a larger role in shaping the political attitudes of Americans, as printed resistance to the Stamp Act (itself a restriction on the effects of literacy) undoubtedly contributed to the British-American tensions that ultimately led to the Revolution. In the late eighteenth century, the number of newspapers in the United States skyrocketed, from thirty-seven in 1775 to over one hundred and fifty in 1800. Although many pre-Revolutionary papers ceased publication shortly after the Revolution, the political leanings that newspapers had developed during the preceding era continued throughout the 1780s. Print remained one of the most popular media for expressing political opinions; both written and oral forms of discourse were used throughout the ratification debates. As will be demonstrated later in this essay, these two forms of discourse were in way mutually exclusive; in fact, they often worked in conjunction for the spread of democratic ideals. Even so, Britain continued to dominate in the literary and cultural fields: no American novels were published until 1789, when William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy* was printed in Boston.

Until relatively recently, the history of discourse in eighteenth-century America has received little attention. The 1960s and 1970s brought the field of *histoire du livre* (history of the book) and its related emphasis on the written word to prominence in France, with the 1965 publication of *Livre et*
Société, detailing the influence of books in eighteenth-century France. Since then, many American historians have entered the field, investigating both the general history of the written word in America and specific turning points in the role of printed materials. For instance, many historians have interpreted the remarkable increase in the number of newspapers between the start of the Revolution and the turn of the century as proof of a “communications revolution”, while other historians look ahead to the beginning of the nineteenth century for signs of this transformation. Nonetheless, no one has yet investigated the role of written publications in the ratification debates specifically, at least in any degree of detail. In fact, Isaiah Thomas, in the original preface to his monumental *The History of Printing in America*, wrote that he had studied American printing until “the most important event in the annals of our country – the Revolution. To have continued it beyond this period, all will admit would have been superfluous.” Yet the paucity of attention the ratification debates have attracted from book historians is entirely incommensurate with the wealth of written publications this period provides. For this reason, among others, I have chosen to shed some light upon this neglected period in the history of publications.

Like its counterpart, the era of the ratification debates deserves some context, as does the historiography of Constitutional interpretations. Following the advent of the colonies’ independence from Britain, the newly United States found themselves in an ambiguous position: while they had united in opposition to a common foe, they had not yet gained the formal ties of nationhood. Many questions about the future of the United States remained after the signing of the Declaration of Independence: would the United States become a nation? Would a strong central government allow

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10 Only twenty-one years after the ratification of the Constitution, Thomas already considered the examination of post-Revolutionary print culture unnecessary. Subsequent historians have continued this trend of ignoring the ratification debates in their examinations of American print culture: to my knowledge, this essay is the first explicit inquiry into the impact of literacy on the ratification debates.
republican values to survive? Would the United States live up to the promise of equality set forth in
the Declaration of Independence? The Articles of Confederation, adopted by Congress on
November 15, 1777, but not officially effective until its ratification by all thirteen states in 1781,
attempted to solve some of these issues, but many more arose from the Confederation’s failure.
Under the Articles, any major Congressional action required nine states’ approval, while Congress
had no authority to regulate commerce or levy taxes. These problems—as demonstrated by the
weakness of the national government in suppressing Shays’ Rebellion—led to discussions about
reforming or replacing the Articles of Confederation.\(^\text{11}\)

From May to September of 1787, the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia, initially to
revise the Articles but eventually to draft a new Constitution. The federal Constitution drafted by
the delegates to the Convention provided a firm answer to the question of nationhood that had
plagued post-Revolutionary America in previous years and gave the federal government many
powers not granted by the Articles of Confederation; at the same time, however, the Constitution
provided for a far more elaborate system of checks and balances than the Articles had. From the end
of 1787 until 1790, ratification debates occurred in every state, followed by ratification conventions
composed of hundreds of state delegates. Men and women debated the Constitution both orally and
in print, with the populace divided into Federalists and Anti-Federalists.\(^\text{12}\) The Constitution went
into effect in mid-1788, after eleven states had ratified it (two more than the required nine).

In both historical research and the popular imagination, the Constitution—but not necessarily
the ratification debates—has enraptured American society ever since its drafting. Although in recent

\(^{12}\) For one of the best histories of the ratification debates, see Pauline Maier, \textit{Ratification: The People Debate the
years constitutional history has been subjugated to other fields of history, countless historians throughout the centuries have interpreted the Constitution in a variety of ways, from the debates between strict and loose constructionists in the early days of the republic to Beard’s economic explanation. Of all of these interpretations, the most relevant to my arguments are those that deal with the struggles between states’ rights and nationalism and between elitism and egalitarianism. In the years immediately following ratification, the former interpretation was by far the most common, but more recent historians have focused on the latter. Gordon Wood, for instance, deemed the Constitution an “aristocratic document designed to check the democratic tendencies of the period”—a cynical treatment of one of America’s favorite documents, but an essential point to keep in mind when discussing literacy’s role in its ratification. Early constitutional histories also focused almost exclusively on the Constitution itself, with little or no emphasis placed on the nature of the ratification debates. Maier’s *Ratification*, published in 2010, is actually the first comprehensive study of the debates. Despite the lasting influence of constitutional interpretation, ratification has only recently entered historical consciousness; nevertheless, due to the plethora of historical accounts that exist and their impact on constitutional thought, the ratification debates are a fruitful and fecund target for historians’ energy.

