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IN THIS ISSUE



Modernity is a difficult concept, and one that can be defined in a host of ways. Still, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, much of American life had an air of change and modernity about it. Many trends made this the case, including new technologies, widespread reform efforts, the increasing presence of women in public life, and a growing emphasis on leisure, spending, and individual fulfillment. This issue of *Utah Historical Quarterly* examines, in part, the place of individuals in the “modern” world of the twentieth century.

William Glasmann was an exceptional person and yet clearly a part of his time and place. Like other striving men in the American West, he devoted himself to boosting, reforming, and politicking in his chosen city—Ogden, Utah. In various phases of his life, Glasmann speculated in land development near the Great Salt Lake, edited a newspaper with obvious party affiliations, asso-

COVER: *Bebe Daniels, the film star, photographed in Utah in 1928.* UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
IN THIS ISSUE (ABOVE): *Automobiles at the Saltair resort, circa 1912. Technological advancement, mass commercial amusement, and the visibility of women contributed to the modernity of the early twentieth century. That modern feel was surely a part of life in Utah, as these photographs demonstrate.* UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

(ABOVE RIGHT): *Local youth who participated in a bathing suit fashion show at the Pantages vaudeville theater. Salt Lake City, June 17, 1918.* UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

ciated with national political figures, and governed Ogden in a manner his (friendly) contemporaries would have described as “clean” and “businesslike.” He was a good example of the kind of person who created change and influenced public life around the turn of the century, and his story ties Utah to politics, progressivism, and municipal governance throughout the nation.

Near the end of Glasmann’s life, Jeanette Young Easton wrote a gossip column for the *Deseret News* entitled “Salt Lakers in Gotham.” Two of our articles deal with the lives



of Salt Lakers who excelled in Gotham, a place that epitomized the trendsetting, fast-paced world of twentieth-century America. Isaac Russell—a grandson of Parley P. Pratt—established himself as a New York City journalist, writing for the *New York Times* and other publications. As with Glasmann, Russell was part of that nebulous movement historians call progressivism, and he was connected to a number of signal people and events of his era: the Wright brothers, Theodore Roosevelt, Guglielmo Marconi, and, as we learn, the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Wallace Thurman was several years younger than Isaac Russell and from a very different segment of Utah society than that “Mormon muckraker.” Born and educated in Salt Lake City, Thurman went on to a fantastic career in New York City and moved in the central circles of the Harlem Renaissance. He championed experimental literary efforts such as the short-lived *Fire!!* and wrote novels, plays, and screenplays that examined, among other things, intra-racial tensions. Our third article substantiates Thurman’s connections to Utah and explores the life and contributions of this brilliant writer. Considered together, these accounts of Thurman, Russell, and Glasmann contribute to an understanding of how twentieth-century America evolved.

The final article completes a story of “murder and mapping” that began in the summer issue. The action takes place in southeastern Utah in the 1880s, when a rash of violent incidents impelled the military to consider the creation of a military cantonment near Monticello. That violence occurred, in part, because of agricultural and livestock operations in the region and a dwindling Native land base—developments that could easily be considered indicators of modernity.



William Glasmann: Ogden's Progressive Newspaperman and Politician

BY MICHAEL S. ELDREDGE

On Friday, July 10, 1891, liberals from all over the Territory of Utah gathered at the Reed Hotel and the Opera House in Ogden to launch a two-day convention that culminated with the organization of the official Utah Republican Party.¹ Fred J. Kiesel, the first non-Mormon to ascend to the office of Ogden's mayor on the Liberal Party ticket—thus confirming Ogden as the first “Americanized” city in Utah—was just completing his term.² The Mormon editor of the *Ogden Standard*, Frank J. Cannon, organized the convention and served as its chairman. Cannon later recalled that he, his good friend Ben E. Rich, and another friend, Joseph Belknap, were the only Mormons who joined the party. “Outside of us three, I did not know of another Mormon Republican in the whole territory,” he later wrote.³ Additional Mormons came later, including Apostle John Henry Smith and President Joseph F. Smith. Mormons were at first reluctant, however, to join the political party that had been responsible for so much relentless persecution

William Glasmann, at work in the Ogden Standard office.

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¹ “Republicans!” *Ogden Standard*, July 11, 1891.

² Richard C. Roberts and Richard W. Sadler, *A History of Weber County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society and Weber County Commission, 1997), 139.

³ Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft* (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1911), 117.

and suffering in the territory for the previous forty years.

As the 1890s wore on, the Republican Party in Utah attracted more members, both Mormon and non-Mormon, but the result was a fractured party. Ogden had become a liberal city because of the railroad and the accompanying influx of non-Mormons. The two principal factions included the liberal non-Mormon Republicans of northern Utah and more conservative Mormon Republicans. Some of these had migrated from the Democratic Party in Salt Lake and Utah counties; the Democratic Party had a strong loyal following among Mormons, stretching back to the time of Stephen A. Douglas in Nauvoo.

For the next twenty years, various subgroups would materialize and dissolve in the party, including the silver Republicans in the 1896 election, Republicans competing between the Salt Lake County and Weber County factions over state party nominations, and the “Federal bunch,” which Senator Reed Smoot dominated through patronage jobs. The conflicts mostly ended in 1912 with the desertion of the progressive Republicans to the “Bull Moose” Party, leaving the more conservative Republicans under Smoot to win Utah for Taft.

William “Bill” Glasmann first appeared in Ogden in January 1893 with his appointment as the general manager of the Standard Corporation. His story and his perspective as a non-Mormon, progressive Republican is valuable because it allows us to contrast the struggles of a progressive politician against the more conservative majority Republicans of his era. He fought with them and formed alliances with them. At first, he was an ally of Frank Cannon during their time together at the *Standard*. They became bitter enemies, however, after the 1896 election, again evidencing the factions within the Republican Party.

Many schools of thought exist about progressivism in the early twentieth century, and defining a “progressive” is especially problematic for historians; further, progressivism of this era should not be confused with the liberal agenda of the twenty-first century. Likewise, Glasmann’s individual brand of progressivism was complicated. He did not embrace the radical reforms of Upton Sinclair or Lincoln Steffens. He was a non-Mormon who lived in a city populated with many other non-Mormons. Yet he got along well with Latter-day Saints; he had to. Glasmann was a classic booster-speculator-newspaperman who championed the city of Ogden and who did everything in his power to improve the city, stamp out corruption, and, through his newspaper, fight misinformation. He had subscribed to a liberal faction of the Republican Party since long before he came to Utah. He supported the free silver movement and threw himself behind William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 presidential election, but was absolutely enamored with Theodore Roosevelt. In spite of his progressive attitude toward Ogden City, Glasmann was a fiscal conservative who balanced the budget in each of his three terms as mayor. He might not have been considered progressive by the standards of Colorado or Washington, but he comfortably fit the

description of a progressive within conservative Utah society.

When William Glasmann arrived in Salt Lake City in the fall of 1885 with his infant daughter Ethel, he began life anew after leaving two businesses and a failed marriage.⁴ Within scarcely two years, he joined in the real estate business with one of the city's most notable citizens, the recently retired, popular postmaster of Salt Lake City.

John Lynch and his wife Bella had arrived in Salt Lake City from Colorado sometime in 1873 after the demonetization of silver closed many western silver mines by causing a dramatic rise in the silver to gold price ratio.⁵ Lynch came to Salt Lake City in hopes of riding out the depression that began in 1873 and lasted until 1879. He went to work in 1876 as a postal delivery clerk, and then on November 16, 1877, President Rutherford B. Hayes nominated him to become postmaster of Salt Lake City. President Chester A. Arthur renominated him in December 1881, but in 1885 Democrat W. C. Browne replaced Lynch as a result of Grover Cleveland's first Democratic administration taking control of civil service patronage. By April 1, 1886, Lynch had turned over the Salt Lake City post office to Browne, and at fifty-six years of age "retired to private life with the well wishes of many friends."⁶

By 1887, Glasmann had befriended Lynch and convinced him to form a real estate partnership. They moved into 221 South Main Street, next door to the post office that Lynch once oversaw, and began a land office business. Lynch and Glasmann stumbled onto the wave of the Utah real estate bubble that took place between 1889 through the end of 1890, during which many Utahns prospered but many more lost everything.

Beginning in 1889, with the real estate boom in full swing, Lynch and Glasmann began acquiring parcels of property, variously known as Clinton Beach properties, located in Lake Point on the southern shore of the Great Salt Lake near the Tooele–Salt Lake County line. For years, Jeter Clinton had promoted the area as a resort site, and he had also built a large home in Lake Point that bore the name Clinton Hotel. The idea never took, presumably because the property lacked shade trees. As Jeter approached age eighty, he agreed to sell the property to Bella Clinton Lynch and her husband's real estate company.⁷

⁴ William Glasmann had migrated to Miles City, Montana, in 1878, and with Ben R. Roberts established the Cheyenne Saddle Shop in Helena in 1880. He married Elizabeth Gamer in 1882 and suddenly liquidated his interest in the prosperous saddle shop early in 1883 and moved to Fort Benton, Montana. In June 1883 he bought the Rosenkranz Harness Shop there and operated it for two years. In 1885, Elizabeth gave birth to Ethel, and that fall, William and Ethel moved on to Utah, leaving Elizabeth behind. See Michael Leeson, *History of Montana, 1739–1885* (Chicago: Warner, Beers and Co., 1885), 1013.

⁵ Milton Friedman, "The Crime of 1873," *Journal of Political Economy* 98, no. 6 (1990): 1159–94.

⁶ "Salt Lake Postoffice," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 1, 1886.

⁷ Bella Clinton Lynch was Jeter Clinton's estranged daughter. The estrangement occurred in Nauvoo in 1846 when Lynch's mother, Betsy Dale, left Clinton because he took a second wife, Melissa Snow. See Tooele County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *History of Tooele County* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1961), 148–52.



On March 10, 1890, an advertisement appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* for platted property known as Garfield City, with William Glasmann listed as the general agent.⁸ The advertisement emphasized three reasons why Garfield City boasted the only site on the Great Salt Lake capable of development: the property was high and dry; Glasmann promised fast-growing trees, shrubbery, and vegetation; and plenty of pure water existed for irrigation and culinary purposes. The advertisement further promised that five thousand trees would be planted in 1890 and, curiously, made a reference to buffalo.

When Lynch and Glasmann began acquiring the Clinton property in Lake Point in 1889, Glassman had a quixotic idea inspired by a trip to Texas to visit friends. While in Texas, he met Charles Jesse “Buffalo” Jones of Kansas, who owned private herds of bison in Texas, Kansas, and Manitoba.⁹ With expenses mounting, Jones decided to sell parts of his herd. Impulsively, Glasmann put a payment down on some bison and told Jones he planned to hire him to manage the Utah Buffalo and Zoological Gardens. He had become enamored with the idea of having a bison herd as an attraction in Garfield City. The plan fit the tenor of the times; at the height of the real estate boom, developers often cooked up hairbrained

Buffalo Park, where Glasmann pursued a real estate venture. Glasmann sold his herd to a Davis County rancher who transported the animals to Antelope Island on platforms.

⁸ “Garfield City on Great Salt Lake!” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 10, 1890.

⁹ Hal Schindler, “Antelope Island Is Bison Home On Range,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 14, 1993, http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt_lake_tribune/in_another_time/111493.html.

schemes to make their properties appear more attractive to potential buyers.¹⁰

In October 1889, the first handful of half-starved bison shipped from Manitoba arrived in Lake Point. Glasmann, who by now lived in the Clinton house in Lake Point, carefully nursed his animals to health, and by March 1890, his herd swelled to seventeen. Glasmann enjoyed all the elements of a first-rate real estate development. He figured that all he needed was the promised infrastructure and the lots would sell themselves. Eagerly, he threw himself into the task at hand and worked tirelessly on the project for the next two years.

Sometime during 1889–1890, William began courting a twenty-one-year-old widow, Evelyn Ellis Jenkins, who was born on October 23, 1868, in Piedmont, Wyoming.¹¹ On June 11, 1890, Glasmann married Jenkins and moved her into the Clinton House in Lake Point. The next year, on May 9, 1891, Evelyn gave birth to their first son, Roscoe.¹²

That same month, Glasmann officially incorporated the Buffalo Park Land Company. That incorporation basically reflected the partnership between John and Bella Clinton Lynch and William and Evelyn Glasmann.¹³ However, the Utah real estate bubble burst in December 1890 when news of the failure of the London banking firm Baring Brothers rippled through Utah. Overnight, property values dropped, resulting in lower profits, overextended credit, and tight money.¹⁴ Property that had sold for ten times the pre-1889 price now went for just a fraction of the former price; but Lynch and Glasmann exuded confidence that real estate in Utah still was a good investment. By the end of the year, the lots remained unsold, but the expenses kept mounting. Lynch and Glasmann desperately tried to liquidate their inventory of lots.

By the summer of 1892, the Lynches left, cutting their losses and moving on. Jeter Clinton had died on May 10, 1892, and by July 26, 1892, Evelyn had replaced John Lynch as secretary and treasurer of the Buffalo Park

¹⁰ "The Antelope Island Herd," *Macon (GA) Telegraph*, January 15, 1897.

¹¹ A small railroad hamlet founded just before the Union Pacific passed through southwest Wyoming, Piedmont sat on the Union Pacific route that led to the historic meeting with the Central Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah. Joseph Ellis, his wife Carrie, and their two daughters Addie and Evelyn left Piedmont when the railroad was completed and relocated to Salt Lake City, where Joseph hired on as a painter for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. For years, the family resided at 16 Willard Court, near 500 West and 600 South, in the heart of the LDS Sixth Ward in Salt Lake City. See "Long Illness is Fatal to Mrs. Glazebrook," *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, February 25, 1955. See also *Salt Lake City Directory* (San Francisco: Kelly and Co., 1889), 67.

¹² William Glasmann named all of his sons after prominent Republicans whom he admired. Roscoe Conklin Glasmann (1891–1964) was named for Roscoe Conkling; Abraham Lincoln Glasmann (1893–1970) for the sixteenth president; Robert Ingersol Glasmann (1895–1897) for an Illinois attorney general and prominent Republican orator; William Wiese Glasmann (1897–1964) for a friend and fellow Republican who campaigned with him in Iowa in the fall of 1896; and Blaine V. Glasmann (1900–1972) for Senator James G. Blaine, who, among other things, was popular in the West because of his efforts to lower the tariff. Family tradition related to author by Myrene Glasmann Temple.

¹³ "Buffalo Park," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 23, 1891.

¹⁴ Ronald W. Walker, "The Panic of 1893," *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 413–14.

Land Company. The Glasmanns also executed notes totaling \$7,500 secured by Buffalo Park Land Company property to keep the operation afloat. But by year's end, Garfield City looked finished.¹⁵

Politically, both Lynch and Glasmann had joined with the Republicans before they came to Utah, and when the Republican Party officially organized in Utah in 1891, they found a home. Glasmann's friends in the Republican Party included, among others, Frank J. Cannon, the thirty-two-year-old editor of the *Standard*.¹⁶ Sometime after both Glasman and Cannon had attended the first Republican Convention on September 15, 1892, Glasmann paid a visit to Ogden.¹⁷

Cannon, one of the few liberal Republican Mormons in Utah, had befriended many non-Mormons as a result of his key role in organizing the Republican Club in Utah in 1891. Cannon was particularly adamant in his support of free silver. Throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century, Americans bickered about the place of gold and silver in the national economy. By the mid-1870s, two factors combined to make silver the cheaper metal for the payment of debts: first, the discovery of large western silver deposits; second, the government had an official exchange rate of sixteen ounces of silver to one ounce of gold until silver was demonetized in 1873 because the glut of silver mined in the West created an inflationary effect on the silver market. Accordingly, many people in the West and in agricultural regions favored bimetallism, especially after the Depression of 1893. In contrast, those who favored a gold standard alone came from the commercial and industrial regions of the Northeast and Midwest. For their part, the political parties took various positions regarding the money question, which gave rise to the silver Republicans, a group composed largely of western Republicans supporting Democrat William Jennings Bryan. Cannon bucked the national Republican Party, which flip-flopped on the issue through the early 1890s; he was a staunch silver Republican who eventually went over to the Democratic Party in 1900. He also dreamed of elected office, and, after failing to win election to Congress in 1892, he mounted another campaign effort in 1894.

While Glasmann's troubles with Garfield City and the Buffalo Park Land Company were occupying his mind, Cannon and other members of the *Standard's* board of directors approached him about the possibility of taking over as business manager of the newspaper. Cannon wanted to remain as managing editor, but the change promised Cannon time to pursue his political ambitions. Glasmann thought it over and decided to abandon the sinking ship in Garfield City.

On January 9, 1893, William Glasmann became one of nine directors, as well as the corporate treasurer, of the Standard Publishing Company.

¹⁵ "Buffalo Park Suit," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 19, 1895.

¹⁶ "Utah Republicanism Defined," *Ogden Standard*, October 26, 1898.

¹⁷ "G. O. P.," *Ogden Standard*, September 15, 1892.



The Ogden Standard office, in a photograph taken sometime after 1910. The newspaper's office was on the northwest corner of Hudson (now Kiesel) Avenue and 24th Street, in Ogden.

Cannon resigned as business manager and turned over those duties to Glasmann.¹⁸ On February 10, 1893, Glasmann sold his seventeen bison to John E. Dooley, who loaded them up and sent them to Antelope Island.¹⁹

When Glasmann joined the *Standard*, it was losing approximately \$1,000 every month. Cannon had failed to run a tight ship, and Glasmann set about to stop the hemorrhaging. Within three weeks he called a meeting of all employees along with the board of directors and proposed a 20 percent cut in pay across the board. The editorial and business departments accepted the reduction in wages, but the Ogden Typographical Union, which refused to attend the meeting, rejected the offer.²⁰ Throughout a series of letters exchanged between Glasmann and the union, Glasmann held firm and threatened to shut the newspaper down. The union promised to organize a boycott if the *Standard* hired nonunion men, which could have caused the paper to fail, but Glasmann rejected the union's threat.

Frank Cannon closed a February 19 editorial with a challenge to Ogdenites to voice their opinions on whether or not the union workers deserved better wages than "a banker or business man" and stated that if the newspaper acceded to the demands of the union, it would mean doubling the retail price of the paper.²¹

The next day, overwhelming support for the management of the *Standard* poured in, instantly making Glasmann a hero. People liked his

¹⁸ "The Standard Officers Elected," *Ogden Standard*, January 10, 1893. For an explanation of the newspaper's hierarchy, see "The Managing Editor," *Ogden Standard*, August 22, 1906.

¹⁹ Over a century later, the herd numbers between 550 and 700 individual bison, making it one of the largest publicly held American bison herds in the world. See "Wildlife on Antelope Island," accessed July 1, 2012, http://www.utah.com/stateparks/antelope_island_wildlife.htm.

²⁰ "Why the Standard Closed," *Ogden Standard*, February 19, 1893.

²¹ *Ibid.*

no-nonsense approach and the biting sarcasm he used to stand up to the union. Glasmann's new-found prestige served him well. In an editorial on February 23, Cannon announced that the newspaper would remain open with nonunion workers but that he hoped the union workers would stay at their jobs at the same wage he promised the nonunion employees.²²

While the *Standard* fought with the union, however, elsewhere in America warnings of trouble loomed on the horizon. On February 23, 1893, the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad filed for bankruptcy, sparking a "pyrotechnic contraction" in the stock market. Investors learned that the company had amassed \$125 million in debt, upsetting an already fragile market. Ten days later, on March 4, 1893, Grover Cleveland succeeded Benjamin Harrison for his second term as president, but Cleveland's administration was handicapped from the outset. Just over two months later, America plunged deep into the depression of 1893.²³

Before it ran its course, the depression caused the bankruptcies of the Northern Pacific Railway, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad; 15,242 businesses and more than five thousand banks failed; and unemployment ran as high as 18.4 percent in 1894. People abandoned their homes and moved west to metropolitan areas, boosting the populations of railway towns such as Ogden, Salt Lake City, Denver, and San Francisco.²⁴

In Utah, several leading men went bankrupt, prompting one prominent Utahn to lament:

I have never witnessed a greater stagnation in business enterprises than has manifested itself during the last month. Money is not to be had, confidence seems to have disappeared, and credit is denied by nearly all tradesmen. Public works are stopped, and thousands of men are out of employment.²⁵

Most observers agreed that the depression meant doom for the newspaper, in spite of cutting labor costs and management salaries. The *Standard* soon found itself on the fringes of the whirlpool that sucked thousands of companies into failure. Glasmann struggled to find a way to keep the newspaper open, but it looked hopeless.

On November 26, 1893, Cannon resigned as editor. In a letter to the subscribers of the *Standard*, Cannon explained "The reasons for this action are many, but none of them implies any lack of hope in THE STANDARD'S future." Politics prompted the decision. When he left, Cannon parted on cordial terms with Glasmann and threw himself into his

²² "The Standard is Continued," *Ogden Standard*, February 21, 1893.

²³ See Douglas Steeples and David O. Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998). Rendigs Fels coined the term "pyrotechnical contraction" in *American Business Cycles, 1865-1897* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), cited in Steeples and Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation*, 32.

²⁴ Walker, "Panic of 1893," 413; Steeples and Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation*, 88.

²⁵ Walker, "Panic of 1893," 413-14.

run for Congress with Glasmann's support.²⁶ He won the congressional seat in 1894, and the Utah State Legislature appointed him to the U.S. Senate in 1896.

Glasmann assumed the added duties of editor-in-chief, although his name remained absent from the masthead as editor for nearly a full year.²⁷ Immediately, his acerbic style began to appear in editorials, especially when he talked of gold advocates, Democrats, and his political enemies, whom he boldly took to task.

On January 25, 1894, Glasmann announced that effective February 1, the circulation of the *Standard* was owned by H. T. Brown and Company in what essentially amounted to a factoring arrangement.²⁸ The move freed up cash flow, which during the depression proved critical for survival.