This essay consists of three sections, corresponding to the three overarching trends associated with literacy as it pertains to the ratification debates: the democratization of information (supporting the Anti-Federalists), the development of a national identity (supporting the Federalists), and the legitimizing power of the written word (supporting the Federalists). Within each section, I use three different methods of supporting my points, including reference to big ideas (important but vague),

15 Maier, x. This generalization excludes books that mention the debates only incidentally, as well as one history of ratification written in German.
anecdotes (specific but subjective), and statistics (objective but difficult to find in this context). I have also begun under one overarching assumption: the written word merits attention due to its ability to transform societies. To a certain extent, it has a type of agency—while people and societies both affect it and the way it is perceived, the written word itself and the ability to understand it can enact massive changes in the world. Because this idea is taken for granted by most book historians, it is not the place of this essay to challenge the very foundation of the field on which it relies.

**Democratization of Information**

The democratization of information that occurred as a result of increased literacy rates in the years leading up to the ratification debates affirmed the position of the Anti-Federalists. Book historians, eager to find meaning in literacy, often refer to any process that results in more information becoming available to more people as “democratizing”. From this perspective, democratic ideals—roughly equivalent to political, social, and economic egalitarianism—are embodied by literacy. After all, having the ability to read can dramatically alter a person’s ability to participate in politics and to acquire a well-paying, meaningful job; more importantly, it allows the common people to think for themselves, to read a viewpoint not officially endorsed by the elite and the established system of government. As Joel Barlow argued shortly after the ratification debates, “this habit of thinking…is the only foundation” for a free society. Taken on a large scale, literacy can have profound effects on the development of democracy: an ambitious study of literacy rates in Europe between the sixth and eighteenth centuries found a strong correlation between literacy, book

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16 See, for instance, Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics 27 (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1994). This account of the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 explores many of the same ideas as the present essay and can be used as a sort of model for further investigations into the applications of book history. Justice studies the various forms of literacy employed by the revolting peasants, in terms of both the democratization of information and the legitimacy conferred by the written word.

sales, urbanization, and political democratization. Countries with greater access to books and larger reading publics tend to progress more quickly toward what we would consider a democratic society. This principle is no less true in the era of the ratification debates, when the abundance of writing (both political and non-political) led to greater involvement in the public sphere, in turn leading to individuals’ desire to promote and protect the freedom of the press.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, literacy rates experienced significant growth across the board—rural and urban, wealthy and poor, men and women. Of course, no official records of literacy rates during the era in question exist, making the gathering of data about literacy incredibly difficult. Kenneth Lockridge, in his study of literacy in colonial America, used the signatures and marks on wills as indicators of the ability to read and write. He found that, from the 1660s to the 1790s, literacy rates among men increased from about 60 percent to about 90 percent; among women, the proportion able to sign their own names increased from 31 percent in the 1660s to 46 percent in the 1790s—a significantly smaller amount, but a noticeable upsurge nonetheless. Linda Auwers, on the other hand, used similar methods to study women’s literacy in colonial Windsor, Connecticut and marked an increase from 27 percent in the mid-seventeenth century to 90 percent in the mid-eighteenth century. Even if these statistics are not altogether infallible, they provide

19 Throughout this section, I focus on the act of reading itself rather than on the content of the books published or on the identities of the authors; while this supposition is certainly not without its faults, a proper treatment of these more complicated factors would require a far more lengthy essay than the one currently at hand.
22 Undeniably, both Lockridge’s and Auwers’s statistics present numerous problems, as both studies assume literacy to be tantamount to having the ability to sign one’s name: neither allows for individuals who could sign their names but did not possess the power or desire to read fluently. Many historians even question the validity of measures of literacy in general due to their inability to account for different shades of reading and writing skills; for instance, see Michael Schudson, Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 35-6.
basic guidelines on how to interpret the trend of literacy during the eighteenth century: clearly, American society was becoming ever more literate.

These increased literacy rates meant that written publications allowed both rural and poorer Americans to involve themselves in the ratification debates of 1787-8. These men and women, who otherwise (that is, without the opportunity to get involved through newspapers, broadsides, or pamphlets) would not have been able to participate in the discourse that swept through urban and elite sections of American society, found themselves politically empowered by the spread of the written word. Farmers like Abner Sanger, a literate but humble man living in New Hampshire during the 1780s, relished in the opportunity to read the news: Sanger wrote in his journal, “Afternoon I go over to old Benjamin Willis’s to cut wood, but spend all the while until night reading in his newspapers.”23 For these individuals, involvement in current affairs meant not only a chance to escape from the monotony of everyday life, but also an opportunity for social advancement. Events such as Shays’ Rebellion brought the often remote matter of politics into the daily lives of many early Americans, causing them to engage with these topics in the form of newspapers (one of the most common incarnations of literacy). An anonymous Massachusetts resident, writing under the name “A Friend for Liberty” in 1787, remarked that due to the excitement of the ratification debates newspapers “are now more read than the bible at this time”, revealing both the popularity of newspapers and their subtle identification with liberty.24 Articles both in favor of and in opposition to the Constitution attracted widespread attention from all echelons of American society on account of the prevalence of literacy.

With the rise of the novel as a popular form of literature occurring simultaneously with the ratification debates, women also found themselves drawn to literacy, eventually allowing them to

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24 Massachusetts Centinel (Boston), November 14, 1787.
enter the ratification debates. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, novels began to become more popular and therefore to assume a far larger role in American society. Whereas previous literary attempts had been geared mainly towards men (the typical audience for the written word) novels often focused on sentimentality and everyday life, appealing to American women. Although no novels were published in the United States until after the ratification of the Constitution, the thousands of books that survive from the 1780s prove just how popular British fiction had become despite the continuing tensions of the Revolutionary War. Cathy N. Davidson has conducted a thorough study of novels that survive from the late eighteenth century: in the one thousand books she investigated, about two-thirds had women’s signatures inscribed inside the cover. Novels involved women in the fruits of literacy and promoted the skill of reading, long in desuetude among American women. Although non-political in nature, works of fiction facilitated political involvement in the ratification debates by giving women a reason to read independently of their husbands. A young law student described his friend’s sister as “a stanch Federalist—and quite a politician” during the ratification debates in Massachusetts. Women also involved themselves in the writing and publishing of newspaper articles and pamphlets, including Mercy Otis Warren, who contributed the influential pamphlet Observations on the Constitution to the Anti-Federalist cause; Jane Aitken, a skilled Pennsylvanian book binder; and Mary Katherine Goddard, editor and publisher of the Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser. Women’s new involvement in the “republic of letters” earned them a new status among the political debaters of ratification.

26 Maier, 156.
28 The Republic of Letters (respublica literaria) is a term typically applied to the intellectual communities that emerged during the Enlightenment; for instance, see Dena Goodman, The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1994). More generally, the term can refer to communities based on the written word—for an application of this definition to the early United States, see Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).
The democratization of information and the inclusion of women and poor, rural Americans in the ratification debates implicitly authenticated Anti-Federalist ideas. Anti-Federalists typically argued that a formal, written document like the Constitution restricted access to free information; indeed, as it appeared in the ratification debates (that is, without a Bill of Rights), the Constitution did not protect freedom of speech or the press. Even in the ratification process, Federalists took considerable measures to prevent Anti-Federalists from voicing their opinions: because they owned the vast majority of the newspapers, Federalists prevented articles that were critical of the Constitution from being published. For instance, the *Massachusetts Centinel* prohibited the publication of anonymous Anti-Federalist works, effectively silencing all critics of the Constitution. 29 Many Anti-Federalists even turned to using pseudonyms in order to avoid persecution. 30 Americans who were appreciative of the democratizing powers of literacy often sought to protect their literary liberty by attempting to prevent the adoption of the Constitution by arguing (as did one Philadelphian) that “the LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—the great bulwark of all the liberties of the people—ought never to be restrained” while pointing out that the Constitution made no provision for its protection. 31 Of course, with the addition of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution can be interpreted as a means of guaranteeing American freedom, not diminishing it; at the time of the ratification debates, however, the contrast between the democratizing influence of literacy and the restrictive powers of the Constitution would have been apparent. The increasing literacy rates during the era of ratification would have gathered significant support for the Anti-Federalists, furthering their position.

29 Maier, 72-4.
30 In fact, both Federalists and Anti-Federalists frequently turned to pseudonyms in order to preserve their anonymity or in order to make a specific point. Many pseudonyms contained classical allusions—for instance, Brutus, Caesar, or Cato—designed to elicit certain connotations in the mind of the reader, including nostalgia for Roman democracy or education and sophistication. Of course, the success of these *noms de plume* depended upon the reader’s familiarity with Roman or Greek history; this type of knowledge is a type of literacy in and of itself and could be the basis for an essay with a different focus. For more on classical pseudonyms in the ratification debates, see Eran Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2003).
31 *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia), September 29, 1787.
Development of National Identity

In addition to playing a role in spreading democratic ideals, the written word appeared in many Federalists’ dreams for a national future. They imagined that the United States, like all of the European countries before it, would develop a culture based on literature and the other creative arts. Prominent Americans began to voice these concerns following the advent of independence, advocating the development of a national literature.

Noah Webster, for instance, writing in 1783, reminded the American people, “While the Americans stand astonished at their former delusion and enjoy the pleasure of a final separation from their insolent sovereigns, it becomes their duty to attend to the arts of peace, and particularly to the interests of literature.”32 Webster advocated for literary nationalism not only for the sake of cultural superiority, but also for the development of an American identity on the same cultural level as that of Europe, in terms of both antiquity and sophistication. At the same time, however, Webster argued that this new American culture would have to be completely separated from that of Europe and, in particular, Britain. Because the vast majority of books were written and printed in Britain, and because the United States had so recently emerged from the Revolutionary War, Americans were anxious to separate themselves socially and economically from Europe. Webster boosted his argument on the importance of American literary superiority by asserting that “Europe is growing old in folly, corruption and tyranny—in that country laws are perverted, manners are licentious, literature is declining and human nature debased.”33 Although Americans had very little literature of their own at this time, they frequently condemned the European tradition of literature and hoped for the triumph of American literature; furthermore, Webster’s equation of the

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33 Webster.
declension of literature with other examples of cultural debasement reveals the extent to which he identified the written word with superiority and sophistication.