On the same day Glasmann's name appeared on the masthead as editor, buried on page five of the *Standard*, a small announcement appeared, calling for a special meeting of shareholders of the Standard Publishing Company on December 11 to amend the articles of incorporation. Glasmann most likely obtained support from the majority interests of the common stock in the Standard Publishing Company and moved to reduce the number of directors from nine to three prior to the meeting. With an assessment of \$0.25 a share approved on November 14, Glasmann undoubtedly believed that no one desired to pump more money into a perceived sinking ship. In the end, Glasmann laid the groundwork to solidifying his control by amending the number of directors from nine to three at the special meetings of shareholders and directors on December 11, 1894. At the regular meeting of shareholders held on January 14, 1895, Glasmann was elected as a director and in the meeting of the directors held directly after he was elected president of the company.²⁹

As Utah and the rest of the nation climbed out of the depression, the Bimetallic Union—which called for the use of both gold and silver in the national monetary standard—organized in Salt Lake City on May 17, 1895.³⁰ At the convention, Glasmann met and befriended Frank Francis, forging a relationship that lasted a lifetime. Francis had just finished a lackluster term in the Nevada State Assembly after promising much reform but accomplishing little.³¹ Francis wanted a new start, and Glasmann accommodated him by making him managing editor. Both men shared a

²⁶ "Republicanism Defined."

²⁷ Glasmann finally claimed the title of editor and business manager on the second-page masthead of the *Standard* on November 20, 1894.

²⁸ "The Standard Sells Its Circulation," *Ogden Standard*, January 25, 1894.

²⁹ "The Standard Publishing Company," *Ogden Standard*, November, 1894. See also "Stockholder's Meeting," *Ogden Standard*, January 7, 1895.

³⁰ "The Bimetallic Union," *Ogden Standard*, May 17, 1895.

³¹ Frank Francis served in the Nevada State Legislature from November 1895 to November 1897 as a member of the Silver Party from Humboldt County. See Nevada Journal of the Assembly, 17th sess., January 31, 1895, 40. See also "Frank Francis Succumbs After 18-Day Illness," *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, December 27, 1945.

passion for free silver that transcended party allegiance, especially in the West. Bimetallism drew the interest of the majority of westerners into an issue-driven campaign that argued for free silver as a second monetized currency, if for no other reason than the poor condition of the economy. Silverites argued that the linkage between the fixed ratio of silver to gold at sixteen-to-one made sense and maintained the emotional argument that the western states needed a fixed price of monetized silver to help pull them out of the depression.³² Glasmann's rationale for supporting the silverites went much deeper. He focused on the global implications of abandoning silver and of interference from European banking interests, most notably the Rothschild cartel. Glasmann felt that if the United States adopted a bimetallic currency standard, the rest of the world would follow.

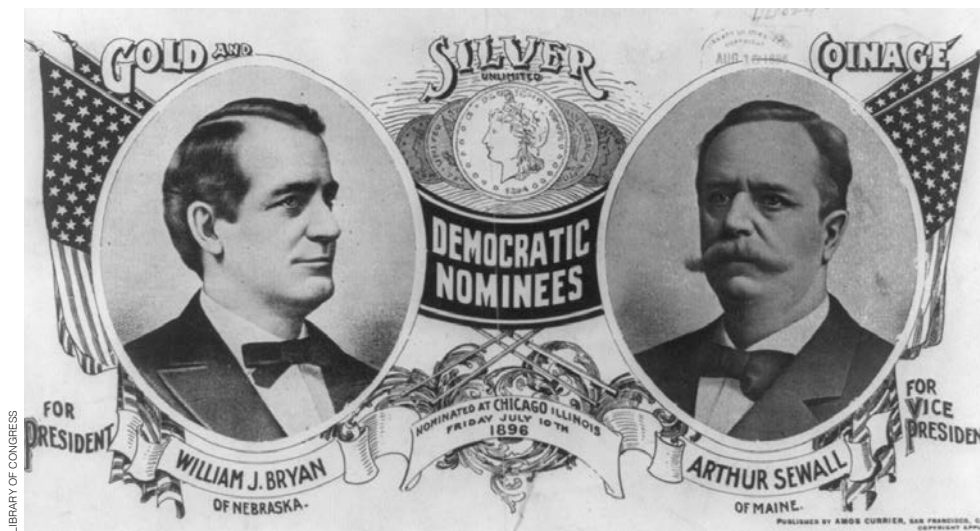
The term "silver Republicans" gained widespread use after the election of Democrat Grover Cleveland in 1892. It grew partially out of the mistrust of the northeastern establishment that many felt controlled Congress, no matter if they belonged to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. The western Republicans called themselves silver Republicans to distinguish themselves from the easterners who wanted to preserve the gold standard, referred to by the pejorative title "gold bugs."

At the Democratic Convention of 1896, William Jennings Bryan won the nomination for president, largely on account of his "Cross of Gold" speech, which sharply defined the currency issue vis-à-vis the Republican candidate, William McKinley. Glasmann supported the Bryan campaign wholeheartedly, with every bit of the gusto with which he had backed Republicans in years past. During this campaign, however, he had more time to spend, owing to the addition of Frank Francis as managing editor. While Glasmann hit the campaign trail stumping for Bryan, Francis busied himself whipping the *Standard* into a first-rate newspaper. On July 1, 1896, the masthead began referring to membership in the United Press. The paper also boasted the moniker "The Pioneer Silver Paper of Utah," which it proudly used for almost three years.³³ Meanwhile, Glasmann had offered his oratory skill to Bryan's campaign and went to work for Bryan where he needed him most. The campaign sent him to Nebraska, where McKinley and Bryan were facing off in a head-to-head battle.

Glasmann stumped for Bryan seventy-two times throughout Nebraska and Iowa in five weeks. Touting his Republican background, but believing passionately in the silver question, he appealed to the rural Nebraska farmer; he argued that one could be a loyal Republican and still vote for Bryan. Silver was the issue, and Bryan was the man. On one campaign swing through northeastern Dakota County in Nebraska, across the Missouri River from the McKinley stronghold of Iowa, Glasmann earned a

³² Friedman, "Crime of 1873," 1172.

³³ On May 11, 1899, the *Standard* quietly removed this title from its masthead, thus following the *Salt Lake Tribune* in abandoning the silver cause.



glowing compliment:

Mr. Glasmann has made a host of converts in this county. Everywhere he was greeted with very large [audiences] and in most instances people were turned away. He thoroughly understands the silver question. He is convincing, eloquent and the sledge hammer blows he deals out leave no room for doubt.³⁴

The 1896 Democratic presidential ticket, headed by William Jennings Bryan. Although Glasmann supported Bryan, he still considered himself a Republican.

In the end, Bryan lost Omaha but carried Nebraska and its eight electoral votes, thanks in no small part to Glasmann, who left the state with a large following. Glasmann possessed a natural talent for politics, and his oratory prowess would prove useful in years to come. The night before the election, Glasmann returned to his boyhood home of Davenport, Iowa, his reputation of arguing for silver well known. A huge crowd welcomed him to the city.

In spite of Glasmann's efforts, Scott County went Republican for McKinley, but that did not dampen the citizens' enthusiasm for their newly found favorite son. He hated to leave the adulation of Davenport, but nevertheless returned home to Utah, having won the battle but lost the war. Glasmann and his fellow Utah silver Republicans now had to face many angry McKinley Republicans, who on November 3 had enjoyed a victory in which McKinley defeated Bryan by a margin of 51 percent to 46 percent. Even though Bryan carried Utah by a whopping 83 percent to 17 percent (64,607 to 13,491), many leaders in the "Pie-eating contingent" of McKinley Republicans carried a grudge.³⁵ The Utah Republican Party had just entered its sixth year, and a good portion of the Bryan victory in

³⁴ "Glasmann a Vote Getter," *Omaha World-Herald*, October 17, 1896.

³⁵ "Big Meeting Assured," *Ogden Standard*, September 3, 1896.

Utah came from old Mormon Democrats who owed natural allegiance to the conservative Democratic Party going back to the days of Stephen A. Douglas.³⁶ However, Glasmann always considered himself a Republican, even though he supported Bryan because of the silver issue.

The 1900 election saw Bryan go down in defeat again to McKinley, who had a new running mate, Theodore Roosevelt. Utah went to McKinley in 1900 by a narrow margin (47,139 to 45,006). The leaders of the Utah Republican Party acknowledged that they needed Glasmann's help to win with the liberal Republicans of Weber County, and he gave it freely, not because of what he stood to gain, but because he had already announced his reasons for abandoning silver. But why did Glasmann abandon William Jennings Bryan? Again, Glasmann answered with his global analysis of silver, and concluded:

As the silver question was the only reason why I supported Bryan, it will readily be seen that no sensible man that has studied the money question can this year support Bryan on the silver issue, and that is the only issue before the people this year, although Bryan and the Democracy are trying to keep silver in the back ground, well knowing that if the question is fully discussed this year their defeat will become greater than in 1896.³⁷

The 1900 election was important for Glasmann, but not to the point that he abandoned his liberal attitudes. On the eve of the election, Glasmann—who ran as a candidate for the Utah State Legislature—published an article in the *Standard* championing the progressive strategy of initiative.³⁸ The measure allowed citizens to initiate legislation on their own by following a certain procedure passed with Glasmann's endorsement. This stance, however, proved immaterial to his chances of winning in his district in northern Utah. Still, with unsuccessful bids to become a representative at the state and federal levels behind him, Glasmann finally won election to the Utah State Legislature by a convincing margin. His subsequent election as Speaker of the House followed this victory. As Speaker, Glasmann led Utah Republicans in the House in an agenda that featured even more liberal ideals.

When he assumed the duties as speaker, Glasmann exercised parliamentary control of the house to the best of his ability. He also introduced several bills, many that died in committee or that other lawmakers rejected outright, presumably because of his liberal stance. They included bills to make voting easier, prevent the removal of voters from voting lists, and establish irrigation districts and dams. Glasmann's most important accomplishment was likely a bill that passed, closing tax loopholes for

³⁶ Cannon and O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, 117–18.

³⁷ "Why Glasmann Left Bryan," *Ogden Standard*, November 5, 1900. Glasmann argued that if the United States adopted a bimetallic system, India and Great Britain would follow suit.

³⁸ "Direct Legislation!" *Ogden Standard*, October 31, 1900. Sherman S. Smith, an Ogdenite and the only Populist in the Third Legislature, sponsored the measure. Though the constitutional amendment passed in the general election, Utah conservatives prevented enabling legislation for sixteen years.

corporations and banks.³⁹

At the end of the session his fellow legislators surprised Glasmann with the presentation of a gavel, accompanied by a heartfelt speech by Democrat Rulon S. Wells:

So honorable was the speaker's course that not a particle of partisan feeling was aroused and perfect harmony prevailed during the sixty days of legislative work. Never in the history of the state legislatures had a presiding officer such a clean record of rulings reversed. His conduct in the chair was of that high dignity and honor which knew no discourtesy and no pettiness, and which had won for him the highest esteem of every member of the body.⁴⁰

Surprised, Glasmann paused, for once at a complete loss for words. In his characteristic nature, he expressed his appreciation to the House members, and credited them for making his job easy. Taking the gavel, he looked at the engraving and read, "Presented to Hon. William Glasmann, Speaker of the House of Representatives, by Members and Officers of the Fourth Legislature, State of Utah."⁴¹

Meanwhile, back in Ogden, for years Glasmann had waged a war of words against private interests trying to buy the city waterworks out of receivership. On June 14, it came to a head when Glasmann proposed a public debate on the issue at the Opera House. In 1900 a group of wealthy Ogdenites made a bid to buy the financially troubled waterworks. This elite group of private citizens included Hiram H. Spencer, Judge Thomas D. Dee, David Eccles, and E. M. Allison. The men admitted in court that they did not intend to sell the waterworks back to the city for what they paid, and further, they planned to use taxpayer money to pay for it through a bond offering.⁴² The bid from Ogden City totaled \$350,000, and the private group offered \$400,000. Glasmann objected to the bid with righteous indignation, calling it a ploy to reap profits from the backs of Ogden citizens. He fought the group editorially at every turn, but on September 24, ownership of the utility transferred to Dee and his associates. The receiver turned over the system "upon property certificates of bonds as under the contract."⁴³ Dee had previously threatened a boycott of the *Standard*, but Glasmann, in his pugilistic style, replied, "Lay on Macduff, and damned be him that first cries hold, enough."⁴⁴

In the midst of the waterworks controversy, Americans learned on September 6, 1901, that anarchist Leon Czolgosz had shot President William McKinley while the president was attending the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Two weeks later, as McKinley's condition worsened, the *Standard* recounted stoically:

³⁹ "Utah Legislature," *Ogden Standard*, March 14, 1901.

⁴⁰ "Speaker Given a Gavel," *Ogden Standard*, March 16, 1901.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "Waterworks Matter in Court," *Ogden Standard*, April 27, 1900.

⁴³ "Waterworks Sale Confirmed," *Ogden Standard*, September 25, 1900.

⁴⁴ "We Call a Halt," *Ogden Standard*, September 27, 1900.



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Last night an anxious throng stood in front of the Standard office awaiting the latest news. The bulletins, all of which held out no hope for his life, and which came direct from Milburn House, were received with sadness and sorrow as they were read through the large megaphone. The crowd changed as the people came and went, but there were many who stood for hours in anxious anticipation.⁴⁵

**Mayor Glasmann (center front),
the Ogden city council, and city
officers, 1901.**

For Glasmann, the news resulted in bittersweet feelings; he lamented the death of McKinley, but he believed the country was safe in the hands of the forward-thinking Theodore Roosevelt.

In early October, the Republicans of Ogden drafted Glasmann as a candidate for Ogden City mayor. The platform boiled down to one simple issue: Joseph Scowcroft and the Democrats for months had wanted to buy the waterworks for \$45,000 cash and assume \$400,000 in bonds at five percent interest. The Republicans argued “in favor of municipal ownership of all public utilities and pledge our party, if entrusted with the government of the City of Ogden, to secure control either by condemnation or purchase, first of the water works system, and afterwards of other public utilities in the order of their importance.”⁴⁶ Ogdenites elected Glasmann as mayor on the primary issue of the waterworks. He defeated Scowcroft by a margin of 320 votes out of 5,518 cast, or by a margin of 5.8 percent.⁴⁷

In mid-afternoon on May 29, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt came to Ogden as part of his extensive tour of the West. Mayor Glasmann rode with Governor Heber Wells and President Roosevelt in the first

⁴⁵ “Platform,” *Ogden Standard*, October 14, 1901.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Official Count of Ogden City Vote,” *Ogden Standard*, November 12, 1901.

carriage from the Union Depot, ahead of a long procession of dignitaries through the streets of Ogden. Roosevelt spoke briefly, and then Secretary of the Navy Moody repeated his promise to name a battleship after Utah. The entourage formed up again and departed west on Twenty-Fifth Street to the Union Depot, where Roosevelt's party boarded the train for the trip up Weber Canyon en route to Wyoming.⁴⁸

On November 5, 1903, two days after the election that saw Glasmann chosen for his second term as mayor of Ogden, Frank Francis received the news that a proposed newspaper, the *Morning Examiner*, had won the Associated Press (AP) morning dispatch franchise for Ogden. The *Morning Examiner*, announced Francis, "would be a Democratic newspaper" and start publication January 1, 1904.⁴⁹ However, four months later, Glasmann ended up buying the infant paper because of a low subscription rate and mounting debt. Francis returned to the managing editor position at the *Standard*. Glasmann decided to run both papers while he searched for a suitable buyer of the *Morning Examiner*.

In 1904, midway through his second term as mayor, Glasmann became an active candidate for the U.S. Senate. At the last minute, former Congressman George Sutherland threw his hat in the ring—even though, dissembling, he had suggested to Glasmann that he would not be a candidate. The following January, Glasmann knew his candidacy lacked support and removed his name from consideration; always the tactician, he considered this move the "nicest" thing to do. The Utah State Legislature elected Sutherland as senator. Though the *Standard* eulogized the loss by saying, "the wise man does not wait to be kicked out of the road," it devastated Glasmann.⁵⁰ Once again the rift between the Ogden liberals and the more conservative Republicans in Salt Lake City was evident. In the end, the conservative faction of the party won out, dominated by Reed Smoot and a growing faction of Utahns that crossed over to the Republican Party, but retained the conservatism of their nineteenth-century Democratic heritage.⁵¹ Glasmann was left to his next move. In late July 1905, he announced he would not run for a third term as Ogden's mayor.⁵²

Then in April 1906, on a trip to Washington, D.C., Glasmann stopped by the White House to see President Roosevelt. When he returned to Ogden on May 3, a reporter from the *Inter-Mountain Republican* asked Glasmann if he planned to apply for the open position of postmaster of Ogden. Glasmann replied that he most likely would.⁵³

⁴⁸ "Ogden, a Radiant City, Greets the Nation's Chief," *Ogden Standard*, May 29, 1903.

⁴⁹ "A Morning Paper for Ogden," *Ogden Standard*, November 5, 1903.

⁵⁰ "Sutherland the Senator," *Ogden Standard*, January 11, 1905.

⁵¹ For background on the Federal bunch, see Jan Shipps, "Utah Comes of Age Politically: A Study in the State's Politics in the Early Years of the Twentieth Century," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Spring 1967): 99–100.

⁵² "The Political Pot," *Ogden Standard*, July 25, 1905.

⁵³ "Glasmann Returns," *Inter-Mountain Republican* (Salt Lake City), May 3, 1906.



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With his bid for postmaster, Glasmann was again opposing the members of Smoot's faction, who routinely kept the plum federal jobs for their loyal supporters. Knowing this, Glasmann simply went over their heads and directly to the president. On May 15, the

Ogden Standard broke its silence on the matter, acknowledging that the incumbent Thomas Davis still held the inside edge over all other candidates, while John D. Murphy had the support of senators Smoot and Sutherland. In his typical self-deprecating modesty, Glasmann said his chances of landing the job "were one in a hundred."⁵⁴ On July 19, however, the *Inter-Mountain Republican* reported that in the coming few days, Congressman Joseph Howell would announce that Glasmann would be Ogden's next postmaster. On the evening of August 16, Glasmann received notification from the AP that Roosevelt had officially appointed William Glasmann as postmaster of Ogden.⁵⁵

On January 16, 1907, Glasmann learned of a secret petition circulated by his political enemies seeking to prevent him from official confirmation by the U.S. Senate. The *Standard* tried to obtain a copy of the petition, but to no avail: "No one is permitted to see the statements made in the protest unless he first pledges himself to sign it."⁵⁶ The petitioners spread the rumor

A group of dignitaries assembled for the opening of the Lucin Cutoff, November 1903. Glasmann is seventh from the right.

⁵⁴ "Ogden Postmaster Fight," *Ogden Standard*, May 15, 1906. See also Jean Bickmore White, "The Right to be Different: Ogden and Weber County Politics, 1850–1924," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 265–68.

⁵⁵ "Glasmann Gets the Office," *Ogden Standard*, August 17, 1906.

⁵⁶ "Dirty Work of Glasmann's Enemies Will Not Injure the Ogden Postmaster," *Ogden Standard*, January 16, 1907.

that Glasmann would resign in the face of this indictment. Evidently the conspirators knew little about Glasmann, because he reacted to a political brawl by leaping into the fray with gusto.

One month later, he journeyed to New York to attend the annual meeting of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, followed by a quick trip to Boston, where he represented the 30,000 Population Club of Ogden in delivering a pledge of \$25,000 in investment capital to lure an iron company to Ogden. From there, he took a steamer to Washington, D.C., to meet with Assistant Postmaster General Hancock about the petition to replace him as postmaster of Ogden. Hancock assured Glasmann that petitions for removal were the rule rather than exception, especially when it came to high-paying patronage jobs such as postmaster. Hancock let Glasmann see the petition letters against him and assured the Ogdenite that the absurdity of the letters guaranteed his ratification by the Senate, but not that year. He imagined Glasmann's commission would be granted in 1908. Hancock commented it was ironic that instead of shortening Glasmann's tenure as postmaster, his enemies actually prolonged his term. Glasmann stood to serve six years, rather than the customary four years because the term started when Glasmann received his commission.⁵⁷

When he returned home by rail on the *Los Angeles Limited*, he commented, "the three principal letters sent to Washington were suffering of 'explosive insanity' and that the form of insanity was Glasmanitis."⁵⁸ With that, Glasmann penned a term that he used more and more often to taunt his detractors. True to Hancock's prediction, the United States Senate unanimously approved his appointment on April 24, 1908.

As the election of 1908 drew near, Glasmann took a furlough from his postmaster job and headed for southern Utah to "spend the time" that amounted to political discussions for campaigning. Near the end of his tour, he made a stop at Pleasant Grove for a speech in support of Smoot, whom he knew was the only person who could make or break his chances of becoming a congressman.⁵⁹ Glasmann agreed to perform his party duty by presenting a united front. The election proved successful for the Republicans, ingratiating Glasmann to the Salt Lake City faction, perhaps a sign of mending fences.

After the election, Glasmann suddenly announced on November 23 that he planned to resign as postmaster, effective December 31. Most observers thought it foolish to give up one of the highest-paid government jobs in the state. An uninformed person speculated on his sanity, but those familiar with Glasmann knew he had a personal reason for the resignation. He would turn fifty in December and needed to get on with his life.

The following October of 1909, Glasmann reluctantly accepted the

⁵⁷ "Glasmann Remains in the Postoffice," *Ogden Standard*, March 4, 1907.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "William Glasmann Makes Great Speech," *Ogden Standard*, November 11, 1908.



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nomination for his third term as mayor of Ogden. He wanted someone else to take the job, but the Republicans of Weber County insisted. The Republicans argued that after controlling the city for the past four years, the Democrats had run Ogden into a financial ditch and had undone everything that Glasmann fought for in his first two terms as mayor.⁶⁰ They also argued that nobody understood municipal finances as well as Glasmann.

The South Fork of the Ogden River, photographed in 1913, in the midst of Glasmann's efforts to construct a dam.