Other Americans, too, possessed the same desire to prove America’s literary prowess by developing a national literature: the Columbian Magazine, founded in 1786, declared that its goal was to “be regarded as a contemporary evidence of the progress of literature and the arts among [American] citizens”.34 It is also worth noting that this same issue of the Columbian Magazine begins with an image of Columbia (an allegorical figure representing the newly United States) standing before a globe and book.35 This symbol, identifying the national culture with literature and the pursuit of learning, can be found throughout much of the printed material from the era of the ratification debates. Images like these Columbia illustrations extend the effects of literacy on the development of a national identity even further: the visual format transcends literacy itself. An illiterate individual might have seen these subtle promotions of American literature and understood their meaning well enough—literacy was a facet of Americanness. In spite of the continued reliance upon British literature, American culture in the 1780s looked promising, with Phillis Wheatley, John Trumbull, and Joel Barlow all standing as titans of poetry.36 Soon enough, it seemed, authors and poets would Americanize all of the literary genres.

Two main factors contributed to the sense of a developing national literature during the ratification debates, both the result of the written word—the relative ease of communication throughout the United States and the idea of books fulfilling an economic responsibility between the States. In the case of the former, the spread of the printed word made interstate communication considerably easier; the opportunity to converse by written as well as oral means saved time and

35 The Columbian Magazine, 1:i.
money while reaching areas that were otherwise inaccessible. The web of correspondences that existed at the time of the ratification debates allowed for the development of a nationalistic sentiment—an idea that was integral to the Federalist position of formally uniting the states. At the heart of this communications trend was the prevalence and popularity of the newspaper. As mentioned above, the number of newspapers skyrocketed during the late eighteenth century: about 450 new papers began between the end of the American Revolution and 1801. Some of these lasted days and some centuries, but in either case newspapers helped to spread information throughout the country. The ratification debates left the states with no shortage of political topics to discuss; furthermore, the requirement of having nine states’ approval before the Constitution could go into full effect forced Americans to monitor the news in other states. Newspapers frequently featured content that crossed state lines, including out-of-state Federalist (and less frequently, Anti-Federalist) pamphlets. For instance, essays from *The Federalist*, perhaps the most influential piece of constitutional thought, were reprinted in virtually every newspaper. In this way, the ratification debates relied on and reinforced intercommunication between the states, contributing to the development of a national identity.

Another main contributor to the growth of national sentiment during the ratification debates, the economic interdependence between the colonies led to the birth and expansion of an American economy. The role of books as commodities played a major role in bringing this change about: the long-standing view of books as commercial goods, in addition to intellectual or cultural goods, promoted the existence of a national economy as a part of American culture and identity. States began to see that their economic stability depended on other states, leading to a sense of responsibility for the growth of the American economy. As such an integral component of the colonial and post-Revolutionary economies, the printing trade saw many instances of this

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37 Mott, 113.
38 Maier, 84.
commercial nationalism. During the ratification debates, it was not uncommon for a book’s or newspaper’s inscription to contain the words, “This work is an American production.”\(^{39}\) Likewise, the “American Productions” described in the opening to this essay demonstrate the obsession with the Americanness of printed works, while the printing trade’s status among the various industries present in the pageant solidifies the book’s role as an American commodity.\(^{40}\) This emphasis on the written word, often a result of economic or commercialist motives, contributed to the perceived unification of the states during the late eighteenth century.\(^{41}\)

This new emphasis on the United States as a cultural and economic entity seemed to demand further and formal solidification under a written document, leading to the authentication of Federalist ideals. Cultures and economies based on nationalistic tendencies tend to require strong central governments in order to protect them: even with a national culture or economy, a loose Confederation of states could have quickly fallen into a sort of isolationism that made meaningful literary dialogues or interstate commercial exchanges unlikely or even impossible. Federalists often brought up issues of nationalism during the ratification debates, using the linguistic similarities of the United States to justify the process of “Americanization.” In *The Federalist*, for instance, John Jay wrote of a “people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs.”\(^{42}\) Jay saw Americans’ common language—and by extension, the ease of communication and the potential for a national literature—as proof of the need for the United States’ formal solidification. Although the position of Anti-Federalism is not entirely inconsistent with a national culture or economy (that is, a country without a Constitution can conceivably be culturally or

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\(^{39}\) Warner, 119.

\(^{40}\) Warner, 118.

\(^{41}\) It is worth noting that, this unification notwithstanding, the United States remained a grammatical plural both before and after the ratification of the Constitution: the United States did not take the singular verb “is” until after the Civil War.

economically connected), they are unlikely partners, especially given that the Federalists sought to protect the economic and cultural interchanges between states. The literary and commercial nationalism generated by the influence of the written word undermined Anti-Federalist ideals and supported unification of the United States under a printed Constitution. Whereas in the first trend explored—that of the democratization of information—increased literacy rates bolstered Anti-Federalism, in the case of national identity literacy worked in favor of the Federalist position.

Legitimizing Power of the Written Word

The simple act of writing something down can give it unprecedented power and legitimacy.43 From the colonial era to the ratification debates, American discourse often took an oral form: with such low literacy rates, it was initially difficult to live up to the ideal of the informed citizenry. As time went on, however, the spread of literacy, the expansion of the printing press, the inception of new and multitudinous newspapers (particularly in urban areas and near large trading centers), and the advent of the novel as a literary genre all contributed to the growing importance of written modes of discourse. The ratification debates relied on both oral and written discussions of the topics involved. As the written nature of the ratification debates marked a major departure from the “town meeting” ideal espoused by earlier Americans, they called into question the comparative value of oral and written communications.44 While historians have traditionally asserted that one form of communication is incompatible with the other, that oral debate and the written word are at odds with one another, some historians have come to believe that they may not be as opposing as they were once thought.45 Rather, oral and written communications represent two different but related

43 This is one of the central ideas in Chapter IV, titled “Textuality and Legitimacy in the Printed Constitution” in Michael Warner’s The Letters of the Republic. I have adapted many of Warner’s ideas throughout this section, and I am indebted to this book for its scholarship.