The campaign proved his toughest yet. Glasmann ran against the incumbent Democrat—Alex Brewer, a popular mayor to be sure—and fully expected to lose. But in the end, the Republicans swept all but one seat on the city council, and Glasmann won the mayoralty with an extremely close margin of 134 votes out of 6,126, or a plurality of 51 percent to 49 percent.⁶¹ Humbled by his narrow triumph, Glasmann said, “I view it as the greatest victory of my political career, won against odds.”⁶² Ultimately, the election turned on an auditing report that agreed with Glasmann’s assessment of the first six months of municipal ownership of the waterworks: he correctly argued that the waterworks had lost money, while Brewer insisted that it had made a profit.⁶³

In April 1911, Glasmann announced that at the end of his present mayoral term he planned to retire, due to the new council form of government that passed the Utah legislature in the 1911 session.⁶⁴ He was interested, however, in a proposed dam on the South Fork of the Ogden River, below the

⁶⁰ “Brewer’s City Record Exposed,” *Ogden Standard*, November 2, 1909.

⁶¹ “The Official Vote of Ogden,” *Ogden Standard*, November 9, 1909.

⁶² “A Few Words from the Mayor-Elect,” *Ogden Standard*, November 3, 1909.

⁶³ “Brewer’s City Record.”

⁶⁴ “Mayor Glasmann Will Retire,” *Ogden Standard*, March 31, 1911.

confluence of Cobble Creek and the South Fork. Just days before Glasmann announced his retirement, he asked the Ogden City Council to initiate steps to construct a new dam for the benefit of farmers in Ogden Valley and other rural districts of Weber County.⁶⁵

Seven years before, in August 1904, Glasmann had entertained several dignitaries, including Weber County Commissioner Barlow Wilson and Fred J. Kiesel, on a trip up Ogden Canyon, but nothing substantial ever came of it.⁶⁶ In early 1911, however, talk began in earnest about building a dam on the South Fork. Glasmann had witnessed the discovery of bedrock at the site shortly after he arrived in Ogden from Lake Point in 1892. He knew right where to go to uncover Moroni Skeen's test holes and prove the dam's feasibility.⁶⁷ It seemed that all of Ogden jumped on the bandwagon, and by the spring of 1911, a host of people converged on the site, digging holes to find bedrock, including David Eccles, Thomas D. Dee, Hiram H. Spencer, M. S. Browning, John Pingree, John Watson, Charles Kircher, and Alex Brewer.⁶⁸

For the next five years, the South Fork Dam consumed Glasmann. Its progress followed a tortuous path of intrigue, political vengeance, and outright misrepresentations that Glasmann patiently refuted.⁶⁹ One thing was for certain: Glasmann probably fought more tenaciously than any foe, and in the end, he always prevailed, though at a large political price; he gradually lost his supporters for the dam.

In the midst of his work on the South Fork Dam, the 1912 election disrupted all of Glasmann's efforts of the previous years to mend the Republican Party of Utah. His friend and hero, Theodore Roosevelt, was likely going to lose the Republican nomination and become a third-party candidate running against Woodrow Wilson and President William H. Taft. In December 1911, anticipating that Glasmann would remain true to Roosevelt, Senator Smoot sent the loyal Federal bunch member and U.S. assayer, Jody Eldredge, to Ogden to buy the *Ogden Standard's* sister paper, the *Morning Examiner*, for the conservative Republicans' mouthpiece in Ogden. Later, Glasmann publicly lamented that the bargain price at which he sold the morning paper brought him just enough to pay its debts. In reality, however, he welcomed the chance for a true adversarial newspaper foe.

When the election ended, Roosevelt and the newly organized Progressive or Bull Moose Party had lost, and Taft had carried Vermont and Utah. Wilson's win came even though the Democratic Party had garnered the lowest percentage of the electorate in twenty years. The tattered Republican Party became—to Smoot's liking—the conservative party, and

⁶⁵ "Big Reservoir Must Be Built," *Ogden Standard*, March 27, 1911.

⁶⁶ "Another Canyon Accident," *Ogden Standard*, August 8, 1904.

⁶⁷ "Work Begins on South Fork Dam," *Ogden Standard*, November 16, 1912.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ "The Nigger in the South Fork Dam," *Ogden Standard*, August 15, 1912.

the Progressives could either return to the Republicans or go to the more liberal Democrats.⁷⁰ In voting for Taft, Utah became a conservative Republican stronghold, while elsewhere in the nation Wilson enjoyed popularity among former Bull Moose progressives who had migrated to the Democratic Party.

After the election, in 1913, Jody Eldredge resigned as assayer and moved his family to Ogden to continue as the general manager of the *Morning Examiner*. Glasmann, Eldredge, and Frank Francis became the best of friends,



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even though they held three opposing political opinions. ***Glasmann in his later years.***

By 1916, it appeared that Glasmann would begin yet another political adventure. That year, candidates in the recently formed first congressional district jockeyed for U.S. Congressman. Glasmann stayed true to the Republican Party, and insisted that he had only defected in 1896 and 1912 because men deserved more loyalty than the party. Ironically, because of Glasmann's liberal roots the party turned to him as the only person capable of defeating the likely Democratic candidate, Milton H. Welling.⁷¹ But on May 12, 1916, three weeks before the filing deadline, William Glasmann suddenly died of a heart attack while resting alone at his home. He was fifty-seven. His dreams of finishing the South Fork Dam and going to Congress died with him. The news spread quickly as Ogden mourned the loss of one of its leading citizens. Francis eulogized his friend and mentor of twenty years, saying:

It was natural that a man of such strong personality would provoke antagonism and make enemies—he had enemies and he fought them with all the intensity of his nature—yet he never harbored malice and was always ready when the battle was over, to ground his weapons and smoke the pipe of peace.⁷²

⁷⁰ For an account of the effects of the demise of the Progressive Party, see Lewis L. Gould, *Reform and Regulation: American Politics from Roosevelt to Wilson* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1996), *supra*.

⁷¹ "Newspaper's Roots Run Deep in Ogden History," *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, June 6, 1961.

⁷² "The Tribute of a Friend," *Ogden Standard*, May 13, 1916.

At his funeral, the men who represented opposite ideologies, including Eldredge and Francis, served as pallbearers. The funeral was held at the overflowing Ogden Tabernacle on 22nd Street and Washington Avenue. It seemed in life he drew as many people to his political rallies, but death silenced his oratory. His was an unfinished life.

William Glasmann's sons, Roscoe and Abe Glasmann, carried on with the *Ogden Standard* under the mentorship of Eldredge and Francis. Four years later, in the spring of 1920, the *Ogden Standard* and the *Morning Examiner* merged to form the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, with Abe Glasmann as publisher, Jody Eldredge as general manager. Francis was given a leave of absence to follow in his friend's footsteps, serving as Ogden's new mayor.

To understand argument was to understand William Glasmann. He tried to argue issues and not bring personalities into an ad hominem fight. He was persistent when he knew the facts were in his favor. He was a gentleman and maintained a calm, yet intense demeanor in an argument with political adversaries. At times he filled with righteous indignation when he knew he was "dead to rights"; Glasmann was at his weakest when he encountered maliciously obvious falsehoods, often resorting to sarcasm to demonstrate the fallacies of his adversaries. Above all, however, he remained mindful of public decorum: whether he was arguing as a silver Republican, Speaker of the House, Ogden City mayor, postmaster, or private citizen, he never lost his cool. Glasmann was, indeed, the consummate politician.

Isaac Russell's Remarkable Interview with Harold Bride, Sole Surviving Wireless Operator from the *Titanic*

By KENNETH L. CANNON II



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On April 18, 1912, Isaac Russell scooped the rest of the journalistic world. The Utah native, who lived in New York City and wrote for the *New York Times*, talked his way onto the RMS *Carpathia* after it docked in New York with the survivors of the *Titanic* disaster on board. There, Russell interviewed Harold Bride—the ship’s lone surviving Marconi wireless radio operator—about the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*. Without the services of Bride and the other wireless operator from the ship and without the invention of Guglielmo Marconi, it is extremely unlikely that anyone from the *Titanic* would have lived.¹ Russell’s telling of Bride’s story covered most of the front page of the *Times* the next morning, and it is almost certainly the best-known eyewitness account of the sinking of the *Titanic*.² When the *New York Times* reprinted Bride’s

This photograph of Isaac Russell appeared on the cover of Salt Lake City’s Progressive magazine on November 1, 1913. On the back of the original image, the following note appears: “Isaac Russell, reporter for the New York Times, ones [sic] of whose reports, on the sinking of the Titanic, during which he worked with Marconi, inventor of wireless telegraphy, aboard the ship the Carpathia, won honors for him.”

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¹ U.S. Senate, Committee on Commerce, “Titanic” *Disaster*, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., S. Rep. No. 806 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 10–11; Michael Davie, *Titanic: The Death and Life of a Legend* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 94–115.

² [Isaac Russell], “Thrilling Story by *Titanic*’s Surviving Wireless Man,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1912. As with most news articles of the period, no byline identified the reporter who prepared the article. The introduction to the report stated that, “This statement was dictated by Mr. Bride to a reporter for THE



Russell during the Spanish-American War, from the *Deseret News*, June 3, 1899.

story a week later, the introductory note stated that “it is the most graphic and most important story published during the tense days that followed the disaster.”³ According to one account, “every Saturday morning paper has paid compliment to the genius of Mr. Russell in securing the only account of this terrible calamity by Mr. Bride, and congratulations have been numerous from friends and newspapermen for the achievement.”⁴

It was all improbable. Russell was an extraordinarily talented journalist who was not always able to stay in the good graces of his editors and publishers. He had served with the Utah Light Artillery in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, where he acted as General John J. Pershing’s personal stenographer. He also had a brush with several Filipinos who had captured an American soldier that Russell freed by engaging with them, reportedly killing two Filipinos and receiving a serious head wound.⁵ At the same time, at the age of

eighteen, Russell started and edited *American Soldier*, one of the army’s first newspapers for servicemen. On his way home from the war, he talked Stanford University’s president, David Starr Jordan, into admitting him into the university. He graduated from Stanford in 1904 with high honors and returned home to Salt Lake City where he worked for several of the local

NEW YORK TIMES, who visited him with Mr. Marconi in the wireless cabin of the *Carpathia* a few minutes after the steamship touched her pier.” The story clearly was not “dictated” to Russell, though Bride no doubt told it to him and the newspaper billed it as being in Bride’s “own words.” Meyer Berger’s usually reliable *The Story of the New York Times, 1851–1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 200, in addition to getting the reporter’s name wrong, described the report as having been taken down “verbatim.”

³ “*Titanic’s* Surviving Wireless Man,” April 28, 1912.

⁴ Janet [Jeanette Young Easton], “Salt Lakers in Gotham,” *Deseret News*, April 27, 1912. Jeanette Young Easton was a daughter of Brigham Young and a professional singer who lived in New York City with her tenor husband, Robert C. Easton. Her weekly “Salt Lakers in Gotham” was a newsy column about Utahns living in or visiting New York City. Regarding the Eastons, see Ardis E. Parshall, “The Loveliest Missionary Tract Ever Published,” *Keepapitchinin*, December 28, 2008, accessed July 2012, www.keepapitchinin.org/2008/12/28/the-loveliest-missionary-tract-ever-published. Rival newspapers in New York City did not identify Russell as the reporter who interviewed Bride, though some noted the *Times*’ account. The *New York Herald* was very critical of the *Times*’ part in an alleged conspiracy with the Marconi Wireless Company not to have the *Carpathia* provide responses to incoming messages to preserve exclusive rights (and monetary value) to the *Titanic* story that would be told by any wireless operator from the *Titanic*. “‘Keep Your Mouth Shut, Big Money for You’ Was Message to Hide News,” *New York Herald*, April 21, 1912.

⁵ “Utah Newspaper Men in the Philippines,” *Deseret News*, June 3, 1899.

newspapers, ending up at the *Deseret News*. Russell did not get along with either the business manager or the editor of that paper and believed (no doubt correctly) that he was overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated.⁶

Eventually, Russell began submitting short articles to *Collier's Weekly*, which had perhaps the highest circulation of any weekly magazine in the country, and *Collier's* published some of his submissions. With the encouragement and letters of recommendation from Jordan and others, "Ike" moved to New York City to seek fame and glory as a writer. Immediately after landing in the city, he began placing freelance articles with the *New York World*. Within thirty days after Russell's arrival, the *New York Evening Sun* hired him full-time, and he felt secure enough to have his wife, Allie Farr Russell, and their infant daughter join him in New York. His work on labor and aviation issues soon attracted the attention of the *Times*, and in early 1910 he was lured away to write for the more prominent newspaper.⁷

Russell rose quickly through the ranks of reporters at the *Times*, and the paper gave him many important assignments, allowing him to cover major political stories, labor strikes, the fledgling aviation industry, and a variety of other subjects.⁸ Ike also began publishing longer articles on a freelance basis for many progressive magazines, including *Collier's Weekly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Pearson's Magazine*, and developed professional relationships and friendships with influential editors such as Norman Hapgood, Mark Sullivan (*Collier's*), and John Thompson (*Pearson's*).⁹ As a result, he was one of the few, if not the only, nationally recognized muckrakers who hailed from Utah.

At the time of the *Titanic* disaster, however, the somewhat mercurial Russell had annoyed his superiors. Carr V. Van Anda, the legendary managing editor of the *New York Times*, handled coverage of the *Titanic's* sinking in a

⁶ Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Isaac Russell, Mormon Muckraker and Secret Defender of the Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 39 (Fall 2013) (forthcoming); Janet, "Salt Lakers in Gotham," *Deseret News*, March 27, 1909; [Ben L.] Rich to Ben E. Rich, December 2, 1908, copy, box 2, fd. 22, Isaac Russell Papers, 1898–1927, M0444, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries (hereafter cited as Russell Papers); "Isaac Russell," *Progressive*, November 1, 1913, 1; "Guide to the Isaac Russell Papers, 1898–1927," Online Archive of California, accessed December 2011, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf6f59n8h4/>; John J. Pershing to Isaac Russell, July 6, 1900, box 2, fd. 28, Russell Papers.

⁷ Isaac Russell to B. H. Roberts, April 1, 1909, box 4, fd. 14, February 23, 1910, box 4, fd. 15, Scott G. Kenney Collection, Ms0587, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah (hereafter cited as Kenney Collection); Janet, "Salt Lakers in Gotham," *Deseret News*, March 27, May 1, 1909, August 6, 1910.

⁸ Alexander Graham Bell to Isaac Russell, March 19, 1914, box 14, fd. 6, Russell Papers; [Isaac Russell], "Curtis Flies, Albany to New York, at the Speed of 54 Miles an Hour," *New York Times*, May 30, 1910; Orville Wright to Isaac Russell, n.d., box 14, fd. 8, Russell Papers; Janet, "Salt Lakers in Gotham," *Deseret News*, July 10, August 21, 1909; April 27, 1912; January 4, August 30, 1913; July 4, 1914; July 10, September 18, 1915; March 11, July 29, 1916; Isaac Russell to Franklin Spalding, December 13, 1912, box 14, fd. 6, Ms0686, Episcopal Diocese of Utah Records, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

⁹ See, for example, Isaac Russell, "The First Professional Strike Maker," *Pearson's Magazine*, August 1909, 269–75; "Mr. Roosevelt to the Mormons, A Letter with an Explanatory Note," *Collier's Weekly*, April 15, 1911, 28, 36; "The Charlatans of Charity," *Harper's Weekly*, August 15, 1914, 159–60.



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way that helped establish the *Times* as one of the preeminent newspapers in the world and him as one of the world's greatest newspapermen.¹⁰ From the earliest reports that the *Titanic* had sent out the CQD distress call and had then ceased to send any signal, Van Anda—unlike other editors—believed that the grand luxury liner had sunk.¹¹ The White Star Line, which owned and operated the *Titanic*, took almost twenty-four hours to officially confirm that the ship had gone down. Just three hours after the liner sank in the North Atlantic Ocean and at a time when there was no confirmed report of the disaster, Van Anda had the *Times* announce in bold, front-page headlines, “New Liner *Titanic* Hits an Iceberg; Sinking by the Bow at Midnight; Women Put Off in Lifeboats; Last Wireless at 12:27 a.m. Blurred.”¹²

In the days that immediately followed the tragic accident, the *Times* continued its extraordinary coverage of the *Titanic*. Along the way, everyone

Russell was one of seven children of Samuel Russell and Henrietta Pratt, a daughter of Parley P. Pratt. Here, the extensive polygamous family of Samuel Russell is pictured.

¹⁰ Barnett Fine, *A Giant of the Press: Carr Van Anda* (Oakland, CA: Acme Books, 1968), 43–48. At least one observer has argued that the *Times*, under the management of Van Anda, essentially invented modern disaster coverage with its *Titanic* coverage (of which Russell's account of Bride's story was a critical part). Roy Peter Clark, “How the *New York Times* Invented Disaster Coverage with the *Titanic* Sinking,” accessed June 2013, www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/writing-tools/169316/how-the-new-york-times-invented-disaster-coverage-with-the-titanic-sinking.

¹¹ The CQD distress call was an earlier version of the SOS signal.

¹² Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 194–97.

learned that the *Carpathia* had rescued hundreds of survivors and had turned around to transport those *Titanic* passengers to New York, where they were scheduled to go, rather than continue its voyage to Europe. As New York City breathlessly awaited the arrival of the *Carpathia*, the paper's city editor, Arthur Greaves, assembled the entire *Times* staff to mobilize what a historian of the *Times* described as the "ultimate in disaster news coverage." The newspaper instructed its reporters to gather and write stories about everything related to the sinking of the *Titanic*, including survivors' tales, the last deeds of prominent passengers, and relief efforts. Notably, correspondents learned that J. Bruce Ismay, the president of the White Star Line, had survived the tragedy. Greaves remarked that the *Times* might not get any information from the *Carpathia*, because the ship had "studiously refuse[d] to answer all queries," in other words, wireless messages that reporters, relatives, and even President William Howard Taft had attempted to have sent to the ship had received no response. Nevertheless, the *Times* was certainly going to try. No one yet knew if either of the *Titanic*'s two wireless operators had survived, and Van Anda was intent on interviewing any Marconi operator, preferably from the *Titanic*, but also from the *Carpathia*.¹³

Van Anda and his staff went to unusual lengths to cover one of the biggest news stories ever. They hired an entire floor of the Strand Hotel, located at Fourteenth Street and Eleventh Avenue, just a block away from where the *Carpathia* would dock, and outfitted it with four telephone lines with direct connections to the *Times*'s "rewrite desks." The newspaper set up more telephone lines in a building at Twenty-Third Street and Eleventh Avenue, and chauffeured cars were ready to whisk the journalists from the pier to the telephones. Sixteen reporters were sent to the pier—though the *New York Times* possessed only four passes, and those passes would not get their owners very close to the ship.¹⁴

In the midst of all this, Ike Russell, bright young star reporter on the *Times*, attended the meeting with Greaves and anxiously awaited his assignment to participate in the story of the century. As Russell later recalled,

Newspapers prepared for the greatest story of their histories breaking under conditions

¹³ Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 197–98. Ironically, the *Times* was shortly thereafter accused of convincing Marconi Company officials to preserve the paper's exclusive rights to the story that would be told by surviving wireless operators by having those operators refuse to respond to incoming messages. Van Anda's biographer asserted that "Van Anda had, by the use of a wireless message, arranged the interview with the surviving operator, before that ship had docked." Fine, *A Giant of the Press*, 47. This is inconsistent with Greaves's statement that the *Carpathia* was not responding to wireless messages and directly contrary to Russell's accounts discussed below.

¹⁴ Ibid.; I. K. Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, n.d., 9, box 16, fd. 6, Russell Papers. Internal references likely date this manuscript in the mid-1920s. A number of Russell's published articles are in the *Titanic* files in his papers; it is possible that this manuscript was published, but its presence in unpublished form in his personal papers makes that unlikely. Russell began professionally going by "Isaac K. Russell" or "I. K. Russell," rather than "Isaac Russell," sometime in 1919. Cannon, "Isaac Russell, Mormon Muckraker."

where the most fascinating chapters might escape all their reportorial watchfulness. The *New York Times*, on which I worked, hired a hotel across the water-front street from the dock at which the *Carpathia* was due to come in. It stocked the hotel with telephones and stocked the telephones with reporters, who were ordered to telephone in every word they could get hold of, one about the crowds, one about the police way of holding them back, one about the pier [guarded by] throngs of marines, sailors and soldiers, and some half dozen about the adventures of any *Titanic* passengers they might encounter at the pier entrance.¹⁵

The *Carpathia* was a Cunard Line ship, and it was due to arrive at the Cunard Pier (Pier 54) in the Hudson River just west of the intersection of West Twelfth Street and West Avenue between eight and nine o'clock p.m. Russell eventually came to a terrible realization: "At seven o'clock I became rudely aware of the fact that I had not been put on any schedule of the day, and was 'off duty' on this most important of nights! It was a stinging blow, and puzzling to account for it since I had never before been so humiliated. In a blue mood, I started from the office to buy a dinner, of which I felt a growing need."¹⁶

As Russell left the office, however, Van Anda stopped him, probably because he had no one else left to perform a necessary errand. Van Anda told Russell to go to the home of John Bottomley, the American manager of the Marconi Wireless Company, at 254 West 132nd Street, and ask him for a letter authorizing *Times* reporters to talk to Marconi wireless operators on board the *Carpathia*.¹⁷ Van Anda instructed Ike to get the release signed by Bottomley and to take it down to the hotel that served as the paper's headquarters for the *Titanic* coverage.¹⁸

¹⁵ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 2–3, Russell Papers.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3. Russell initially wrote in his manuscript that he had started from the office to "buy a new pair of shoes," but crossed out "new pair of shoes" and wrote in "dinner."

¹⁷ Russell consistently spelled the Marconi manager's last name as "Bottomely, which appears to be wrong. *Ibid.*, 3, 4. In Berger's telling of the story, Van Anda devised the whole ploy to get Marconi, a personal friend of his, to the pier to talk his way onto the *Carpathia*. Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 199–200. Berger's version of the facts may have come from Barnett Fine's biography of Van Anda, originally published in 1933. Fine, *A Giant of the Press*, 45–48. As one writer described the story, "Getting to talk to Bride was a journalistic coup and one that would be associated with Van Anda for the rest of his life." Steve Turner, *The Band that Played On: The Extraordinary Story of the 8 Musicians Who Went Down with the Titanic* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 7. No credit was given to the reporter who went to the Marconi Company office then went aboard the *Carpathia* with Marconi. However, as Susan Tift and Alex Jones write, Van Anda was "known to indulge occasionally in self-glorification," and it was "luck and an enterprising reporter [Isaac Russell] [who] played a far greater role than Van Anda [in obtaining the Bride interview]." Susan Tift and Alex S. Jones, *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999), 804–5.

¹⁸ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 2–3, Russell Papers. Berger spent three pages describing the sequence of events told below through the accounts of Isaac Russell, but mistakenly identified the reporter in question as "Jim Speers." He provided no citation for this reference to "Jim Speers," and it is clearly incorrect. Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 199–201. Books and newspaper reports noting the centennial of the *Titanic's* sinking followed this inaccurate identification. See, for example, Turner, *The Band that Played On*, 4–7; James Barron, "After the Ship Sank, Fierce Fight to Get Story," *New York Times*, April 9, 2012, accessed July 2012, www.cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/after-the-ship-went-down-scrambling-to-get-the-story. Tift and Jones's more recent book, *The Trust*, 804–5, correctly identified the reporter as Russell. In support, they referred to correspondence between Russell

Isaac Russell set about his “humble errand.” When he arrived at Bottomley’s Harlem residence, Bottomley received Russell “with British sullenness and unresponsiveness. There was no request that I come in.” The Marconi manager even shut the door in the young *Times* reporter’s face as he decided whether to sign the release. The door was soon opened, however, by a different man, one of “surprising GENTLENESS. . . . It was something that made you love to be near him at first contact.” Russell soon realized that this gentle man was the great Guglielmo Marconi himself, the creator of the wireless radio, whose invention had facilitated the survival of anyone on the *Titanic*.¹⁹



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Guglielmo Marconi.

Marconi recognized Russell as a newspaper reporter. In Russell’s account, Marconi was concerned about news reports that Marconi Company wireless operators on board the *Carpathia* had ignored repeated requests from William Howard Taft, president of the United States, for a report of whether his military aide, Major Archibald Butt, had survived the sinking of the *Titanic*. The requests had been sent by the Navy scout cruiser

and Adolph Ochs (publisher of the *Times*) and Van Anda, some of it in the Russell Papers at Stanford. Russell’s letter to Ochs, in fact, recounted the story that Russell told several times, as discussed below. Russell to Adolph S. Ochs, September 24, 1921, box 6, fd. 25, Russell Papers. I engaged in a productive e-mail correspondence with James Barron, who wrote the April 2012 story. Kenneth L. Cannon II to James Barron, June 28, July 26, 27, August 28, 31, September 3, 4, 2012, Barron to Cannon, June 28, July 24, 27, August 28, 31, September 4, 2012, copies in my possession. Upon being informed of the mistake in the report, the *Times* published another article, acknowledging that Russell apparently was the reporter who interviewed Bride but suggesting that, perhaps, L. C. Speers might have contributed in some way. Barron, “Mystery of Who Got Big *Titanic* Interview,” *New York Times*, September 4, 2012, New York City metro edition, A24; Barron, “100 Years after the *Titanic*, Still Wondering Who Got the Story,” accessed September 2012, www.cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/100-years-after-the-titanic-still-wondering-who-got-the-story.

¹⁹ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 4, Russell Papers; Isaac Russell, “How Marconi, Wizard of Wireless, Met Survivors of *Titanic* at Sea,” *New York Evening Mail*, July 6, 1917; I. K. Russell, “Why Boy Kept Silent on Maj. Butt’s Death,” *New York Daily News*, April 8, 1924, copy, Russell Papers; [Isaac Russell], “Marconi Pays Visit to the Rescue Ship,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1912.

Chester. The media reports insinuated that the Marconi operators had failed to respond to the messages because they hoped to profit from stories regarding the *Titanic* when they arrived in New York.²⁰ Marconi asked whether the *Times* could get him a pass to board the *Carpathia* and find out from his operators why they had not responded to Taft's inquiries.²¹

Russell knew that the *Times* had only four passes, that the paper had already allotted all those passes, and that the passes only permitted reporters to approach the pier and not board the ship in any event. Nevertheless, he telephoned the *Times* offices and asked Greaves whether Marconi, whose invention had such an important place in the rescue efforts, could have a pass. According to Russell, Greaves was flustered and did not seriously consider who was asking for a pass. "Tell Marconi nothing; all our passes are in use," came the reply. Russell did not want to discourage Marconi from visiting the pier, however, because he was confident that New York City policemen, United States Marines, and anyone else guarding the *Carpathia* would not follow instructions and would suspend all rules to let Guglielmo Marconi, savior for the *Titanic* survivors, onto the *Carpathia*.²²

Russell did not tell Marconi that the *Times* had no pass for him. Instead, he lied and said "Yes, I have your pass for you. I can take you down all right." Bottomley signed the release letter; unfortunately for the *Times*, it authorized Marconi operators to talk to anyone from the press, and the *Times* had hoped to pay \$500 for an "exclusive." Russell told Marconi the quickest way to the Cunard Line pier and instructed him how to catch the Ninth Avenue elevated line, which he could board on 130th Street, just a few blocks away. Meanwhile, Russell hurriedly went ahead of Marconi and delivered the signed letter of release to the *Times*'s rented space in the Strand Hotel. He then met Marconi at the Fourteenth Street station on the "El" and "settled down for a beautiful adventure in which seeing Marconi aboard would be the objective."²³

While the *Times* had no passes for Marconi, it did have a taxicab waiting

²⁰ Shortly after the *Titanic* sank, Frederick Sammis, the chief engineer of the Marconi Wireless Company, testified that he had wired the Marconi operators on the *Carpathia* that they could probably sell their stories of the *Titanic* tragedy for "big money" after they landed. He denied having them refuse to respond to any incoming messages. "United States Senate Inquiry, Day 10," Titanic Inquiry Project, accessed June 2013, <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/USInq/AmInq10Sammis01.php>.

²¹ [Russell], "Marconi Pays Visit," April 19, 1912; Russell, "Why Boy Kept Silent," April 8, 1924.

²² Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 4, Russell Papers; [Russell], "Marconi Pays Visit," April 19, 1912; Russell, "Why Boy Kept Silent," April 8, 1924.

²³ [Russell], "Marconi Pays Visit," April 19, 1912; Russell, "Why Boy Kept Silent," April 8, 1924; Russell, "Met Survivors of *Titanic*," July 6, 1917; Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 4, Russell Papers. The allegation that the *Times* had paid for an exclusive right to obtain and publish the wireless operators' story became controversial; other New York papers seized on the allegation and the United States Senate investigated it, among other charges. Russell stated that he had delivered the release and then gone "off duty" to try to get his own story, because reporters were paid primarily for the "space" used to publish a story; wages for "errand" assignments were negligible. He worried that "errand" pay "meant tragedy with a haunting vision of babies at home for whom no daily bread was being earned." Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 4.



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at the “El” station to transport him closer to the pier. When they reached the Cunard Line pier, Russell, Marconi, and a third man (a representative of the Marconi Company)

An immense crowd waiting near the Cunard pier to greet the survivors of the Titanic.

were faced by tens of thousands of people: photographers, reporters, relatives and friends of *Titanic* passengers, and, mostly, onlookers, watching the end of the century’s worst disaster. New York City policemen, U.S. Marines, and security guards employed by the Cunard Line regulated the crowd. Russell knew that he had no pass, but he also knew that Marconi himself would serve as a pass for them both. “Instead of being shut out of the great work of the night, as the paper had planned,” he rejoiced, “I was to have a hand in it after all!”²⁴

As the three men tried to make their way through the crowd, Russell focused on an old New York City Police sergeant who was one of the initial gatekeepers, whose assignment was to ensure that no one would pass to the pier. Russell introduced himself and Marconi, but his “words were lost upon my Sergeant, for he had seen Marconi standing behind me and

²⁴ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 5, Russell Papers; Russell, “Met Survivors of *Titanic*,” July 6, 1917; Russell, “Why Boy Kept Silent,” April 8, 1924; [Russell], “Marconi Pays Visit,” April 19, 1912. Russell identified the third man as Marconi’s chief engineer; other sources have identified him as Bottomley, the American manager of the Marconi Company. Barron, “After the Ship Sank,” April 9, 2012; Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 199–200. Frederick Sammis testified that he had gone to the pier with Marconi. “United States Senate Inquiry, Day 10.” Because Russell’s account was firsthand and is supported by Sammis’s Senate testimony, the details he described were almost certainly accurate.

plunged in, seized his hands, and was kissing them while tears flowed in big gobs down his cheeks.” The sergeant walked three blocks with the trio, waving off other policemen who sought to intervene.²⁵ The three were across West Street and getting closer to the pier. They passed an Italian customs guard who bent down on his knees and began kissing Marconi, whom he recognized from photographs.²⁶ Russell pushed on. Policemen challenged them at the pier: “The officer in charge of issuing permits to go upon the pier was appealed to. At first he had no time to listen. Finally he gathered what the request was about and came hurriedly to a place where Mr. Marconi had been backed against a pier buffer by a guard. The policeman invited him to come quickly through the door and past a long line of the suffering.” Marconi started sobbing as he met injured and traumatized *Titanic* survivors.²⁷ He had been scheduled to travel on the *Titanic*’s maiden voyage himself and would have done so, but he needed to work en route and believed that the *Lusitania* had better stenographic services on board, so he took that ship a few days before the *Titanic* set sail.²⁸

The obstacles to their progress were removed. As Russell described it,

What mortal power could issue orders to bid Marconi stop? Sailors fell before us. Eyes popped out and lips froze with one word [“Marconi”] half uttered upon them. Gaping guards to the right of us, gaping guards to the left—and gaping guards in front of—and beside themselves and all ready to die—to see that Marconi passed in spite of every order they had received. . . . The magic word had travelled along—“Marconi” came up in a murmuring mutter from the guards ahead. And the “living wall” crumpled before us as men pressed back to hold their bayonets out of Marconi’s way, and strive for a snatch at his hand or a long glowing glance into his face.²⁹

Russell, Marconi, and the engineer neared the gangplank to the *Carpathia*. The three waited as injured *Titanic* survivors were carried down the gangplank. “The maimed were coming off now, dangling helpless arms as they wildly looked about, and were gently guided down the living lane of guards towards the rooms where friends were waiting.” Russell whispered to the head guard that “the wireless boys” wanted Marconi. The “hard-boiled” guard responded, “Marconi goes ahead but you go back.” Isaac Russell replied that “we are three—Marconi, his chief engineer, and myself a reporter off duty.” Russell had placed his reporter’s police card in the engineer’s hat to help him along in the crowd, but the chief guard, noticing the card and confused by everything going on around him, permitted Marconi and Russell to proceed while holding back the engineer. As Russell later recorded, “Marconi and I were more lifted than

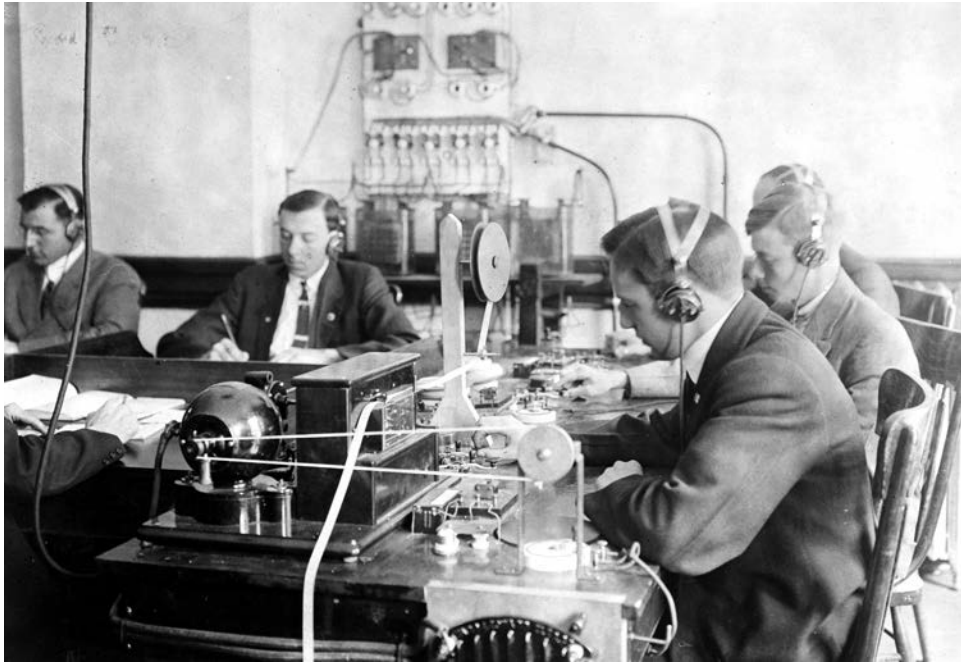
²⁵ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 5–6, Russell Papers; Russell, “Met Survivors of *Titanic*,” July 6, 1917.

²⁶ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 6, Russell Papers. In other accounts, Russell described the man as an Italian taxicab driver who wept “because he could no better serve his great compatriot.” Russell, “Met Survivors of *Titanic*,” July 6, 1917.

²⁷ [Russell], “Marconi Pays Visit,” April 19, 1912.

²⁸ Greg Daugherty, “They Missed the Boat,” *Smithsonian*, March 2012, 38.

²⁹ Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 6, Russell Papers.



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shoved by loving guards with holstered-up revolvers, onto the *Carpathia*'s deck."³⁰

A Marconi wireless training school.

The inventor and the reporter soon located the wireless cabin on the deck of the large passenger ship. There they "found a boy sitting on a high stool—sending, sending, sending—His feet dangled below him in swaths of white bandages. On his wireless stand before him sat a plate of dinner all uneaten." On the wall of the cabin hung a photograph of Marconi. Marconi gently told the young man that the ship was now in port and that he no longer needed to keep sending messages. As he said this, Marconi "lifted the boy's hands from the keys." Harold Bride, the only surviving wireless operator from the *Titanic*, did not seem to hear what Marconi was saying. "The people out there they want these messages to go—I must send them—the people waiting by the cabin." Marconi explained that everyone had gone ashore and that the operator could now stop sending messages and have his serious injuries attended to.³¹

It took what seemed like a long time before recognition came into the young man's eyes, but when it did, he even smiled a little. "You are Mr. Marconi," Bride finally said, as he took his fingers from the telegraph key.³²

When at last he had Bride's attention, Marconi wanted to know why Bride had not received President Taft's messages to the *Carpathia* regarding

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 7–8; Russell, "Met Survivors of *Titanic*," July 6, 1917; Russell, "Why Boy Kept Silent," April 8, 1924.

³² Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 7–8, Russell Papers.

the condition of his military aide, Major Butt. Bride's astonished answer was "Did anybody call? I never once started to receive [messages]. Those people came with their messages. I just started to send—and I sent all the time. I never once had receivers on my ears."³³ After the *Titanic* sank, Bride had clung to a damaged lifeboat for hours and had received serious injuries; in spite of this, shortly after he was pulled aboard the *Carpathia*, he was consumed with sending wireless messages written by other *Titanic* survivors!

Twenty-two-year-old Harold Bride's tale was harrowing. He told it to Russell and Marconi as they urged him on.³⁴ He was the junior wireless operator on the *Titanic* and his principal function was to relieve the more senior operator, Jack Phillips, from midnight until some time in the morning each day, when Phillips would wake up and take over. Bride was due to start earlier than usual the night the great ship hit the iceberg, because Phillips had become exhausted working to repair the wireless equipment. The wireless had broken down on Sunday, April 14, which turned out to be fortunate, because Phillips and Bride were able to repair it just hours before disaster struck. About the time Bride took over, the *Titanic* hit the iceberg, but he "didn't even feel the shock." Bride did not know that anything had happened until Edward J. Smith, the ship's captain, stopped in the cabin to tell the wireless operators that "we've struck an iceberg, and I'm having an inspection made to tell what it has done for us." The captain continued, "You better get ready to send out a call for assistance. But don't send it until I tell you."³⁵

Smith returned ten minutes later and instructed Phillips and Bride to "send the call for assistance." The operators heard a "terrible confusion outside" the cabin, but otherwise, nothing else indicated trouble. Phillips asked which distress call to send. "The regulation international call for help. Just that," came the captain's reply. Phillips began to send "CQD" as the operators joked and "made light of the disaster."³⁶ Five minutes later, Smith returned. "What are you sending?" he asked. Phillips said he was sending CQD. Bride jokingly said they should start sending SOS because "it's the new call and it may be your last chance to send it."³⁷ Though Captain Smith laughed, he did not disagree, and Phillips began sending the new SOS signal. First, the steamship *Frankfurt* responded, with its operator indicating that he would check with his captain to see if the *Frankfurt*

³³ Russell, "Why Boy Kept Silent," April 8, 1924.

³⁴ [Russell], "Titanic's Surviving Wireless Man," April 19, 1912.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ CQD was the Marconi Company's distress call. In 1912, SOS was a relatively new call and one only adopted as an American standard that same year. The *Titanic* apparently used both signals. Neal McEwan, "'SOS,' 'CQD,' and the History of Maritime Distress Calls," *Telegraph Office* 2, no. 1 (1997): accessed August 2012, www.telegraph-office.com/pages/arc2-2.html; Andrew Wilson, "Shadow of the *Titanic*," *Smithsonian*, March 2012, 35.

³⁷ [Russell], "Titanic's Surviving Wireless Man," April 19, 1912.

could provide any support. The *Carpathia* then answered the *Titanic*'s distress call, and just then Bride could "observe a distinct list forward" of the *Titanic*. Phillips wired the *Carpathia* operator, giving their position and indicating that "we were sinking by the head." Five minutes later, Phillips and Bride received word that the captain of the *Carpathia* had ordered his ship to change its direction and head for the *Titanic*.³⁸

Phillips instructed Bride to run to Smith and inform him of what the *Carpathia* was doing. Bride "went through an awful mess of people to his cabin. The decks were full of scrambling men and women." Every few minutes thereafter, Bride made a trip to the captain's cabin, bringing reports of the *Carpathia*'s position and its speed as it steamed toward the *Titanic*. As he returned to the wireless cabin on one of these trips, Bride noticed that women and children were being loaded into lifeboats and that the ship's "list forward was increasing." Meanwhile, the wireless was growing weaker. The captain informed the operators that the engine rooms were taking on water and that the dynamos—which powered the ship's electricity and therefore its wireless operation—likely would not last much longer. Phillips sent this message to the *Carpathia*, indicating, essentially, that the *Titanic* might not be able to send many more messages.³⁹

Bride explained to Russell and Marconi how Phillips's persistence left him awestruck. Bride related, "He was a brave man. I learned to reverence him that night and I suddenly felt for him a great reverence to see him standing there sticking to his work while everybody else was raging about. I will never live to forget the work of Phillips for that last fifteen minutes." Bride, remembering that each crew member had a life belt, retrieved not only his life belt, but Phillips's also. He also picked up boots and an overcoat for each of them. Phillips was still sending messages to the *Carpathia* to let it know the *Titanic*'s status and position. Phillips also began to receive messages from the *Olympic*, the *Titanic*'s sister White Line ship, which was then returning to England from New York.⁴⁰

Phillips asked Bride to see if any lifeboats remained. Bride saw one last collapsible lifeboat and helped boost it down to the deck. A number of people nearby scrambled into this final lifeboat, while Bride returned to Phillips's side. Smith stopped by, telling them that they had done their "full duty" and instructing them to abandon their cabin. Still, Phillips hung on, continuing to send messages. Bride went back to the bedroom of the operators to retrieve their money, in case they survived the sinking of the ship. As he returned, a large man, a "stoker from below decks" was slipping Phillips's lifebelt off the courageous wireless operator. Harold Bride, who by his own account was "very small," "suddenly felt a passion not to let that man die a decent sailor's death. I wished he might have stretched rope or

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. The *Olympic* was too far away to render any aid to the *Titanic*.

walked a plank. I did my duty. I hope I finished him. I don't know. We left him on the cabin floor of the wireless room and he was not moving."⁴¹

As Bride and Phillips ran looking for some way to save themselves, they heard the band playing a ragtime tune and then "Autumn." The collapsible lifeboat that Bride thought he had already helped shove overboard was still on the deck. As he helped push it into the water, a "big wave carried the boat off. I had hold of an oarlock and I went off with it. The next I knew I was in the boat." The problem was that the boat was upside down, and Bride was under it. He fought to get out from underneath the capsized lifeboat and, as he did, he saw "hundreds" of men—"the sea was dotted with them, all depending on their life belts." As Bride looked up, he watched the *Titanic* as it began to move under the water—"she was a beautiful sight then." Bride knew he had to get away from the suction, and he swam for all he was worth. He watched as "the *Titanic*, on her nose, with her after-quarter sticking straight up in the air, began to settle—slowly."⁴²

As Bride waited in the water, he quickly recognized that he was very cold and felt "like sinking" himself. He saw a boat and put all his strength into swimming for it. He realized that it was the same collapsible lifeboat he had helped to launch. As Bride approached the boat, a hand reached out and pulled him aboard. There was just room for him on the edge of the still-capsized boat. Someone sat on his legs. His legs became wedged between slats and his feet were wrenched out of shape. He hung on, even as larger and larger waves crashed over him. Someone on the boat suggested they all pray together, and they all joined in the Lord's Prayer.⁴³

Eventually, as the *Carpathia* neared them, Bride noticed that one person on their raft was dead. As he looked closely at him, he realized it was his colleague, Jack Phillips, whose relentless service had contributed so much to the successful rescue mission of the *Carpathia*. Bride was pulled up a rope ladder onto the deck of the *Carpathia* and received care for a number of hours. At that point, someone told him that the *Carpathia* radio operator was "getting 'queer'" and wondered if he could take a turn on the wireless key. From then on, Bride had been sending, sending, sending. As he asked, "How could I then take news queries? Sometimes I let a newspaper ask a question and get a long string of stuff asking for full particulars about everything. Whenever I started to take such a message I thought of the poor people waiting for their messages to go—hoping for answers to them. . . . I was still sending my personal messages when Mr. Marconi and the *Times* reporter arrived to ask that I prepare this statement."⁴⁴ This was the story—clearly Bride's—that Ike Russell told in his spare, graceful prose.