44 For a comprehensive look at the democracy under the town meeting system, see Frank M. Bryan, Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How It Works, American Politics and Political Economy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). As the title would suggest, many town meeting historians perceive local, oral debates as the most direct application of democracy.

45 Hall, 12.
means of expression—in separate categories, but towards comparable ends (involvement in the public sphere). In many cases, the process of reading aloud to illiterate friends and neighbors marked a fusion between the two—literacy led to oral communication, which led to the introduction of more people into public affairs. Illiterate people who listened to others reading aloud could even acquire some degree of literacy, as in the case of Samuel Goodrich, writing about his childhood in the late eighteenth century, who remarked that he had learned elementary Latin and Greek from listening to his brother’s lessons.\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, Abner Sanger (the newspaper-loving New Hampshire farmer mentioned above) often fulfilled the role of intermediary in his community, reading and writing others’ letters for them and sharing the news with them.\textsuperscript{47} In this way, he involved his neighbors in the republic of letters, giving them a partial sort of literacy that would have allowed them to partake, even indirectly, in the permanence of writing and the intellectual fervor of the ratification debates. Other forms of unwritten discourse that fall into the same category could include sermons in church—a very common means of information transfer during the eighteenth century—and images of the kind discussed above.

Nevertheless, the written nature of the Constitution contributed to its reception as a legitimate source of power. Based in part on the Magna Carta, one of the first written constitutions in history, but intended to solve many of the issues with the English mode of government, the Constitution relied heavily upon its simultaneous permanence and flexibility for its popularity. While its writtenness conferred it with a sense of durability, securing nationhood into perpetuity, the provision of a way to amend it seemed to guarantee that the Constitution would indeed represent the will of the people. Meanwhile, the Constitution gained legitimacy from the very fact that it was written and printed, due to the emphasis that eighteenth-century Americans placed on the written

\textsuperscript{46} S. G. Goodrich, \textit{Recollections of a Lifetime, or Men and Things I Have Seen: In a Series of Familiar Letters to a Friend, Historical, Biographical, Anecdotal, Descriptive} (New York: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1856), I:152-3.

word: as Thomas Paine put it as early as 1776, “All constitutions should be contained in some written Charter.” 48 Although the leading political thinkers of the ratification era inevitably focused on the representation of the people’s will in government, they also displayed considerable concern for the way in which the Constitution’s writtenness influenced its perceived legitimacy. 49 Thus, the obsession with literacy and textuality aided the Federalist perspective during the ratification debates.

As a final note, it has been argued by Michael Warner, among others, that this legitimization of power through the written word presents some challenges to the conception of a free society and the idea that power derives from the people. Under the constitutional system of the United States, according to this idea, the Constitution has authority because it represents the will of the people; however, it represents the will of the people only because it originally claimed to on the basis of its authority. Of course, this authority relies upon its claim to represent the people, and so on. This cycle results in a paradox, which Warner finds logically problematic, concluding that it undermined the Federalist position. 50 Suggesting that contemporary Anti-Federalists actually concerned themselves with such logical minutiae, however, seems incredibly implausible; in all likelihood, anyone who thought so analytically would have concluded that, by providing a written claim to represent the will of the people, the framers of the Constitution actually offered a dual source of authority—the Constitution had both textual legitimacy and popular sovereignty to its benefit. Therefore, this argument (if it entered discussion at all) would have furthered the position of the Federalists in the ratification debates.

Conclusion

49 Warner, 73.
50 Warner, 98.
Although the prevalence of printed means of communications in the ratification debates of 1787 and 1788 resulted in the democratization of information for both literate and illiterate individuals, thereby supporting Anti-Federalism, it also resulted in the development of a national cultural identity based on an American literature and economy and allowed the legitimizing nature of the written word to come to prominence, both of which trends bolstered Federalist ideals. Despite the scarcity of research about literacy’s effect on the ratification debates, the topic provides a rich and complicated view on both the ratification of the Constitution and the history of the book in general. While historians tend to focus their studies of communication on the so-called communications revolution of the nineteenth century, a significant prelude exists, one that sheds light on the interpretation of literacy throughout American history. The era of the ratification debates was one of the greatest turning points in the United States’ past—a period characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, and experimentation. The arguments used in support or criticism of the Constitution at the time of its ratification still apply today and still form the foundation for any study of how constitutional interpretations have changed over time. Understanding the war of printed words can augment our consideration not only of literacy’s meaning in our own society but also of the most debated document in American history.
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Racism’s Infiltration of Civil War Medical Practices and Disease Contraction

While there were some facets of sanitary conditions and medical standards during The War that were equally abhorrent for soldiers of all races, the medical treatment of blacks was more greatly exacerbated by racism. When Confederate General Major General Howell Cobb claimed, “…the proposition to make soldiers of slaves and slaves of soldiers is the most pernicious idea since the war began… the moment you resort to negro soldiers your white soldiers will be lost to you,” he deems black army enlistment as unnatural and introduces the racist argument that blacks had no place fighting in a “white man’s war.”1 Black troops suffered immensely from the limited and racist perspectives of men like Cobb, and fought to establish their own identity as men throughout the Civil War. A predominant viewpoint of the era was that blacks could not fight, as they were neither as physically capable nor as intelligent compared to white males. As stated by the 5th Massachusetts Colored Cavalry Major Charles Frances Adams Jr. in his providing an example of such a limited perspective, “After all a negro is not the equal of a white man…He has not the vigor and energy, he cannot stand up against adversity…He cannot fight for life like a white man.” Adams Jr. showcases the limitations that white citizens placed on black cognitive and physical capabilities due to racism.2 Lamentably, blatant discrimination such as that documented by Cobb and Francis affected black medical care and disease contraction by manifesting itself in harsh labor, equipment, unequal pay, and inadequate treatment in hospitals.3