After Bride was carried off the *Carpathia* on a stretcher and Marconi and

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Russell also had left the ship, the “Nabobs of the Times” took Marconi to a midnight dinner. Meanwhile, Russell sat down to his typewriter, both to tell Harold Bride’s tale and to recount how Marconi had come to visit Bride onboard the ship.⁴⁵ As Russell later described, he was “on the fourth page of my story about the wireless boy. I saw that the ribbon was ‘going wrong’ and spreading ink



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about, and became aware that tears were falling on the paper in gobs as big as those shed by the old [police] sergeant” who guided Russell and Marconi through the crowds. He pondered how he would have knelt “or at least should have bowed” if Marconi were still with him. Instead, Russell “turned back to my typewriter. They say Literature is Truth touched by Emotion. I have written steadily for twenty years or more. If ever I wrote Literature, that was the night.”⁴⁶

Harold Bride, being carried up a ship’s ramp, 1912. Bride’s description, written by Russell, is likely the best-known eyewitness account of the Titanic disaster.

Yet Russell’s accomplishment was not without controversy. According to him, the senator who later would lead the Senate’s investigation into the tragedy of the *Titanic* was reportedly “furious” that Marconi and a *Times* reporter had boarded the ship “against all orders.”⁴⁷ As part of its inquiry into the accident, Congress summoned Bride, Marconi, and other company representatives. Other newspapers claimed that the Marconi Wireless Company made an exclusive agreement with the *Times* for the story of the wireless operators. Harold Bride was accused of holding back information from the President of the United States about Major Butt, among other things, in order to profit from telling his experiences. Bride testified for hours before a congressional committee, acknowledging that he had received \$1,000 from the *New York Times* the next morning for his story.⁴⁸ The committee may have summoned Russell to Washington,

⁴⁵ [Russell], “Marconi Pays Visit,” April 19, 1912.

⁴⁶ In the same issue that Russell’s retelling of Bride’s story appeared, the *Times* published an account by Russell of his visit with Marconi to Bride on the *Carpathia*. Russell, unpublished manuscript on visit with Harold Bride, 9, Russell Papers.

⁴⁷ Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 9, Russell Papers. The senator who chaired the Senate’s investigation was William A. Smith of Michigan.

⁴⁸ U.S. Senate, Committee on Commerce, “Titanic” *Disaster*, 133–39, 896–907.



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This image captures the hectic atmosphere of the U.S. Senate investigation of the disaster.

but never asked him to testify.⁴⁹

Russell's view of the Senate investigation makes clear his biases on the question:

The simple honest Marconi was unmercifully pilloried by a U.S. Senatorial committee for this

night's work. A Senatorial committee worked out a theory that the wireless boy had "willfully" refused to answer messages such as a message from President Taft asking how Major Archibald Butt was, and he "willfully" refrained from sending details of the story so that with Marconi's aid he could "sell" the story on this eventful night for Gold!

It was a curious theory to work out of that mania to send-send-send which kept the wireless boy with his hand on the sending key and never let him take thought of the receiving apparatus. But it was worked out and I have never seen such a crucifixion [*sic*] as the Senate committee made of Marconi in their ferocious attempt to make their case. I could not be called. The Nabobs of the Times were called—and all they knew was that they had offered money for a "beat" and had "got it!"⁵⁰

For his part, Russell wrote that the newspapers and the Senate committee both had "accused the lad of holding back to sell his story. Many newspapers had wirelessly him fat offers for his story. He knew nothing more about them when he told it to Marconi than he did about the President's calls that, along with all the others he had not heard—because he was sending, sending, sending."⁵¹

Russell and Marconi worked so hard to find Harold Bride for different reasons. Marconi wanted to know why his operators on the *Carpathia* had not responded to Taft's inquiries regarding Butt. Russell pursued the story because he understood that the extraordinary fortune he was experiencing, being thrown into the situation with Guglielmo Marconi, offered him a unique opportunity to write an exceptional article. From Russell's perspective, *Times* officials were happy to believe that the paper had landed an exclusive on Bride's story by paying for it. As he described it, "they were rather proud, I think, of the hypothesis put forward by the Government!"⁵²

⁴⁹ Janet, "Salt Lakers in Gotham," *Deseret News*, May 18, 1912. In her *Deseret News* column, Easton reported that "Isaac Russell of the *New York Times* was in Washington during the investigation of the *Titanic* disaster, where his presence was desired by the investigation committee.

⁵⁰ Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 10, Russell Papers.

⁵¹ Russell, "Met Survivors of *Titanic*," July 6, 1917.

⁵² Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 10, Russell Papers.

It was Isaac Russell, working without assignment from the *Times*, who obtained the exclusive interview with Bride. He turned it into the best-known eyewitness account of the sinking of the *Titanic* largely through good fortune, but also through pluck and resolution—not through payment of a fee. The *Times* did pay Bride for the interview after the fact, but he had not withheld information to preserve the value of the interview. Ironically, as noted above, even the semiofficial history of the *Times* failed to correctly credit Russell as the *Times* reporter who obtained and told Bride's famous account.

The April 19, 1912, issue of the *New York Times*—which ran as its lead article the story told by Harold Bride to Isaac Russell—went down in newspaper lore as one of the greatest issues ever published. Original copies of it became unusually valuable as a collector's item. Many years later, Carr Van Anda was reported to have visited Alfred Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* offices in London. When Van Anda met the newspaper's editor, the editor "opened a desk drawer at his right hand. In it lay the *New York Times* of April 19, 1912. He said 'We keep this as an example of the greatest accomplishment in news reporting.'"⁵³

The final ignominy Russell endured was that, though he received a modest \$25 bonus, he received payment for the publication of the Bride story only once, even though the *Times* reprinted it on several occasions and newspapers and magazines all over the world described the account countless times.⁵⁴ In this era, the *New York Times* paid its reporters once per article, on a "space" basis. If an article was good enough to be reprinted, the newspaper and its readers benefitted, not the reporter. As Ike recalled,

Newspaperdom is a funny world. The next Sunday, the *Times* reprinted the story by "request" of people who wrote in by the scores that they broke down in the midst of reading it and finished in a flood of tears. My pay came by "space." On account of the huge exploitation of the story by the paper and its resale all over the English-speaking world, I asked if they could not allow my "space rate" on this special supplement publication.

"No," was the answer "you got your space the first time and now the story is ours. We would have got it anyhow, we had all our plans made if you had not slipped in on them."⁵⁵

In his unhappiness over his treatment in the whole matter, Russell neglected to acknowledge the congratulations and small bonus Adolph Ochs had sent through Arthur Greaves.⁵⁶ Russell's preparation of one of the most famous newspaper stories in history regained for him the favor of

⁵³ Berger, *Story of the New York Times*, 201.

⁵⁴ Arthur Greaves to Isaac Russell, April 23, 1912, box 5, fd. 1, Russell Papers. Greaves noted how Adolph Ochs, the publisher, had asked him to send Russell the bonus. Greaves also wrote that "You have been made fully aware of the opinion of everybody in the office that it was very well done." Ibid.

⁵⁵ Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 9–10, Russell Papers.

⁵⁶ Arthur Greaves to Isaac Russell, April 23, 1912, box 5, fd. 1, Russell Papers; Tiff and Jones, *The Trust*, 805.



most of his superiors at the paper, but Van Anda's comment to him the next day when they passed in the hall was "'We would have got [Bride's account] anyhow.'" ⁵⁷

After his work on the *Titanic* story, Russell continued to gain prominence, working for the *Times* for three more years and contributing muckraking articles to *Collier's Weekly*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Pearson's Magazine*, *World's Work*, and other magazines. Then in June 1915, the *Times* fired him for covering a controversial speech made by Amos Pinchot. Together with his better-known brother, Gifford, Amos had supported Theodore Roosevelt for years. By this point, however, the relationship between the brothers and the former president was strained, and Russell reported that the Pinchots had decided to break with Roosevelt. ⁵⁸ When Roosevelt learned that the *Times* had "summarily fired" Russell for writing the article, he "never paused until he had hunted me up and got me a new job. And

A graduation photograph from Lowell School, Salt Lake City, 1895. Isaac Russell appears to be on the back row, second from the right. His classmates included the artist Mahonri Young and his brother Waldemar (who also attended Stanford with Russell); Clarence Neslen, a future mayor of Salt Lake City; and several children from prominent local families.

⁵⁷ Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 9–10, Russell Papers.

⁵⁸ Russell's explanation of the break embarrassed Gifford Pinchot; as a result, both brothers accused him of misreporting Amos's speech. [Isaac Russell], "Pinchot Renounces Allegiance to T. R.," *New York Times*, May 31, 1915; "Pinchots Deny They Renounced Colonel," *New York Times*, June 1, 1915. Van Anda's take on the story that led to the firing was that Russell had "reported a 'conclusion, not a fact.'" Tift and Jones, *The Trust*, 805. Characteristically, Russell wrote an envenomed letter to the *Times's* editor, asserting that he had reported the speech correctly and complaining that he had not received a fair hearing before being fired. Isaac Russell to the Editor of the *New York Times*, n.d., box 15, fd. 17, Russell Papers; see also Isaac Russell to Arthur Greaves, June 15, 1915, box 5, fd. 1, Russell Papers. He sent another letter to the staff of

then for two hours he told me all of his dealing with the Pinchots.” Russell’s new position was with the *New York Evening Mail*, where he soon became city editor and also served as the paper’s food editor.⁵⁹

Though Isaac Russell left Utah for the big city in his late twenties, he maintained close ties with family, friends, and colleagues in the Beehive State. He acted as a “contributing editor” of the Progressive Party’s local Utah publication, the *Progressive*, and submitted many columns on contemporary political issues.⁶⁰ From 1911 through 1918 and later in the 1920s, Russell operated a secret “press bureau” for the Mormon church in New York and Chicago, cleverly defending the church and its leaders against attacks; ghost-writing articles, letters to the editor, and speeches for church leaders; and generally providing brilliant public relations services for the church.⁶¹ In late 1921, he moved to Chicago, where he provided public relations, editing, and lobbying services first for the American Institute of Baking and then for Westinghouse Electric.⁶² Always a whirling dervish of activity, Russell found time in Chicago to write a book and numerous articles on the history of Utah and the West.⁶³ Unfortunately, his health seriously declined in his mid-forties. In September 1927, he died of a heart attack in Chicago at the age of 47.⁶⁴

the *Times* indicating that Ochs had sent him a check as a severance payment and, no doubt, as hush money, and that anyone deserving on the staff could have it. Russell did not want the money; he wanted a fair hearing. Isaac Russell to the Members of the Staff of the *New York Times*, n.d., box 15, fd. 17, Russell Papers. He later remembered this episode as the “most disastrous of [my] life.” Isaac Russell to David Starr Jordan, April 3, 1923, box 5, fd. 27, Russell Papers.

⁵⁹ Isaac Russell to Mr. Vail, November 1, 1921, box 8, fd. 10, Russell Papers.

⁶⁰ “Isaac Russell,” *Progressive*, November 1, 1913, 1. A few of his prominently featured contributions to the *Progressive* included Isaac Russell, “Concerning Venal Newspapers,” *Progressive*, February 15, 1913, 8; “The Federal Bunch and President Wilson,” *Progressive*, April 5, 1913, 5–6; “To Parson Simpkin—A Few Kind Words,” *Progressive*, April 19, 1913, 5–6; “Senator Sutherland—Doctor of Laws,” *Progressive*, October 11, 1913, 9, 19; “A Smoot Hero and Bull Moose Standard,” *Progressive*, October 18, 1913, 3, 6; “Seven Keys to Baldpate and One to Senator Smoot,” *Progressive*, April 11, 1914, 4–5; “On Fighting Smoot with Moyle,” *Progressive*, August 15, 1914, 6–7.

⁶¹ Cannon, “Isaac Russell, Mormon Muckraker.” Russell burst on the Mormon scene when he convinced Theodore Roosevelt to write a letter for publication in a national magazine defending the Mormons against what B. H. Roberts referred to as the “magazine crusade” against the church. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “‘And Now It Is the Mormons’: The Magazine Crusade Against the Mormon Church, 1910–1911,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 22, 25–31; Isaac Russell, “Mr. Roosevelt to the Mormons, a Letter with an Explanatory Note,” *Collier’s Weekly*, April 15, 1911, 28, 36; Joseph F. Smith to Isaac Russell, April 25, 1911, box 7, fd. 23, Russell Papers; B. H. Roberts to Isaac Russell, April 20, 1911, box 7, fd. 9, Russell Papers.

⁶² Cannon, “Isaac Russell, Mormon Muckraker”; Isaac Russell to B. H. Roberts, January 22, 1922, B. H. Roberts Papers, Ms0106, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah; Isaac Russell to Lewis Bolser, April 25, 1925, box 4, fd. 11, Russell Papers; Heber J. Grant to Isaac Russell, May 10, 1925, box 4, fd. 30, Russell Papers.

⁶³ Isaac K. Russell, in collaboration with Howard R. Driggs, *Hidden Heroes of the Rockies* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, NY: World Book Company, 1923). Russell published regularly about Utah history in the *Deseret News* and in LDS church magazines. See, for example, Isaac K. Russell, “Theodore Roosevelt—Staunch Friend of Utah,” *Deseret News*, December 20, 1919, Christmas news section, 12; Isaac K. Russell, “Joseph Smith and the Great West,” *Improvement Era* August, November, December 1925, February, March, April, May, September, October, December 1926, January, March, May, July 1927. The long-running “Joseph Smith and the Great West” was a broad-ranging history of Mormon settlement in Missouri.

⁶⁴ “I. K. Russell Found Dead,” *New York Times*, September 8, 1927; Obituary, *Chicago Post*, September 8, 1927; “Death Closes Writer’s Work,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 8, 1927.

While Harold Bride's eyewitness account of the *Titanic* disaster continues to be critical to understanding what happened that fateful night in April 1912, Isaac Russell's preparation of that account has until now been largely forgotten. As he said in his unpublished manuscript, "[The Nabobs of the *Times*] did not ask their reporter, either, so none of them knew until this writing, how [the Bride account] all really came about."⁶⁵ The same is true of historians who have credited Carr Van Anda for masterminding Marconi's visit to the *Carpathia*, who accused Bride and the Marconi Company of withholding information to preserve the value of the wireless operators' stories, and who even incorrectly identified the *Times* reporter who accompanied the inventor onto the ship. Russell's recounting of the extraordinary tale of how the account was obtained corrects these mistakes. When Russell and Marconi interviewed Bride, they learned that the wireless operator was not refusing to respond to incoming messages to preserve a likely fee for his story; rather, the traumatized twenty-two-year-old was so overwrought by what he had seen that he could not stop sending messages from his fellow *Titanic* survivors who were writing to reassure frightened relatives and loved ones that they were alive. Russell's account is also contrary to the legend that has been created about Carr Van Anda's supposed grand plan to get Marconi onto the *Carpathia*. It was not Van Anda at all. As Tift and Jones wrote, it was "luck and an enterprising reporter" who got the story, and that enterprising reporter was Isaac Russell.⁶⁶ This takes little away from the *Times*' managing editor's masterful oversight of the paper's coverage of one of the greatest news stories of the twentieth century, but it does provide an important correction. Russell's descendants and relatives are justifiably proud of the remarkable role he played.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Russell, unpublished manuscript on his visit with Harold Bride, 10, Russell Papers.

⁶⁶ Tift and Jones, *The Trust*, 805.

⁶⁷ A photograph of Isaac Russell at the J. Willard Marriott Library has the following handwritten note on the back: "Isaac Russell, reporter for the New York Times, ones [sic] of whose reports, on the sinking of the *Titanic*, during which he worked with Marconi, inventor of wireless telegraphy, aboard the ship the *Carpathia*, won honors for him." Samuel Russell Photograph Collection, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah. In an article about Russell's great-grandson, Robbie Russell, the reporter described what is certainly a family tradition he heard from Robbie, "Robbie's great-grandfather is Isaac Russell, a former *New York Times* reporter who, legend has it, was the first to write about the sinking of the *Titanic*." Steven Goff, "Getting to Know D.C. United's Robbie Russell," accessed July 2012, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/soccer-insider/post/getting-to-know-dcuniteds-robbie-russell/2012/01/26/gIQAkSvfTQ_blog.html.

Wallace Henry Thurman: A Utah Contributor to the Harlem Renaissance

By WILFRED D. SAMUELS
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The 1920s were a turbulent and contradictory period in American history. Though the legacy of World War I haunted the era, it was yet a time of prosperity and optimism. On the one hand, during the so-called Roaring Twenties, many Americans enjoyed dance crazes, Model-T cars, and the first transatlantic flight. No longer bound by the tenets of what literary critic Granville Hicks called “the great tradition,” Americans across the social spectrum reveled in a frenzied pursuit of pleasure, which became paramount in the lives of urban trendsetters.¹ On the other hand, it was a period of rising intolerance and isolation, as much of post-World War I America retreated into provincialism, as evidenced by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the anti-radical hysteria of the Palmer raids, restrictive immigration laws, and prohibition. Then came the decade’s sobering end: the stock market crash of 1929.²

The Harlem Renaissance was among the trends that sprang from and contributed to the confusion and excitement of the 1920s. Also known as the “New Negro Manhood Movement,” the Harlem Renaissance was a movement of African American artists, musicians, and writers, among others, dedicated to the celebration of black culture. It became renowned in part for its African American literary icons, such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Nella Larsen, and a lesser-known Utahn, Wallace Thurman

(1902–1934). Born and reared in Salt Lake City, Thurman attended West High School

**Langston Hughes (left) and
Wallace Thurman (right), 1934.**

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¹ Granville Hicks, *The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature since the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

² John F. Wukovits, ed., *The 1920s* (San Diego: Greenhaven, 2000), 9–19.



Thurman was born in Salt Lake City and spent his childhood and youth there, as this studio portrait demonstrates.

and the University of Utah, and worked at the Hotel Utah before moving to Los Angeles and finally to New York City, where he joined the vanguard of the Harlem Renaissance.³ While the ways in which growing up in Utah affected Thurman remain ambiguous, the time he spent in Harlem dramatically altered his views of his hometown. One thing seems certain: the Mormon mecca indirectly impacted the “New Negro” mecca through the participation, leadership, and architectural role of one of its native sons, Wallace Thurman, whom Langston Hughes called a “strangely brilliant black boy.”⁴

Wallace Thurman was born in Salt Lake City on August 16, 1902, to Beulah and Oscar Thurman.⁵ Little is known about either of his parents. Shortly after Wallace’s birth, his father moved to California, abandoning Thurman and his mother. Beulah and Oscar divorced in 1906. The divorce papers dated Oscar’s departure as September 10, 1905, and claimed that he “willfully and wrongfully and without just cause or excuse abandoned and deserted” his wife.⁶ Beulah remarried at least six times and moved her family from Salt Lake City to Boise to Chicago to Omaha and back to Salt Lake City during Thurman’s childhood.⁷ Beulah Thurman’s relocations reflect the wider movements of African Americans who sought freedom and economic opportunities during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

³ Eleonore van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s Harlem Renaissance* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 55. Van Notten notes that she has verification of Thurman’s graduation from West High School. However, the authors could not document this fact: records for the school only go back to 1920, and Thurman does not appear in any of the school’s yearbooks or graduation programs. Linda Hale and Theresa Mbauke, e-mail to David Hales, November 21, 2011. Records concerning Thurman’s attendance at the University of Utah vary. According to student records housed at the Marriott Library, Thurman never attended the university or took classes there. Paul Mogren, e-mail to David Hales, June 26, 2012. However, according to records from the Office of the Registrar, Thurman attended the University of Utah from January to June 1920. Timothy J. Ebner, University Registrar, to David Hales, July 16, 2013. Further, the university has a transcript showing his attendance and enrollment in chemistry, physiology, pharmacy, and zoology. Copy in possession of the authors.

⁴ Langston Hughes, “Harlem Literati in the Twenties,” *Saturday Review of Literature* 22 (June 22, 1940): 13.

⁵ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s*, 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 74–77. Two days after her divorce, Beulah Thurman married Thomas Brown. They had one son, Lawrence Brown. It is not known how many husbands Beulah had. In 1929, Thurman wrote that his mother was attempting to leave her sixth husband. Even in old age Beulah was described as “an attractive elegant woman with stunning straight black hair and an intelligent outgoing personality.” *Ibid.*, 75–76.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 77, 81. In 1914 Thurman entered high school in Omaha, Nebraska, but returned with his mother to Salt Lake City shortly thereafter.

Although many blacks flocked to the Northeast—more than half a million during the World War I period—thousands also migrated to the West, especially the Pacific Northwest.⁸

Only sketchy, contradictory information exists about Thurman's paternal family. In his brief autobiographical portraits, Thurman said that he came from a family of pioneer westerners.⁹ Richard Bruce Nugent, his long-time friend and a gay voice of the Renaissance, depicted Thurman's family in an unpublished fictional manuscript that opened with Thurman's great-grandparents. Nugent implied that Thurman's earliest known paternal ancestor was a woman brought to the Salt Lake Valley with the Mormon pioneers. However, no evidence of any of his paternal ancestors in Utah before 1892 remains extant.¹⁰

When Thurman discovered that his paternal grandparents managed a hotel in California, he wired for reservations without announcing who he was. Thurman's grandparents welcomed him.¹¹ While Wallace was in California, Oscar Thurman—now paralyzed and suffering from what was diagnosed as tuberculosis of the throat—came to visit his parents. Thurman wrote that he almost fainted from the sight of his father, and he called Oscar “the most pitiful albeit nauseating sight I have seen in many a day.”¹²

More information exists about Thurman's mother's family, especially his maternal grandmother, Emma Ellen Gladen Jackson (“Ma Jack”), with whom Thurman shared a deep and lasting relationship. Emma Jackson was born in Osceola, Missouri, on August 10, 1862. She and her first husband, Missouri native Thomas Stanford Stewart, moved to Leadville, Colorado, in the early 1880s, where they lived with their two children, Beulah and Arthur. Jackson married her second husband, Wallace P. Jackson, on July 29, 1890, eighteen years before Thomas Stewart's 1908 death.¹³

Two years later, in June 1892 and for unknown reasons, Jackson brought her two children to Salt Lake City, which had only a small African American population.¹⁴ At the time, the federal census records indicated that most of Utah's blacks—male and female—worked as servants and waiters in commercial establishments and private homes.¹⁵ Records divulge only enough information about Jackson's early activities in Salt Lake City

⁸ Quintard Taylor, “Susie Revels Cayton, Beatrice Morrow Cannady, and the Campaign for Social Justice in the Pacific Northwest,” in *African American Women Confront the West: 1600–2000*, eds. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 189–204.

⁹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 78. This is according to a letter Thurman sent to William Jourdan Rapp, a New York City editor and friend.

¹² *Ibid.* At that time his grandparents lived at 1538 Fifth Street, Santa Monica, California.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Wallace Thurman, “Quoth Brigham Young: —This is the Place,” *Messenger* 8 (August 1926): 236; Ronald Gerald Coleman, “A History of Blacks in Utah, 1825–1910” (PhD diss., University of Utah, 1980), 79–80.

to intrigue and mystify. In Utah she married five times; four of her husbands were surnamed Jackson.¹⁶

Jackson's experiences reflected the challenges that she, like most African Americans, faced in her struggle to achieve economic and domestic stability in the years between the end of Reconstruction and the close of the nineteenth century. Although women could often find domestic work, men had difficulty getting employment; as a result, they migrated to places with more attractive job opportunities, often abandoning their families, leaving women in charge, and giving the appearance of a black matriarchy. As a woman from Boulder, Colorado, put it, "the Negro women, of course, were the support of the church, the backbone of the church, the backbone of the family, they were the backbone of the social life, everything."¹⁷ Jackson clearly fit this profile. Indeed, she was the backbone of everything—including the life of her grandson, Wallace.

In Salt Lake City, Jackson's role as a respected community leader was evidenced by the fact that she helped to establish the Baptist Prayer Band, "to worship, pray to God and read the Bible."¹⁸ The group met on a regular basis in her home during the late 1890s and, in 1896, became the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church of Salt Lake City.¹⁹ Jackson's action in founding Calvary must be considered progress; it resonated with a similar movement, which occurred particularly in the South, wherein African Americans transformed church missionary societies into social service agencies. Such societies were more than religious sanctuaries, although Calvary Baptist—founded in the shadow of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which denied the priesthood to black men—provided a refuge for its members. These churches, including Calvary Baptist, often veiled the political and economic ventures, activities, and intentions of the black women who formed them. By the century's end, churches like the Calvary Baptist Church functioned as a "parapolitical tool," and African American women "understood their new role in community life and their unique ability to execute it."²⁰ Jackson belonged to this group of women and in the forefront of Salt Lake City's black community.

Despite Calvary's growth, intra-racial tensions and issues related to skin color impacted the congregation. These tensions pervaded African American culture in the early twentieth century, and they would become a major theme in Wallace Thurman's fictional work. Nationally, the Baptist church was segregated by gender, and at Calvary Baptist in Salt Lake City,

¹⁶ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 61.

¹⁷ Susan Armitage, "'The Mountains Were Free and We Loved Them': Dr. Ruth Flowers of Boulder, Colorado," in Taylor and Moore, *African American*, 171.

¹⁸ 1800. *Calvary. 1976: Missionary Baptist Church* (church bulletin) (Salt Lake City: Calvary Baptist Church, 1976), 2.

¹⁹ Today the Calvary Baptist Church is a thriving, integrated congregation; for a history of the church, see France A. Davis, *Light in the Midst of Zion: A History of Black Baptists in Utah, 1892–1996* (Salt Lake City: Empire, 1997).

²⁰ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 150–51.



“the complexion of one’s skin determined where a member sat in church. . . light-skinned members sat on one side and darker sat on the other side of the church.”²¹ The “Blue Vein Society,” so called because its members supposedly had skin light enough for veins to show through, initiated this practice and valorized “the lightness of one’s skin.” Indeed, “the church was unable to escape the social practices of its time.”²²

This practice was one of the most insidious remnants of slavery that followed African Americans into the twentieth century, namely, the categorization of blacks on the basis of their proximity in color to their enslavers’ white skin. State constitutions used labels such as mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon to classify blackness in the Jim Crow era, while African Americans memorialized the self-hating glorification of whiteness in a folk ditty: “If you was white, should be all right, / If you was brown, stick around, / But as you’s black, hmm brother, get back, get back, get back.” Yet African Americans also gave the negative signifier of blackness positivity by declaring that “black [was] beautiful,” hence, “the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice”—a proverb that became the title of Thurman’s first novel.

To be certain, intra-racial conflict functioned symbiotically with economic status in the African American community generally—and presumably within Jackson’s Salt Lake City social circles—as class stratification and social caste based on color became a double-headed viper. Light-skinned African Americans (whom Thurman called “dicty”) often belonged to the “black bourgeoisie,” had more prestigious occupations, and were granted access to higher formal education. Therefore, they enjoyed a higher social status, leadership roles, prestigious neighborhoods, and well-appointed homes.²³

An address entry for Emma “Ma Jack” Jackson, Thurman’s grandmother, from the 1902 Salt Lake City Polk directory. This address was in a boarding house, as the directory establishes elsewhere. Note the designation of Jackson as “col’d.”

²¹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s*, 69.

²² Davis, *Light in the Midst of Zion*, 27–28.

²³ The intra-racial tensions present in Jackson’s congregation were not unique to Salt Lake City. On the contrary, Thurman wrote about class divides within Harlem’s black churches. He reported that “the better class of Harlemites attend the larger churches. Most of the so called ‘dictys’ are registered ‘Episcopalians’ at St. Phillips, which is the religious sanctum of the socially elect and wealthy Negroes of Harlem. The congregation . . . is largely mulatto.” At the other end of the spectrum were the earthy “outlaw sects,” including Holy Rollers, black Jews, and Moslems. Thurman, “Negro Life in New York’s Harlem: A Lively

The historical record provides a mixed view of the economic status of Jackson and her family. According to the Salt Lake City directories, Jackson lived near 212 West 100 South in 1902, and she continued to live in the general area for a number of years. She changed residence at least five times, finally landing, in 1928, at 308 East and 900 South.²⁴ Despite their church membership, a Thurman biographer suggests that Jackson and her seventh husband, Jesse R. Jackson, were involved in bootlegging and that their home doubled as a brothel.²⁵ Although the difficult circumstances of the Jacksons' life might account for their seemingly disingenuous religiosity, it is equally feasible that they viewed bootlegging and prostitution as an avenue to economic stability. Just so, as an adult, Wallace Thurman wrote to a friend that "his grandparents were financially secure" and that they owned the house on 900 South, a "typical middle-class neighbourhood [*sic*]."²⁶

At this time, as African Americans sought to establish a middle class, "faith in business enterprise was mingled with the Negro's religious faith."²⁷ Both Jackson and her husband supported the economic empowerment advocated by Booker T. Washington, who gave a lecture at the University of Utah and visited the Calvary Baptist Church in 1913. Washington was controversial for prioritizing economic advancement and industrial education over sociopolitical rights and formal education, and he taught blacks to "cast down your buckets where you are" to achieve success in business and commerce. Sadly, prostitution and bootlegging may have been among the limited options the Jacksons had to help them achieve a modicum of success. Their decision does not necessarily speak to their moral values alone, but also, to the scanty economic choices they had in Utah.

As for the young Wallace Thurman, according to Doris Fry, one of his childhood classmates, he was a "nervous, sickly child." Yet Thurman was known to have a big smile, a deep laugh, and a dark brown skin. "His voice was without accent, deep and resonant. That was the most memorable thing about him," noted Dorothy West, a fellow Harlem Renaissance novelist and a long-time friend.²⁸

Picture of a Popular and Interesting Section," in Amritjit Singh and Daniel M. Scott III, eds., *The Collected Writings of Wallace Thurman: A Harlem Renaissance Reader* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 58–59.

²⁴ *Salt Lake City Directories* (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk, 1902–1928). Here one finds the most detailed information regarding the known addresses of Emma Jackson and her family in Salt Lake City.

²⁵ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 68–69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 71. A letter Thurman wrote to William Jourdan Rapp in 1929 suggests the complexity of the Jacksons' relationship with their congregation. At this time, after Jackson underwent a cataract surgery, members of the Baptist church came to the family's home to pray for her. As Thurman recorded, the minister "infected my grandmother especially when he asked mercy for the blind and the afflicted." Thurman ordered them out of the house and wrote, "My ostracization among polite colored circles in Salt Lake will now be complete." Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 156–57.

²⁷ E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Free Press, 1957), 40.

²⁸ Phyllis R. Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," in *Afro-American Writers from the Harlem Renaissance to 1940*, ed. Trudier Harris (Detroit: Gale Research, 1987), 261. Dorothy West, best known for her novel *The Living is Easy*, was a black author and part of the Harlem Renaissance.



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Thurman loved to read and from an early age thought of himself as a writer. At age ten, he wrote his first novel, which was based on a film adaptation of Dante's *Inferno*.²⁹ He read William Shakespeare, Gustave Flaubert, Herbert Spencer, Charles Baudelaire, Charles Sainte-Beuve, Henrik Ibsen, Thomas Hardy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, Havelock Ellis, and Sigmund Freud. During his young adulthood, Thurman dismissed the idea of a literary career, but in college he changed his mind again.³⁰ According to Langston Hughes, his close friend, Thurman "had read everything" and could read eleven lines at a time.³¹ A high school friend, Nathan Gray, said Thurman learned to read at such intense speed by sneaking into a bookstore in Salt Lake City when the owner was away and reading books without buying them.³² Thurman was also a devout movie fan; he enjoyed the typical serials that he saw (probably at Saturday matinees), and experimented with writing screenplays. His interest in film was a lasting one.³³

West High School, around the time of Thurman's attendance.

Thurman, who attended West High School in Salt Lake City, worked as a busboy at the Hotel Utah's café in 1919. From January to June 1920, he was enrolled as a pre-medical student at the University of Utah. In September 1922, Thurman left for California where he enrolled in the University of Southern California's School of Journalism. Although he dropped out after one semester, he stayed in Los Angeles and worked as a postal clerk. A regular salary provided him time to write. He published "Inklings," a column in the *Pacific Defender*, a black Los Angeles newspaper.³⁴

²⁹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 81; Mae Gwendolyn Henderson, "Portrait of Wallace Thurman," in *Remembering the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Cary D. Wintz (New York: Garland, 1996), 291.

³⁰ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 261.

³¹ Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea: An Autobiography* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1940), 234.

³² Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 82.

³³ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 261.

³⁴ Henderson, "Portrait," 291–92.

Ambitiously, he launched a monthly magazine, the *Outlet*, in September 1924, labeling it “the first western Negro literary magazine.”³⁵ This magazine provided an outlet for Thurman’s own writing and the work of some of his friends, including Arna Bontemps, who became a well-known gay American poet and Harlem Renaissance figure, and Fay Jackson, a journalist and movie publicist.³⁶ However, Thurman could not sustain the financial burden, and the *Outlet* closed down after six issues. He also tried unsuccessfully to organize a literary group on the West Coast comparable to those developing in the East.³⁷

The juncture in American and African American history and culture that took place at the dawning of the twentieth century—identified by W. E. B. DuBois as a time characterized by the problematic “color line”—witnessed, according to Alain Locke, the emergence of the “New Negro.” According to Locke, then the Dean of Humanities at Howard University, “the younger generation is vibrant with its new psychology, the new spirit is awake in the masses, and under the very eyes of the professional observers is transforming what has been a perennial problem into the progressive phase of contemporary Negro life.”³⁸ Locke’s declaration, in many ways, confirmed DuBois’s pronouncement in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1902) that the new “American Negro” “would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism.”³⁹

During the 1920s, a diverse assortment of writers, artists, musicians, diletantes, and even revolutionaries congregated in New York and declared war on the values of middle-class America. As F. Scott Fitzgerald explored to some degree in his now-classic novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), these independent thinkers had the romantic appeal of the exotic, the fervor of insurgents, and the promise of liberation from outmoded forms. Although artists have frequently been on the fringes of “respectable” society, the culture gap that yawned during the Jazz Age was painfully deep.⁴⁰ This gap existed, in part, because of the racial aspect of 1920s culture and its ability to generate stereotypes, tension, idealism, and aspiration. DuBois, Locke, and the major writers of the budding Harlem Renaissance—including Thurman—readily knew this.

The Dutch first settled the neighborhood known as “Haarlem”; German, Irish, and Jewish residents lived there in subsequent eras. The first

³⁵ Freda Scott Giles, “Glitter, Glitz, and Race: The Production of Harlem,” *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* (Fall 1995): 2.

³⁶ Arna Wendell Bontemps (1902–1973) became a librarian at Fisk University, where he established an important collection of African American literature and culture. Fay Jackson (1902–1979) founded the first West Coast black magazine, *Flash*. In the 1930s, Jackson became the first black Hollywood correspondent with the Associated Negro Press.

³⁷ Dorothy West, “Elephant’s Dance: A Memoir of Wallace Thurman,” *Black World* 20 (November 1970): 78.

³⁸ Alain Locke, “The New Negro,” in *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 3–16.

³⁹ W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 215.

⁴⁰ Wukovits, *The 1920s*, 9–19.



uptown African American settlement can be pinpointed to an apartment house at 31 West 133rd Street in 1905.⁴¹ By the early 1920s, Harlem—particularly “Strivers Row,” from 135th to 137th Streets—had become a magnet for middle-class African Americans, who were increasingly determined to achieve full citizenship, particularly because of their participation in World War I and their mass migration to the more integrated cities of the North.

***The University of Utah,
circa 1920, when Thurman
was enrolled there.***

Harlem, a metropolis within a metropolis, rapidly developed as an international symbol that attracted blacks not only from the American South, but also from areas such as West Africa and the Caribbean islands. Newly founded political and cultural organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and Marcus Garvey’s black nationalist Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) contributed to this movement. These groups published journals and newspapers (*Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and *Negro World*) that encouraged blacks to migrate in order to find greater opportunities and a better chance at justice in northern communities, such as Chicago, Detroit, and Harlem.⁴²

The settlers of Harlem included a black intelligentsia—a group of college-educated blacks, such as Harvard graduates DuBois and Locke—who were not only riding the heady wave of post-World War I optimism, but also consciously attempting to record, describe, and shape its relevance to African Americans. On the one hand, these intellectuals described the

⁴¹ Steven Watson, *The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African-American Culture, 1920–1930* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), 11; see also Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem, the Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890–1930* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

⁴² Watson, *Harlem Renaissance*, 21–26; see also Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 189–213.

new cultural ebullience as a rebirth and an awakening—the Harlem Renaissance. On the other hand, artists, bearers of culture, and leaders like Garvey valorized a black aesthetics grounded in black oral and folk culture, specifically music: blues and jazz and art. As Hughes, considered the poet laureate of the Harlem Renaissance, stated in his now-classic essay, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” “perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be himself.”⁴³ This battle raged at the core of the general explosion of creative activity in post–World War I America.

Significantly, this movement also included many white intellectuals such as Carl Van Vechten, a contributor to *Vanity Fair*, and others who hoped to forget the sterility of their own lives by frequenting nightclubs that offered jazz and alcohol, where black performers danced against a backdrop of cardboard jungles. Black literati suddenly enjoyed a prestige among whites that they had not known before. Young blacks and white moderns joined in a dazzling outpouring of creativity, the whole movement anchored by a group of well-respected and well-organized older black men, including DuBois, McKay, Locke, Walter White, and George Schuyler.⁴⁴ The younger, more radical generation was represented by such writers as Countee Cullen, Zora Neal Hurston, Rudolph “Bud” Fisher, Hughes, Nugent, Jean Toomer, and Thurman, who stood with the vanguard of this pioneering black cultural movement.⁴⁵

Pulled by reports of the Harlem Renaissance and pushed by his lack of success in Los Angeles, Thurman followed his fellow journalist-novelist Arna Bontemps to New York City, arriving in Harlem on September 7, 1925. For the next three months he remained unemployed, although, according to Dorothy West, this “did not matter, for that was the great ‘sponge era’ too, and you ate at anyone’s mealtime. . . . Downtown whites were more than generous. You opened your hand and it closed over a five spot.”⁴⁶ One could also hold a “Rent Party,” in which “you invited a crowd of people to your studio charging them admission, got your bootlegger to trust you for a gallon or two of gin, sold it at fifteen cents a paper cup, and earned enough from the evening’s proceeding to pay for your back rent, your bootlegger, and still had sufficient money left to lay a week’s supply of liquor and some crackers and sardines.”⁴⁷ Judging by his account of a “Rent Party,” which he described as a “Harlem Institution” in a 1927 article in the *World Tomorrow*, Thurman was no stranger to such events:

⁴³ Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. Henry L. Gates Jr., 2nd edition (New York: Norton, 2004), 1311–14.

⁴⁴ West, “Elephant’s Dance,” 78.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Watson, *Harlem Renaissance*, 130–31, provides detailed information about the “Rent Party.” Some people made their livelihood holding such parties.

Despite the freedom and frenzy of the parties they are seldom joyous affairs. On the contrary they are rather sad and depressing. A tragic undercurrent runs through the music and is reflected in the eyes and faces of the dancers. . . . The environment in which they live is a steel vise, restricting their natural freedom, depriving them of their spontaneity.⁴⁸

Significantly, as both a participant and observer of these events, Thurman provided valuable insight into their core.

Thurman eventually landed a position with Harlem theater critic Theophilus Lewis, who published his own paper, the *Looking Glass*. Thurman worked as an “everything” man: editorial writer, reporter, and errand boy.⁴⁹ On the recommendation of Lewis, Thurman was hired as managing editor for the *Messenger*, “The World’s Greatest Negro Monthly,” founded and edited by the socialist labor organizers A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen. At the *Messenger*, which “became an intellectual and cultural outlet for black artists,” Thurman made the acquaintance of many active writers from whom he solicited manuscripts. Their contributions markedly improved the quality of the *Messenger*.⁵⁰ Thurman was responsible for the publication of Hughes’s first short stories, for which the *Messenger* paid ten dollars apiece. By 1927, Hughes had published three short stories in the magazine: “The Young Glory of Him,” “Bodies in the Moonlight,” and “The Little Virgin.” According to Hughes, “Wallace Thurman wrote me that they were very bad stories, but better than any other they could find, so he published them.”⁵¹ In addition, Thurman published the works of Zora Neale Hurston and his own essays, reviews, and short stories, including “Grist in the Mill,” his best-known short story.⁵² Thurman left the *Messenger* in the autumn of 1926 to join the staff of the *World Tomorrow*, where he continued to expand his literary contacts.⁵³

Through his editorial positions, Thurman gathered around him such lights as Hurston, Hughes, Nugent, Fisher, and West. At his boarding house at 2677 West 136th Street, known as “Niggerati Manor,” Thurman and his group mocked the older African American intellectuals and the Victorian values imitated by some blacks. In 1926 this group gathered to plan the publication of *Fire!! A Quarterly Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists*. They intended *Fire!!*, in grandiloquent terms, to “satisfy pagan thirst for beauty unadorned,” as well as to provide a forum for younger black writers who wanted to stand apart from the older, venerated black writers.⁵⁴ It would be strictly literary, with no focus on contemporary social issues.⁵⁵ In later years

⁴⁸ “Harlem House Rent Parties,” in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 73–74.

⁴⁹ Klotman, “Wallace Henry Thurman,” 261.

⁵⁰ Sondra Kathryn Wilson, ed., *The Messenger Reader: Stories, Poetry, and Essays from the Messenger Magazine* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), xx.

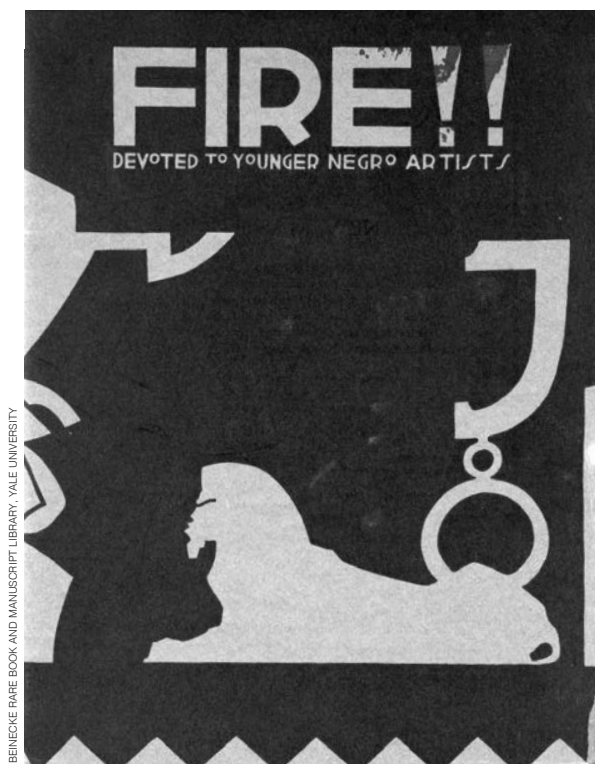
⁵¹ Hughes, “Harlem Literati,” 13–14.

⁵² Wallace Thurman, “Grist in the Mill,” *Messenger* (June 1926).

⁵³ Henderson, “Portrait,” 293.

⁵⁴ *Fire!! A Quarterly Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists* (November 1926), foreword.

⁵⁵ Hughes, “Harlem Literati,” 13.



The cover of *Fire!!* featured Aaron Douglas's striking artwork.

Hughes wrote, "Sweltering summer evenings we met to plan *Fire*. Each of us agreed to give fifty dollars to finance the first issue. Thurman was to edit it, John P. Davis to handle the business end, and Bruce Nugent to take charge of the distribution. The rest of us were to serve as an editorial board to collect material, contribute our own work, and act in any useful way we could."⁵⁶

In the end, only a few members of the group donated their fifty dollars, and Thurman advanced a large portion of the publication money.