Rather than fighting on the battlefield like their white counterparts, black soldiers were often forced to complete severe and physically arduous tasks exceeding that of whites. Born of the same strand of racism reflected in Cobb’s claim, many people believed the job of fighting to be the white man’s place; hence, to allow for white soldiers to be active on the battlefield, the “fatigue work” was left to black soldiers to handle. In addition, black labor in the Union Army was also ignited by the misconception “that Southern blacks were less susceptible than northern whites to the heat and fevers of the South,” (63) along with the widely-held prediction that The War would end before blacks could be taught to fight.”4 Working eight to ten hours per day, black servicemen were forced to labor “digging trenches and wells, drawing sand, dredging swamps, felling trees, cleaning latrines and shipbunkers, and building fortifications, bridges, and railways.”5 Moreover, such physical work often led to the contraction of disease, especially with the idea that most of these soldiers had no means of shelter while working. When a black regiment commander claimed, “the fatigue duty of my regiment has been incessant and trying—so that my sick list has increased from 4 or 5 to nearly 200 in a little over a month,” his purpose was to highlight the massive toll brute physical labor took on his troop and to show his desperateness that such conditions could be alleviated to preserve his men.6 Such physical work, a product of racism, inflicted black soldier disease but was not the only means by which discrimination infected the health of black soldiers; in fact, inferior equipment played an integral role from the protection aspect of The War as well.

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4 Krawczynski et al., *Historical Context for the African*, 63.
5 Krawczynski et al., *Historical Context for the African*, 63.
6 Krawczynski et al., *Historical Context for the African*, 64.
An initial perusal of the figures may not reveal exactly why many whites in California may have taken affirmative action programs to task; in spite of a 1.7% increase in those in poverty between 1989 and 1999, the percentage of Californian whites below the poverty line (10.5% circa 1999)\(^1\) laid well bellow many minority groups, such as blacks, who hovered at 22.4.\(^2\) However, whites still composed 50.2% and 43.8% of Californians in poverty in 1989 and 1999 respectively.\(^3\) The issue compounds when one also considers that the number of poor whites (2,059,640)\(^4\) nearly matched the population of blacks (2,098,226)\(^5\) circa 1999 – the fact that the poverty rate of whites followed an upward trend since 1979 (a period in which poverty among blacks consistently decreased) did even less to abate non-minority concerns over their situation. Through the eyes of economically disadvantaged whites, one could see that in spite of their very heavy presence among the poor, they received comparatively little support from both businesses and government.

The statistics continue to add onto this effect; California was accompanied by both a large, poor white community and an abnormally large minority population: comparative to the larger American racial landscape, 82.96% of which was white, California had a staggeringly low 51.88%\(^6\)


\(^3\) U.S. Census Bureau, "CPH-L-165. WHITE PERSONS BY POVERTY," in Census Historical Poverty Tables

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) U.S. Census Bureau, "CPH-L-166. BLACK PERSONS BY POVERTY," in Census Historical Poverty Tables

white composition, just shy of 30% below the national percentage. While abnormal at the time, it was not necessarily unexpected; America had been trending towards a larger minority population since. But again, the contextualization of affirmative action made the statistic infinitely more multifaceted. Most prominently, the increasing minority population, coupled with their increasing break into the middle class, while white conditions declined, made for a tense situation in of itself. Most startling, however, was the unique simulation conditions that such a composition of people provided; in an increasingly diverse environment, the integrity of affirmative action, specifically in 1995, faced tremendous difficulty in holding itself up. Despite best intentions, a sizable portion of California’s population had revolted against the instated quota systems. For an America that was increasingly diversifying, that did not bode well.

The statistics spoke a very clear message; if the model of affirmative action remained, the base would refuse to hold. In assuming that non-white businesses and employees were inherently disadvantaged, much of the context of their situations was stripped away, meaning that the core message of ‘equal opportunity’ began to muddle. Poorer whites would be forced into the same cycle of poverty that other minorities were once condemned to, rather flipping the dynamic, as opposed to leveling it.

https://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/intfile3-1.txt

7 Ibid.
Without science, we would be lost with no knowledge of our surroundings. Unfortunately, the history of science has not always received the treatment it deserves, despite its importance. Although it cannot be denied that it is recorded, science always seems to get ignored when it comes to historical analysis, as it tends to be relegated to encyclopedias and objective chronological summaries, despite the efforts of scientific historians. And yet, all the technology we take for granted, all the information we have on the world and the universe around us, stems from science. It is a shame that such an important part of the past tends to be left out by historians, and it is time to remedy that by giving science its due and providing analysis of scientific progress. To begin this new historical analysis of science, the universe seems a good place to start, as it seems to be slowly crawling its way into public interest. One question that begs to be answered when one examines the history of stellar knowledge is: how did America become so prominent in the field if they started engaging in it so long after Europe did? Astronomy began developing as early as Ancient Times; the Greeks were well known for stargazing. Modern astronomy began in the 1800s; the United States were just starting to turn towards scientific research on their own continent, while Europe already had millennia of experience.