The first issue included works by Thurman, Hurston, Gwendolyn Bennett, Nugent, and Arthur Huff Fauset, and poetry by Cullen, Hughes, Bontemps, Helen Johnson, Edward Silvera, Waring Cuney, and Lewis Alexander. Aaron Douglas provided the cover art, and the volume included line drawings by Nugent.⁵⁷ Yet *Fire!!* folded after one issue: it was plagued by financial and distribution problems, and it received only mediocre reviews. Older black intellectuals did not support it in any way. White critics hardly noticed it. As Hughes stated, "Du Bois in the *Crisis* roasted it. The Negro press called it all sorts of bad names." Meanwhile "Rean Graves, the critic for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, began his review by saying: 'I have just tossed the first issue of *Fire* into the fire.'"⁵⁸

Fire!! finally went up in flames: "several hundred copies of *Fire* were stored in the basement of an apartment where an actual fire occurred and the bulk of the whole issue was burned up."⁵⁹ Thurman had to continue paying the printer. Despite the magazine's failure, Thurman did not give up on his dream of publishing the work of young writers. In 1928, with

⁵⁶ Hughes, *Big Sea*, 236; see also "Harlem Literati," 13.

⁵⁷ *Fire!!*

⁵⁸ Hughes, "Harlem Literati," 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

outside funding, he launched *Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life*, a moderate, more broadly focused magazine that was also devoted to displaying work by all young writers; it too failed after its premier issue.⁶⁰

Along with the collapse of *Harlem*, 1928 saw the disintegration of Thurman's whirlwind marriage to Louise Thompson, a student at the New School of Social Research and Hughes's secretary.⁶¹ The marriage was ill-fated from the start. As suggested by the filmmaker Isaac Julien in *Looking for Langston*, Thurman was not only a literary luminary, but he, along with Locke, headed the monarchy of Harlem's black gay community. It is now well documented that many of the writers—including Cullen, McKay, Nugent, Hurston, and possibly Hughes—were homosexual, although, in the case of Cullen, McKay, and Thurman, some of them sought to cloak their preference in heterosexuality. The openly gay Nugent was the exception; his short story "Smoke Lilies and Jade," which was published in *Fire!!*, had homosexuality as its central theme.⁶²

According to West, Thurman had "long wanted to be a father, but he had not taken into consideration that he must first be a husband."⁶³ Frustrated by her husband's financial problems, heavy drinking, and continued interest in men, Thompson left Thurman after six months, although she never officially divorced him.⁶⁴ Thompson later admitted that she "*never understood Wallace. . . . He took nothing seriously. He laughed about everything. He would often threaten to commit suicide but you knew he would never try it. And he would never admit that he was a homosexual. Never, never, not to me at any rate.*"⁶⁵ No existing records from the time Thurman

⁶⁰ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 162.

⁶¹ Louise Thompson, born in Chicago on September 9, 1901, was one of the first black women to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley. She eventually moved to New York City to study at the New School of Social Research. Thompson entered Harlem Renaissance circles through a friendship with painter Aaron Douglas and his wife, Alta. Here she became acquainted with Langston Hughes, became his secretary, and later helped him found the Harlem Suitcase Theatre. She also met and married Wallace Thurman in New York City. Although they separated after six months, Thompson reportedly typed the manuscript for *The Blacker the Berry* and nursed Thurman in the hospital prior to his death. She joined the Communist Party, actively participated in it in America, and spent time in Russia. In 1940, Thompson moved to Chicago, where she married William Patterson, a prominent figure in the American Communist Party. In the 1960s, she was involved in the defense of Angela Davis and Black Panther leaders. She died in 1999, at ninety-seven years old. "Louise Patterson, 97, Is Dead: Figure in Harlem Renaissance," *New York Times*, September 2, 1999.

⁶² *Looking for Langston*, directed by Isaac Julien (Sankofa: London, 1989); George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 264–65.

⁶³ West, "Elephant's Dance," 60; see also Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 200. In a letter to Fay Jackson, Thurman wrote that he was not married, "not now or ever . . . and since I have no paternal instincts would be a dead waste of time, talent, and industry. If I ever mate up it will be free love and brief."

⁶⁴ West, "Elephant's Dance," 81. In 1929, shortly after he arrived in New York City, Thurman was arrested on a morals charge for accepting a proposition from a man in a public restroom. He appeared as a major player in most accounts of queer Harlem. Wallace Thurman to William Jourdan Rapp, May 7, 1929, in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 138.

⁶⁵ Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I: 1902–1941, I, Too, Sing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 172. Emphasis in original.



Louise Thompson Patterson,
Thurman's wife for a short time.

spent in Utah establish his sexual orientation. However, the radical experimentation of Bohemian life in Greenwich Village and Harlem during the 1920s included many forms of alternative sexualities.

Further, while Thurman himself never explicitly mentioned it, he, too, belonged to what he called "the male sisterhood," and he was known to have lovers of both sexes during his time in New York.⁶⁶ Regarding sex, Thurman urged West to "get rid of the puritan notion that to have casual sexual intercourse is a sin. It's a biological necessity my dear. . . . I don't say just saunter forth and give yourself to the first taker. I only say don't repress yourself, nor violently suppress your sex urge, just because you are Puritan enough to believe that hell fire awaits he who takes a

bite of the apple."⁶⁷ What Thurman regarded as a non-puritanical view about repression indicates that either his reading of Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis influenced his thinking on the subject or that their ideas struck a chord with his personal convictions, helping him to embrace his own sexual identity. In the end, while it is clear Thurman's sexuality affected his marriage, its role in his creative and professional life remains ambiguous.

During his first years in Harlem, Thurman experienced challenges, but he also enjoyed success. In addition to working as an editor and gaining a broad network of literary friends, Thurman wrote critical articles on African American life—particularly about Harlem's role as a hub of black culture—for such magazines as the *New Republic*, *Independent*, *Bookman*, and *Dance Magazine* in 1927 and 1928.⁶⁸ In 1929, he began ghost writing stories, many of them Irish, Jewish, and Catholic "true confessions" for *True Story* magazine under a variety of pseudonyms, including Ethel Belle Mandrake and Patrick Casey.⁶⁹ In 1929 Thurman penned his first, and most famous, literary works: *Harlem: A Melodrama of Negro Life* and *The Blacker the Berry*.

Central to Thurman's thematic focus and the treatment of his characters was his conviction that art should celebrate the spectrum of humanity. This included the perspectives of blacks, and not solely the bourgeoisie, but also the black masses. This premise undergirded his efforts with *Fire!!* and ran

⁶⁶ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 236–37. Nugent stated that he often slept on the floor under Thurman's bed, while Thurman entertained his male guest overhead.

⁶⁷ Wallace Thurman to Dorothy West, 1929, in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 172.

⁶⁸ Mae G. Henderson, "Wallace Thurman," in *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture*, ed. Jack Salzman (New York: Simon & Schuster and Prentice Hall International, 1996), 2659.

⁶⁹ Hughes, "Harlem Literati," 13; Therman B. O'Daniel, introduction to *The Blacker the Berry*, by Wallace Thurman (New York: Collier Books, 1970), xii–xiii.

counter to the contention of W. E. B. DuBois in “Criteria of Negro Art” that “all art is propaganda,” even racial propaganda.⁷⁰ Thurman’s tendency to showcase unwashed and untalented African Americans truly irked middle-class black leaders such as DuBois and authors such as James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, and Jessie Fauset, who focused primarily on biracial characters who denied (if not erased) their African roots and embraced whiteness.

Thurman’s play *Harlem: A Melodrama of Negro Life* grew out of his short story, “Cordelia the Crude,” which he published in *Fire!!* The play dramatizes how moving to Harlem affects the Williamses, a black family from the South. While the older generation seeks solace at church when their dreams of a “Promised Land” do not become reality, their wayward daughter, Cordelia, becomes caught up in the corruption of life in Harlem. She is the focal point of both their concern and the play’s dramatic conflict.⁷¹

After a successful weeklong tryout at the Boulevard Theatre in Jackson Heights (Queens), *Harlem* opened on February 20, 1929, at the Apollo Theater on 42nd Street west of Broadway.⁷² Thurman and William Jourdan Rapp, who had helped him rewrite the play, immediately became both famous and infamous. Though its reviews ranged from “exciting” to “vulgar,” *Harlem* was generally considered interesting. Blacks, however, did not care for its focus on the seedier element of Harlem life—liquor, gambling, illicit sex, and wild parties thrown to collect rent money. R. Dana Skinner wrote in *Commonweal* that she was especially upset by the “particular way in which this melodrama exploits the worst features of the Negro and depends for effect solely on lust and sensuality.”⁷³ However, others said *Harlem* “captured the feel for life” and was “constantly entertaining.”⁷⁴ *Harlem* ran for an impressive ninety-three performances during a poor theatrical season and then went on tour to Chicago, Detroit, Boston, Los Angeles, and Toronto.⁷⁵ According to Edward Blatt, Universal Studios eventually bought the screen rights to *Harlem*, but never made it into a film.⁷⁶

Published less than a month after the debut of *Harlem*, Thurman’s first novel, *The Blacker the Berry* (which he dedicated to his grandmother), was generally well received. Thurman titled his novel after the folk saying “the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice” and used it to launch an attack on the intra-racial prejudices. The protagonist, Emma Lou, a dark-skinned girl from Boise, Idaho, is looked down upon by her fairer family members and friends. Discouraged, she travels to Harlem, where she believes her dark

⁷⁰ W. E. B. DuBois, “The Talented Tenth,” in *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois, Volume I*, ed. Julius Lester (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 385–403.

⁷¹ Klotman, “Wallace Henry Thurman,” 266.

⁷² R. Dana Skinner, “Harlem (Critique),” *Commonweal*, March 6, 1939, p. 514. Note that this is not the Apollo Theater in Harlem, but rather, the Apollo Theatre on 42nd Street, west of Broadway.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Giles, “Glitter, Gritz, and Race,” 9, 11.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

color will be accepted. However, the city offers her nothing but disenchantment. She begins emulating the looks and behaviors of fairer-skinned people around her until she realizes that her light-skinned lover is homosexual, a moment that awakens Emma Lou to her own hypocrisy.⁷⁷

Although critics praised Thurman for devoting a novel to the plight of a dark-skinned girl, they faulted him for being too objective, claiming he recounted Emma Lou's life without handing down any judgment on the world in which she lived. Other critics insisted that Thurman "was working out his own feelings of self-hatred, his personal experiences with discrimination both inside and outside the race; the locales almost force the reader to see the novel as autobiography."⁷⁸ Thurman Forsythe, Thurman's longtime friend, wrote in his 1929 review that the novel "is cold, unpoetic, unemotional, unmusical, unrhythmic but keenly analytical, fearless and honest."⁷⁹

While older readings of the novel found a correlation between the dark-skinned Thurman and his protagonist, Emma Lou, more recently, critics have not supported the argument that *Blacker* was a thinly veiled autobiography. In spite of Thurman's dark skin and the insults he might have endured because of his complexion, for him, intra-cultural conflict (at least in his published work) had more to do with the tensions between blacks born in and outside of the United States than anything else. Foreign-born blacks migrated to Harlem in droves after World War I and, as Thurman argued, "the American Negro looks down upon these foreigners just as the white American looks down upon the white immigrants from Europe."⁸⁰ He further explained,

It is the Negro from the British West Indies who creates and has to face a disagreeable problem. . . . He is frowned upon and berated by the American Negro. This *intra-racial prejudice* is an amazing though natural thing. Imagine a community of people. . . . universally known as oppressed, wasting time and energy trying to oppress others of their kind, more recently transplanted from a foreign clime. It is easy to explain. All people seem subject to prejudice, even those who suffer from it the most.⁸¹

Color and wealth, Thurman argued, were part of a larger spectrum of racial and territorial division in America and in Harlem. Meanwhile, as Daniel Scott contends, *Blacker* was not "a reflection of Thurman's anxiety over his own dark skin," but "a text that deliberately . . . [explores] identity categories as staged in Harlem, the 'city of surprises.'"⁸²

⁷⁷ Until recently, when gay and lesbian studies made same-sex orientation and love legitimate topics of discussion in the media and academy, few, if any, critics addressed Thurman's bold reference to homosexuality through the implied relationship between Emma Lou's lover, Alva, and his male friend. Scholars and critics now discuss this lifestyle as a central, though often indirect and silent, theme of the Harlem Renaissance.

⁷⁸ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 269.

⁷⁹ Thurman Forsythe, "Review of *The Blacker the Berry*, by Wallace Thurman," *Flash* (June 29, 1929): 1.

⁸⁰ Thurman, "Few Know Real Harlem," in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 67.

⁸¹ Thurman, "Negro Life in New York's Harlem," in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 44, emphasis added.

⁸² Daniel M. Scott III, "Harlem Shadows: Re-Evaluating Wallace Thurman's *The Blacker the Berry*," *MELUS* 29, no. 3/4 (2004): 323–39.

Encouraged by his overall success as a playwright and novelist, Thurman continued his literary career in the following decade. In 1930, he collaborated with Rapp on a three-act play, *Jeremiah the Magnificent*, which he based on Marcus Garvey's UNIA "Back to Africa" movement of the post-World War I era. The play remained unpublished and was only performed once after Thurman died.⁸³ In 1932, Thurman published two more novels: *Infants of the Spring* and *The Interne*.

Thurman dedicated *Infants* to his mother, Beulah: "The goose who laid a not so golden egg."⁸⁴ Set in Harlem during the 1920s, the story revolves around Raymond Taylor, a young black author. In this novel, Thurman suggests that the pretentious writers who surround Taylor (who, many believe, he based on well-known figures of the Harlem Renaissance, including Hughes, Locke, Hurston, and Nugent, and their ever-present supporter-patron, Carl Van Vechten) had destroyed their creativity with their decadent lifestyles.⁸⁵ He vigorously attacks black writers and their white patrons, who praise everything produced by black authors regardless of its quality. Critics gave *Infants* a reception much like that of *Blacker*. Several wrote that Thurman examined too many issues; one critic wrote that the novel was "clumsily written." While one critic "found its dialogue" to be "often incredibly bad," another concluded that "there are monotonous speeches, an unclear thesis and a lack of unity."⁸⁶ Others praised Thurman for his frank discussion of black society. In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Martha Gruening wrote, "No other Negro writer has so unflinchingly told the truth about color snobbery within the color line, the ins and outs of 'passing' and other vagaries of prejudice. . . . [Its] quota of truth is just that which Negro writers, under the stress of propaganda and counter-propaganda, have generally and quite understandably omitted from their picture."⁸⁷ Some observers considered *Infants* one of the first books written expressly for black audiences and not white critics.⁸⁸

Thurman wrote his third and final novel, *The Interne*, in collaboration with Abraham L. Furman, whom he met while working at Macaulay's Publishing Company. The novel portrays medical life in an urban hospital through Carl Armstrong, a white doctor, whose ideals are shattered because of the corrupt behavior of the staff and the bureaucratic red tape. He saves himself by leaving.⁸⁹ Critics could not agree whether Thurman's account of

⁸³ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 267–68; According to Amritjit Singh, Thurman wrote a number of other plays that are not extant today. Singh also notes that "some scholars have mistakenly ascribed the plays *Singing the Blues* (written by John McGowan) and *Savage Rhythm* (written by Harry Hamilton and Norman Foster) to him." Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 312.

⁸⁴ Wallace Thurman, *Infants of the Spring* (New York: Macaulay, 1932), front flyleaf.

⁸⁵ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 270.

⁸⁶ Terrell Scott Herring, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Manor: *Infants of the Spring* and the Conundrum of Publicity," *African American Review* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 586.

⁸⁷ Martha Gruening, "Two Ways to Harlem," *Saturday Review of Literature* (March 12, 1932): 585.

⁸⁸ "Wallace Thurman," African American Literature Book Club, accessed July 17, 2013, aalbc.com/authors/Wallace.htm.

⁸⁹ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 272.



Wallace Thurman, 1902–1934.

medical wrongdoing was based on fact or not. Many claimed that the novel had no semblance of reality, while others insisted that the incidents were real, if unusual.⁹⁰

Buoyed by the experience of writing his play and novels, Thurman returned to the West Coast in 1934 to write screenplays for Bryan Foy Productions. While in California and aided by his salary of more than \$250 a week, he drank excessively.⁹¹ He nevertheless wrote two screenplays: *Tomorrow's Children* (1934) and *High School Girl* (1935), which demonstrated Thurman's readiness to discuss the controversial issues present in his previous works. *Tomorrow's Children* follows the Masons, a poor white family that faces sterilization as a condition of continuing to

receive welfare.⁹² At the time, Hollywood rarely explored such situations. The film was considered groundbreaking because it used the medical term "vasectomy" to explain the procedure for male sterilization. However, as Thurman biographer Phyllis Klotman wrote, "Although the runner sensationalizes the problem and links sterilization to prevailing Nazi theory (and practice), the film is [a] rather restrained melodrama, and in general not very different from the Hollywood norm."⁹³ Nevertheless, because of its revolutionary subject matter, the film was banned in New York and boycotted by the Catholic Church upon its release.⁹⁴

The film *High School Girl*, which focuses on the controversial topics of teen pregnancy and abortion, follows a girl who gets pregnant (although the word is never mentioned) because her mother never educated her about the facts of life and sexuality. She receives help only from her brother and a biology teacher. According to Klotman, *High School Girl* is "another message film," which "delivers its moral punch with a mailed fist. Babies having babies was not yet an everyday occurrence, but without recourse to legal abortion, coat hanger suicides and parental guilt were not unusual in the case of unexpected and unwanted teenage pregnancies."⁹⁵ The reviews for *High School Girl* were less than enthusiastic. The review in the *Times*

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Klotman, "The Black Writer in Hollywood, Circa 1930: The Case of Wallace Thurman," in *Black American Cinema*, ed. Manthia Diawara (New York: Routledge, 1993), 81.

⁹² "Tomorrow's Children," American Film Institute, accessed July 17, 2013, <http://www.aifi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=4417>.

⁹³ Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 272. An estimated 60,000 Americans were subjected to sterilization beginning around 1907 and continuing until the 1970s, especially during the 1930 and 1940s.

⁹⁴ West, "Elephant's Dance," 86; Klotman, "The Black Writer," 85.

⁹⁵ Klotman, "The Black Writer," 90.

found no redeeming value in the film and *Variety* called it a “tiresome preachment of the facts of life and parental neglect.”⁹⁶ Thurman completed these screenplays as his last major literary works before his death.

While Thurman spent most of his literary career in Southern California and New York City, he had roots in Utah and continued to visit Salt Lake City throughout his life. Thurman’s experiences in Utah and in his grandmother’s home surely affected him and his perceptions of race relations; however, the ways in which growing up in Utah influenced him are not always clear. For example, although Thurman was raised and mostly educated in the Mormon-dominated community and public school system, he never converted to the religion and he claimed that living in this environment had not greatly impacted him.⁹⁷ Furthermore, while he had to deal with racism as a young man in Salt Lake City, he made little mention of his personal experiences with racism in his writings.

One such experience occurred in 1918, when soldiers attacked Thurman and a young black woman, Thelma Steward, at Second South and Main Street in Salt Lake City. Thurman was “badly beaten” and Steward was “loaded into an automobile by a crowd of soldiers,” yet the police apparently allowed the assailants to escape. According to the *Salt Lake Telegram*, Reverend George W. Harts, a pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, then brought the issue of police negligence before the city commission on behalf of Thurman and Steward and filed “condemnatory resolutions adopted at a mass meeting of negro [*sic*] citizens.”⁹⁸ What came of these resolutions, or how Thurman responded to the event, remains unclear.

However, while Thurman himself made no such claims, it is tempting to believe that such incidents might have influenced his decision to join the group of radical Harlem writers dedicated to representing African Americans as “New Negro[es]”—who, as Locke claimed, would no longer be passive or obsequious. Locke wrote that “the Negro of today [must] be seen through other than the dusty spectacles of past controversy. The day of ‘aunties,’ ‘uncles’ and ‘mammies’ is . . . gone.”⁹⁹ McKay captured the sentiments and character of this “New Negro” in his sonnet, “If We Must Die”:

If we must die, O let us nobly die
 So that our precious blood may not be shed
 In vain; then even the monsters we defy
 Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

 Like men we’ll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
 Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Thurman, “Quoth Brigham Young,” 236.

⁹⁸ “Negligence Charge is Hurlled at Police,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, April 18, 1918.

⁹⁹ Alain Locke, “The New Negro,” in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1968), 3–16, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Claude McKay, *Selected Poems of Claude McKay* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1953), 36.

While Locke and McKay announced the death of the “Old Negro” in their writing, in Salt Lake City, Harts confirmed it with his actions.

Likewise, Thurman’s participation in the Harlem Renaissance apparently colored his image of Utah. During his years in New York, Thurman returned to Salt Lake City to spend time with Jackson and to recuperate from his “fast life” in Harlem. His grandmother even took care of his finances at various times.¹⁰¹ In the spring of 1929, he returned to Salt Lake City on a protracted visit, during which he seems to have perceived a dramatic change in the treatment of Utah’s black population. In a letter to William Jourdan Rapp he wrote, “Here in Salt Lake just 10 years ago there was no segregation whatsoever and now Negroes are segregated a la Georgia everywhere except on street cars. A taxi man refused to drive me home from the depot!!! Now I ask you?”¹⁰² In another letter he told Rapp that he had tried to hire a public stenographer in a downtown Salt Lake City office to type his manuscript, but “the lady took it not. With hostility she regarded me. And icily informed me that she was too busy to take any work.”¹⁰³

Yet other evidence suggests that the change was not so much in the way white Salt Lakers treated blacks, but rather in Thurman’s perception of his hometown. These include Thurman’s previous experiences in Utah, laws passed in the late 1880s forbidding intermarriage between whites and blacks, and other accounts of racial prejudice, such as Doris Fry’s recollection that “the Mormon Church limited job opportunities for blacks and catholics [*sic*] regulating them almost exclusively to the menial job market.”¹⁰⁴ Thurman himself had noted in his 1926 article “Quoth Brigham Young” that “Negroes are rigorously segregated in theaters, public amusement parks, soda fountains, and eating places” and suggested the segregation was a “result of the post world war migration of southern Negroes to the north which was accompanied by a post world war wave of Kluxism and bigotry”; however, Thurman did not employ the same tone of personal indignation in making these observations as he did in his comments to Rapp.¹⁰⁵ Whether this was due to his longer 1929 visit to Utah, which provided more time for observation, or because he had by then spent four years in the company of authors and artists striving to change the way blacks were viewed by others and by themselves, it seems clear that something had caused Thurman to look differently at the situation of blacks in Utah.