One of the best ways to observe the changes in the scientific field are by observing them through the eyes of the people who lived them. By doing case studies on the lives of astrophysicists in the early twentieth century, it is possible to gain considerable insight into how and why America emerged as a leader, both in technology and discoveries. Through these studies, reasons for this Americanization emerge. An answer for the advent of American dominance in the field despite Europe’s head start can be found in the historical context of emerging research universities and the
more advanced observational technology engendered by these institutions. Due to the more modern nature of American technology, especially observatories, a wave of the greatest European minds were attracted to the studies possible beside the already impressive minds of America itself; the technological prowess combined with the abundance of stellar genius and the continued discoveries of these great scientists propelled the United States to the front of the field of astrophysics.

Despite the clear context of the evolution of astronomy and the emergence of research universities, few historians have attempted to dissect the reasons behind America’s emergence as a superpower in stellar science. Part of this can be attributed to the unintentional relegation of science to encyclopedias, or at least to books chronicling the history with very little bias. Unfortunately, scientific historians have tended to record history in narrative form rather than truly analyzing. Encyclopedias, for example, provide all the information necessary for analysis, but none is provided other short descriptions of the importance of some events. Even specific books chronicling specific scientific histories never go beyond mentioning causation, or at best shallow analysis. Although these types of books are useful for gathering information, they provide little to no analysis of the causations and causalities that historians typically search for. The emergence of research universities and the shift to American dominance themselves are both very well documented. In his book *The History of Astronomy from Herschel to Hertzprung*, Herrmann mentions that “in the second half of the [nineteenth] century, the USA moved into the lead,”1 but dismisses the emergence of new observatories as “pursuit of prestige.”2 No writer ever seems to go beyond this superficial reasoning. It has been nearly two hundred years since the invention of the spectroscope and so some analysis of the time period should be expected. The role of a historian is not just to revel in the stories of the

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2 Herrmann, 182.
past, but also to pick them apart, to analyze them, to find connections no one has made before. And for that reason, as a historian, I feel obligated to look where few have looked before in order to explain this shift in dominance that has never adequately been analyzed.
Striving forever to be synonymous with modern, corporations and their advertising utilized the women’s suffrage movement made prominent by the ratification of the 19th amendment in August of 1920. The struggling patriarchal family system, challenged by the entry of women into the workforce with the boom of women and children employed in factories posed a new question as to the role of women inside the family setting and amongst the American population. Answering directly to Americans’ hesitations on women’s new role in society, advertising in the 1920s defined women’s role for Americans: women were to become the consumers of society. Granting women a starring role in 1920s America and American consumption, corporations gambled on women’s feeling of power at their newly gained profession of consumption. Aiming the majority of their advertisements at women, corporations offered women a way to exercise their awakened power of choice in everyday life. In a 1929 Mazda light bulb commercial, the advertisement portrays its typical consumer as a modern woman, hand-in-wallet, walking in front of a backdrop of skyscrapers. Announcing herself that she “is the purchasing agent of America” and buys “four-fifths of all things that are bought in stores”, the woman and the Mazda ad clearly demarcate women’s power and influence on business as the authority on consumption and define women as the American consumer. Reiterating this same message, Strathmore Papers’ ad advertises its paper as perfect for advertisements as it will attract women. Similarly to Mazda’s commercial, this Strathmore Papers’ advertisement depicts its consumer as the vantage point of a city scene, as a chic woman walking.

2 Saturday Evening Post, May 11, 1929, p.149.
3 Saturday Evening Post, May 11, 1929, p.149.
front-and-center in a street sided by two walls of skyscrapers. Utilizing empowered, modern women and neoteric urban settings, advertisements labored to represent and define modernity. Focusing their advertisements on women, corporations took full advantage of mass magazines and tabloids whose popularity bloomed during the 1920s.

The beginnings of the mass magazine in the early 1900s became the perfect platform for advertisements in the 1920s and brought the impact and influence of advertising to a whole new level. Mass magazines during the 1920s addressed a range of topics from politics and contemporary affairs, to family life and celebrity gossip with a strong, often blunt, style that endeavored to convey a sense of expertise and authority. This aggressive and clearly opinionated style of writing found in mass magazines intermixed with advertisements made it confusing to where the “authenticity” of the magazine stopped and the ads started. Blurring the lines between the actual magazine content and the advertisements themselves, mass magazines and corporations united their two businesses of profit. Cyrus Curtis, the publisher of *Ladies' Journal* and *Saturday Evening Post*, lowered the subscription rate of both of his magazines as most of magazines’ profits where from advertisements. The 1920s’ new race of magazines no longer relied on subscription income like previous magazines had, but rather depended on advertising. In 1918 the gross advertising revenues in magazines was only $58.5 million, however, during the 1920s those figures grew exponentially. In 1920 the gross revenues more than doubled when they reached an astounding $129.5 million and then continued to grow to reach $196.3 million by 1929. This complex, intricate, and interwoven knot between mass entertainment, mass media, and full-throttle advertising defines 1920s advertising. A perfect example of the bond between advertising and mass entertainment, *Saturday

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Evening Post’s July 27th cover featured the “Fisher Body Girl” as an anonymous cover girl. Mass magazines of the 1920s brought Americans the instant entertainment and satisfaction that they yearned for. Paired with each other, mass magazines and advertising became in the 1920s the undefeatable messengers of consumption.

Advertising during the 1920s preyed on the American population’s insecurities, uncertainties, fear of instability and unreliability. In a 1927 ad for sanitary pads, Kotex advertised how “8 in 10 better-class women” have adopted Kotex sanitary napkins. Using the image of a modern woman with her knee length dress hopping out of a car in a busy urban scene, Kotex not only emphasized the charm and magnetism of modernity but also subliminally marked the importance of class in America with its repeated use of “better-class women” in its ad. This conscious reminder of the social class strata illustrates perfectly the camouflaged messages of class-consciousness by advertisements. Messages that shrieked words of false concern for its consumers, warning them about the pain and shame of not being conscious of one’s and other’s position in the American class system and the material and physical denotations that identify what class one belongs to. Using the slogan “she looks old enough to be his mother”, Lysol addressed the reason for the consumption of their product, the judgment of others. Similarly, one of Listerine’s ads depicts a man hunched, head hanging, ashamed, while fingers point accusingly at him. Listerine’s campaign in this ad starts by asserting that “it [dandruff] offends all, this disgusting and common condition” and “it affects your chances in love, society and business.” Listerine uses blunt and harsh words like “offends” and “disgusting” on top of the judgmental finger pointing to increase, even more, its consumers’ feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness. In a similar advertisement boasting the power of

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9 Saturday Evening Post, July 27, 1929, first cover. c. 1929, the Curtis Company.
10 Ladies’ Home Journal, Nov. 1927, p.79. FIGURE 1
11 Ladies’ Home Journal, Nov. 1927, p.79. FIGURE 1
12 Ladies’ Home Journal, May 1928, p.77
Listerine for combating halitosis, Listerine confided to its audience that “no matter how charming you may be or how fond of you your friends are, you cannot expect them to put up with halitosis (unpleasant breath) forever” and goes on to say “don’t fool yourself that you never have halitosis as do so many self-assured people who constantly offend in this way.”\textsuperscript{15} Using one of their popular slogans, “Halitosis makes you unpopular”, Listerine continues to pressure their audience with outside judgment, tapping into consumer’s fear of being criticized unknowingly by those closest to them and perfect strangers.\textsuperscript{16} Listerine again uses biting phrases and cutting words to amplify reader’s unsteady confidence and wavering self-assurance. Preying on insecurities, corporations took into account the American population’s fear of being dispensable. During the 1920s, the mechanization of work which often valued an individual’s ability to keep up a routine rather than creativity or prowess created a general feeling in the American population that they could be replaced at any time.\textsuperscript{17} This fear of being replaced paired with the fact that a lot of jobs did not require a previous skillset, made Americans turn to image to distinguish themselves in the competition for employment. Many of the few ads that targeted men during the 1920s made men question why a company would hire him rather than another person if he had either hygienic or fashion issues. Advertisements of the 1920s demonstrated the increasing number of messages on the importance of image along with the need for self-consciousness to protect oneself from the shame and humiliation of an imperfect consumerist appearance.

\textsuperscript{15} 1928 Listerine Ad, “Halitosis Makes You Unpopular” FIGURE 2 AND 3
\textsuperscript{16} 1928 Listerine Ad, “Halitosis Makes You Unpopular” FIGURE 2 AND 3
The Safe Solution of Women's Greatest Hygienic Problem
Which 8 in 10 Better-Class Women Have Adopted

Positive Protection Under ALL Conditions and An End Forever to the Embarrassing Difficulties of Disposal, This NEW Way

By ELLEN J. BUCKLAND, Registered Nurse

WYTTRE this way the hazards and uncertainties of the old-time methods are avoided.
You wear clean frocks and gayest gowns without a woman's fear or doubt. You go about with heart easy, knowing that the health and comfort of your family are not endangered. This means a Kotex. Thence went it. Nurses speak it. Women need it. It is the scientific solution of their greatest hygienic problem. In use it will make a great difference in your life.

The difference between Kotex and ordinary pads
Kotex is the only sanitary and filled with absorbent material, the extraordinary hospital absorbent recently discovered. Thus Kotex provides the amazing absorptions of 16 times its own weight in moisture! It is 5 times as absorbent as ordinary cotton.

Kotex is a scientifically developed product; the creation of a world-renowned maker of hospital absorbents, completely, thoroughly laundered.

Kotex is scientifically designed for safety in use. That means a special quality gauze. It means paper gauze covering and strong gauze attachment ends, to eliminate absolutely all chance of leakage.

Thus, from personal experience and from what other women have told them, FPR (Franklin Protection Research) and Kotex have discarded ordinary ways for Kotex. Once a woman tries Kotex, she rarely again allows the hazards of less scientific ways.

Only Kotex is "like" Kotex
Look for the name "Kotex" on the box of any sanitary pad you are about to buy. If that name isn't there, you are not buying genuine Kotex. No other product is "like" Kotex. No product not plainly marked "Kotex" is Kotex. A single Kotex at any drug store at any time is a Kotex. A single Kotex at any drug store at any time is a Kotex.

"Ask for them by name"
Kotex Protects—Discourages.
No laundry—discards as easily as a piece of name.

FIGURE 1
Halitosis makes you unpopular

FIGURE 2

Halitosis makes you unpopular

FIGURE 3