Thurman’s time in Harlem also affected his views of Mormon culture or at least made him fully aware of the curiosity the religion evoked in others. In “Quoth Brigham Young,” Thurman wrote that the brightest part

¹⁰¹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s*, 70.

¹⁰² Wallace Thurman to William Jourdan Rapp, in Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 136; see also Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s*, 80. As noted by Van Notten, internal evidence suggests that this exchange occurred in April 1929.

¹⁰³ Thurman to Rapp, n.d., copy in possession of authors.

¹⁰⁴ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman’s*, 80.

¹⁰⁵ Wallace Thurman, “Quoth Brigham Young,” 236.

of returning to his home state was that it invariably furnished him with material for conversation:

It does not matter to whom I am talking, whether it be Jew or Gentile, Black or white, Baptist or Episcopalian, thief or minister, when the conversation begins to lag I can always introduce the fact that I was born in Utah, and immediately become the centre of attention nonchalantly answering the resultant barrage of questions. I find that I can even play this trick on the same group of persons more than once, for it seems as if they never tire asking—Do Mormons still have more than one wife? Do they look different from other people? . . . Are there any Negro Mormons? . . . It is for this reason alone that Utah has one warm spot in my rather chilled heart.¹⁰⁶

The literary opportunities presented by this outside fascination with Mormon culture seem to have struck Thurman fully by his return to Utah in 1929, for in addition to finishing a collection of essays titled *Aunt Hagar's Children* and apparently writing a novel (never completed) based on the script of *Harlem*, Thurman also began a new book or play concerning the Mormons.¹⁰⁷ In a letter to Rapp, he announced that his room was crowded with books on Joseph Smith and the early Mormons.

I even have a book [*sic*] of Mormon, confession of one of Brigham's wives and much other juicy materials, both scandalous and serious. Some emancipated Mormons I know here have aided me in gathering material, and I have gone directly to the Church library for the rest. Give me a week and I will have a cast of characters and ideas enough to begin work or at least to transmit to you so we can develop continuity.¹⁰⁸

The proposed title for the work was "Sultan Smith."¹⁰⁹ During this same period, Thurman wrote to Rapp, "Herein is my first contribution to the beginnings of Sultan Smith. Have immersed myself in Mormon history. And am raring to go." No record exists, however, of Thurman ever having finished this work.¹¹⁰

Ultimately, Thurman's experiences outside of Utah led him to view his home state as boring and unsophisticated, albeit a conversation-starter. In "Quoth Brigham Young," he expressed disdain for Salt Lake City's provincialism, noting his irritation that only one of the newsstands had ever heard of *New Republic* and that *Nation*, *Living Age*, *Bookman*, *Mercury*, and *Saturday Review of Literature*—all papers he had ready access to in New York or Los Angeles—would have to be special ordered. The proprietor of the single establishment who recognized these names "capped it all by enquiring whether or not I [Thurman] was a Bolshevist."¹¹¹ Further in the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, xviii. Singh and Scott's compilation is the most comprehensive collection of Thurman's writings available; in it, *Aunt Hagar's Children* is published for the first time.

¹⁰⁸ Thurman to Rapp, n.d. Copy in the possession of authors. Thurman wrote to Rapp, "I announced in my letter to you the other day that I intended to finish *Harlem*. I have. The entire thing has gone to my typist. You shall have it soon as she finishes her work."

¹⁰⁹ Van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's*, 245.

¹¹⁰ Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 157.

¹¹¹ Wallace Thurman, "Quoth Brigham Young," 235.

same article, Thurman exclaimed: "Thus is Utah burdened with dull and unprogressive Mormons, with more dull and speciously progressive Gentiles, with still more dull and speciously progressive Negroes. Everyone in that state seems to be more or less of a vegetable, self-satisfied and complacent."¹¹² He concluded with the sentiment that Utah was, at least, "not worse than some of its nearby neighboring states, which being the case the fates were not so unkind after all—I might have been born in Texas, or Georgia, or Tennessee, or Nevada, or Idaho."¹¹³

In May 1934, Thurman returned to Harlem from California. Though he was very ill, Thurman went on one last drinking binge with his Harlem friends. He collapsed in the middle of the reunion party and was taken to City Hospital on Welfare Island, New York. That September, Walter Winchell noted in his *New York Daily Mirror* Broadway gossip column that Thurman had "been at the city hospital on Welfare Island for several months. . . . He once did a book called 'The Interne,' which many think bombasts the very hospital in which ironically he now finds himself."¹¹⁴ After spending six months in the hospital, Thurman died from tuberculosis on December 22, 1934. His funeral services were held in New York City on Christmas Eve, and he was then buried in Silver Mount Cemetery, Staten Island, New York. On the day of Thurman's funeral, a brief article entitled "Negro Novelist Dies in Gotham" appeared in the *Salt Lake Telegram*. In addition to describing the circumstances of his death and listing a few of his editorial and literary works, the article claimed Wallace Thurman as a "Former Salt Laker."¹¹⁵

Today, critics present varied opinions of Thurman's contribution to the Harlem Renaissance. Some argue that he had a slight impact on the movement. Thurman's contemporary, Langston Hughes, wrote in his autobiography:

¹¹² Ibid., 236. This article includes other tidbits of information about blacks in Utah. Thurman noted that one seldom saw a person of color in Salt Lake City because the black population was not centralized. However, in Ogden, one often saw people of color because they lived in "the ghetto" around the railroad yards. He claimed that the only black institutions of note were the deluxe gambling clubs and whore houses in Salt Lake City and Ogden, including "three super-bawdy houses that I know of, where white ladies of joy with itching palms cavorted for the pleasure of black men only."

¹¹³ Ibid. Thurman's August 1929 letters to Rapp conveyed a sense of the isolation he felt in Utah and the circumstances of his grandparents' lives. On August 13, he wrote, "I feel fine physically, and only wish I was out of Salt Lake. It is damn lonesome here, there being no one here of interest. I spent the weekend on a friend's fruit farm, but did little work. It being much nicer to lounge around in the shade and watch the others. I did enjoy feeding the pigs, chickens, rabbits, and ducks. And oh how I devoured freshly picked fruit." In another letter, Thurman noted that, "Before my grandfather went away he fixed up the screen porch on the rear of the house for me. I have my bed, my books and all out in the open. Hence I can type without disturbing any all night if I wish and I am sleeping and writing in the open. I feel like a million dollar McFadden disciple." Singh and Scott, *Collected Writings*, 156–57, 159.

¹¹⁴ Walter Winchell, "BROADWAY GOSSIP: Memos of a Columnist's Girl Friday," *New York Daily Mirror*, September 26, 1934. After doing the research at Welfare Island hospital for *The Interne*, Thurman vowed that he would "never set foot again in the place." Klotman, "Wallace Henry Thurman," 273.

¹¹⁵ "Negro Novelist Dies in Gotham," *Salt Lake Telegram*, December 24, 1934.

Thurman had also felt that he was merely a journalistic writer. His critical mind, comparing his pages to the thousands of other pages he read, by Proust, Melville, and Tolstoy, found his own pages vastly wanting. So he contented himself by writing a great deal for money, laughing bitterly at his fabulously concocted “true stories,” creating two bad motion pictures of the “Adults Only” type for Hollywood, drinking more and more gin, and then threatening to jump out of windows at people’s parties and kill himself.¹¹⁶

Others applaud Thurman for making the reading public aware of issues relevant not only to African Americans but to America at large that might otherwise have been ignored. The literary critic Mae Gwendolyn Henderson writes, “His significance far exceeds the work he left behind, not only was he tremendously influential upon the young and perhaps the more successful writers of the period, but his life itself became a symbol of the New Negro Movement.”¹¹⁷ In recent years his books have been reprinted, and many journal articles, theses, and doctoral dissertations have been written about him and his work.

While scholarly interest in Thurman as a Harlem writer has burgeoned, he nevertheless remains a little-known figure in Utah’s history. His name commonly appears on lists of significant Harlem figures, but rarely turns up on lists of famous Utahns. The mention of his name in Salt Lake City still tends to evoke the response: “Who the hell is Wallace Thurman?”¹¹⁸ However, in March 2010 Wallace Thurman made a brief but shining return to his home city, appearing in one of twelve portraits of “Uconoclasts” (“literary icons with Utah connections”) displayed at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center in Salt Lake City.¹¹⁹ In conjunction with this exhibit, the Plan-B Theatre Company performed *Wallace*, which merged Debora Thredy’s one-act play *Where I Come From* (the story of Wallace Stegner) with Jenifer Nii’s one-act play *Fire!* (the story of Wallace Thurman).¹²⁰ In her review of *Wallace*, Barbara Bannon describes how Nii’s script captures the essence of this long-neglected writer, portraying him just as he was: “an outsider—a ‘black pioneer in a strange white land’—steadfastly searching and eventually finding a place to express his artistic voice in the Harlem Renaissance.” Appropriately, “Thurman’s abiding symbol is fire: a flame that flares, flashes brilliance, then spends itself too soon.”¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Hughes, *Big Sea*, 235.

¹¹⁷ Henderson, “Portrait,” 147, 289.

¹¹⁸ Jerry Rapier—the director of Plan-B Theatre Company’s production of *Wallace*—recalls thinking this when Ken Sanders, the owner of a Salt Lake City bookstore, first mentioned Wallace Thurman to him. Roxana Orellana, “Plan-B Theatre: Two Paths Diverged—Then United in ‘Wallace,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 27, 2010.

¹¹⁹ Ben Fulton, “Twelve Scribes of Utah: Exhibition Reveals State’s Literary ‘Uconoclasts,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 27, 2010.

¹²⁰ Barbara M. Bannon, “A Tale of Two Wallaces,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 5, 2010.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*



Murder and Mapping in “The Land of Death,” Part II: The Military Cantonment in Monticello

By ROBERT S. MCPHERSON, KEVIN CONTI, AND GARY WEICKS

In April 1884, Navajos killed two prospectors—Samuel T. Walcott and James McNally—in the vicinity of Navajo Mountain.¹ These deaths were part of a string of other violent events in the region. Circumstances contributed plenty of reason for trouble: the increasingly settled nature of southeastern Utah, including three large cattle companies and Mormon (Bluff) and non-Mormon (Aneth and Montezuma Creek) farms on the San Juan River; the expanding livestock industry of the Navajo; and the shrinking land base for the Utes. A local constabulary force composed primarily of volunteers in Bluff hardly proved adequate to confront large groups of armed men bent on theft, harassment, and murder. That job fell most often to a military force at times stymied by local conditions. The deaths of Walcott and McNally, along with a host of other incidents, encouraged the military to look for a long-term solution to the violence.

Fort Lewis near Durango, Colorado, had for four years provided mobile infantry and

Blue Mountain attracted Native Americans, miners, cattle companies, and settlers who sought resources in the high country desert. At the mountain's southern base, the military considered establishing a fort.

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¹ See the first article in this two-part series: Robert S. McPherson, “Murder and Mapping in ‘The Land of Death,’ Part I: The Walcott–McNally Incident,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 249–66.

cavalry forces to patrol the region and react to volatile situations. Although military officers and agents involved in the area were concerned with the doings of different Indian groups, they were not blind to the activities of the cattlemen, who were often more truculent than the Native Americans or settlers. Each of these groups depended on grass, water, and other resources for their own purposes. Conflict appeared inevitable. For example, the Beaver Creek incident in southwestern Colorado erupted in 1885 when cowboys massacred four men, two women, and a child in a peaceful Ute hunting camp. Naturally, retaliation came quickly. In this case, with a military presence nearby, what could have been a large-scale war turned into an abbreviated conflict soon settled. However, in more remote areas such as southeastern Utah, events could escalate rapidly, and with plentiful and easily accessible escape routes, miscreants soon disappeared. An informed military presence on the ground, with personnel who knew the lay of the land, could provide a strong deterrent to problems while decreasing the travel time for response. The possibility of creating this presence needed to be investigated.

A sidelight of the Walcott-McNally incident was that of jurisdictional control. Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico were still territories that depended upon the strong arm of the federal government to influence issues too big for their own fledgling power. In the West, the Army filtered its tasks through two large entities—Division of the Missouri, headquartered in Saint Louis, and Division of the Pacific in San Francisco. Geographically, this put the Four Corners area at the extreme end of each jurisdiction. Departments subdivided the divisions. The Department of the Missouri ranged over Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico; the Department of the Platte held responsibility for Iowa, Nebraska, Utah, Wyoming, and parts of Montana and the Dakotas; the Department of California, one of two in the Pacific Division, controlled California, Nevada, and Arizona.² What this meant for operational integrity was that three different departments held responsibility for some part of the Four Corners territory, and for all of them, this area was at their extreme limits. Southeastern Utah was about as far away from the geographic center of the three commands as one could get.

For this general reason and in response to a host of specific incidents, military planners toyed with the idea of establishing a permanent military presence in southeastern Utah. If created, it would complement the efforts of Fort Lewis in Colorado and a number of posts in New Mexico where officials had their hands full keeping track of various Native American groups, including the Navajo and Apache. By placing a fort or cantonment in this area, the soldiers could cover a wide geographic region—the “land

² Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars, the United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 14–15.

of death” as one Indian agent called it—and get it mapped and controlled. Since this area technically was the responsibility of the Department of the Platte but was often covered on the ground by cavalry and infantry from Fort Lewis under the direction of the Department of the Missouri, some jurisdictional definition was in order. When incidents included northern Arizona, technically a third party entered in—the Department of California. Somehow, the “Dark Corner” needed to have some light shined in it.

Forty-three citizens from both Colorado and Utah urged through petition in August 1885 that the lands of southeastern Utah be placed under the Department of the Platte to supplement the protection provided by the soldiers at Fort Lewis.³ A second petition from San Juan County, Utah, followed that October.⁴ As different incidents occurred in 1885, the military decided to act by sending two officers from Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City to determine the feasibility of establishing a post and mapping the area. Officials at Fort Douglas issued Order Number 200, which initiated a small reconnaissance mission that brought Lieutenant Colonel N. W. Osborne and First Lieutenant R. R. Stevens of the Sixth Infantry into southeast Utah. The two spent twenty-eight days on horseback researching the possibility of some type of installation and providing information to assist in determining whether the area should fall under the departmental jurisdiction of the Platte or the Missouri.

On September 25, 1885, the two men left Salt Lake City aboard the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG), headed to the station at Green River, Utah (then known as Blake), where they hired a guide with pack animals. From there it was on to the budding town of Moab, which boasted a saloon on each side of the street, encouraging a rough environment with its fair share of outlaws.⁵ Before reaching Moab, the officers crossed the Colorado River on a ferry for a fee of four dollars. There was plenty of room—the twenty-eight-foot craft was large enough to transport a dismantled wagon and five horses. From Moab the pair traveled south, stopping to assess a possible location for a post near Blue Mountain (known also as the Abajo Mountains), thence to Bluff City, on to Fort Lewis, and ultimately back to Salt Lake City.

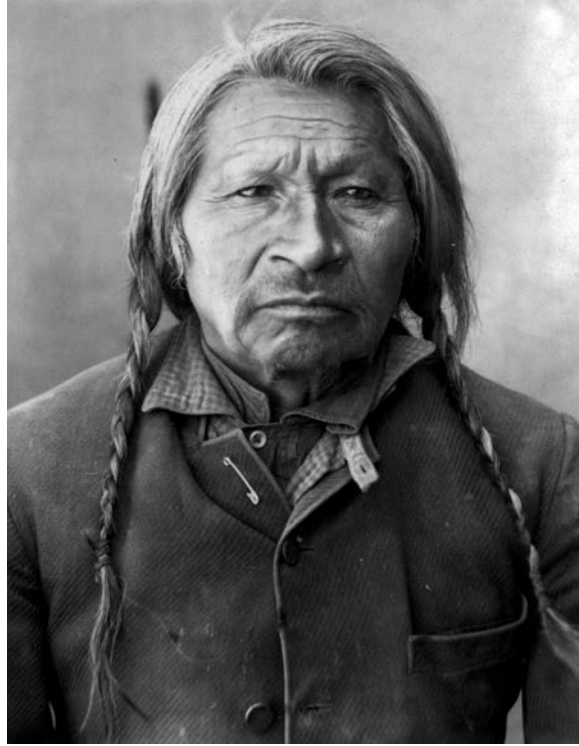
As the two men traveled, they observed Navajos heading north to trade with Utes, Mormons picking up newly arrived settlers at Thompson

³ Citizens of La Plata and Dolores Counties, Colorado, and San Juan County, Utah, to Secretary of the Interior, August 13, 1885, Letters Received—Adjutant General's Office, 1881–1889, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Letters Received—AGO).

⁴ San Juan County, Utah, to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Platte, October 1885, Letters Received—AGO.

⁵ Faun McConkie Tanner, *The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah* (Salt Lake City: Olympus, 1976), 148. The William McCarty family were numbered among the outlaws in the region. The McCartys had been involved in the 1874 killings of three young Navajos and had at times ridden with Butch Cassidy. They settled in nearby La Sal, where they plied their trades of cattle rustling and legitimate ranching. See Richard A. Firmage, *A History of Grand County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society and Grand County Commission, 1996), 159–60.

Station on the D&RG, and possible sites with water for a cantonment. On October 7 they stayed in the Mormon settlement of Bluff. Here they talked with Utes and Navajos, the latter enjoying profitable sales of mutton and wool. Osborne wrote that the Navajos were inclined to petty theft of small items, while the Utes were honest but preyed upon range stock in revenge for having lost much of their hunting and gathering land in that vicinity. The leader of this group, Mancos or “Winchester” Jim, had a following of thirty to forty men who were no strangers



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to Navajo Mountain during times of trouble. Mancos Jim was well known for his involvement in the fight against the military and civilian factions, and he became the symbol of Ute and Paiute resistance to white encroachment in the area. As the two officers continued toward Colorado, they noted eight deserted homesteads where both farming and ranching had been practiced. Flooding and Indian pressures had caused the abandonment of these homesteads since many of the Native Americans resented the loss of land and were anxious to take in payment what the settlers owned.⁶

This quick tour provided further encouragement for some type of military force stationed in the region. The reasons for this establishment hinged on a number of factors reported by Osborne and Stevens. First, Ute and Paiute “renegades” of southeastern Utah were preying on herds of cattle owned by non-Mormon ranchers. The massacre along Beaver Creek in Colorado that year had led to more violence and increased tension. The

Mancos Jim, or “Winchester,” in the 1890s. Mancos Jim participated in the Pinhook Draw and Soldier Crossing fights of the 1880s while defending his land against white invaders. He was known for his bravery and leadership, and he was a constant thorn in the side of those settling the region.

⁶ Nathaniel W. Osborne, “Official Report,” October 26, 1885, Records of the Consolidated Ute Indian Agency, Record Group 75.19.17, Denver Federal Records Center, Denver, Colorado.

ranchers wanted more protection, so they provided the main voice calling for some type of bulwark against depredation—not to mention that more soldiers would mean increased sales. Perhaps these sales would offset some of the ranchers' loss of cattle to the Indians, estimated by some as ten percent of their herd. In addition, friendly relations among Mormons and Indians gave rise to the suspicion that the two groups were working against the non-Mormons, another point of tension. Many Coloradoans wished to see all Utes removed from their state and pushed into Utah, while others wanted to decrease the presence of Navajos on the land. In summarizing the need for a post, Osborne concluded:

The wish for a new military post in the Blue Mountain region is generally entertained by non-Mormon interests. Difficulty of access in winter leaves the country unvisited by government forces during a large part of the year—control of trails west and southwest of the Blue Mountain, are little known except by Indians. The reported disaster in the vicinity of Blue Mountain [Soldier Crossing] and limited supply of water, easily within the control of Indians are reasons for establishing a post.⁷

Osborne went on to comment that the Indians also needed to be protected from white neighbors infringing on their lands. A continuous military presence would reduce the tension “growing out of the conflicting passions, prejudices, and greed of two races.” If the government decided to place an installation in this region to control the “comparatively unknown section of southeastern Utah and adjacent parts of Colorado,” then Blue Mountain offered the best location. “From there it is practicable to reach the San Juan settlements south and the Indian strongholds and trails west and southwest.” In terms of logistics, water ran the entire year in the North Fork of Montezuma Creek at the southeastern base of the mountain; during summer months, Fort Lewis could provide the region with supplies and troops, and with the railroad stop at Thompson, necessities and personnel could be transported by wagon, horseback, and ferry twelve months of the year. In conclusion, “southeastern Utah can be as effectively controlled in a military sense by the Department of the Platte as by the Department of the Missouri.”⁸

By March 1886 the military decided to send troops from Fort Douglas to see just how busy they would be if a permanent garrison were to be stationed in southern Utah. Planners hesitated to make a full-blown commitment, given the recent problem with the creation of Fort Thornburg, also in Utah, a few years earlier. Established in the Uinta Basin in September 1881, moved to a new spot in less than a year, then permanently abandoned a little more than a year later, that fort represented what the military wanted to avoid.⁹ With a constantly shrinking budget, planners

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ David L. Schirer, “Fort Thornburgh,” in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 201–202.

wished to ensure that their expenditures were meaningful and somewhat permanent. What had appeared as a necessity for Fort Thornburg had quickly become unnecessary. A good summer test for a Blue Mountain post would be worth the effort in the long haul. On April 7, 1886, the military issued the order sending units to southeastern Utah, charging both the departments of the Platte and the Missouri to provide detachments of soldiers.¹⁰

The men and officers coming from Fort Douglas faced many challenges. On June 2, 1886, the men of D Company, Sixth Infantry, completed their 220-mile ride on the D&RG from Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City to Thompson Springs, Utah. Their mission was twofold: maintain peace among contentious factions of Utes, Navajos, cowboys, and settlers and map a little-known section of country. To do so, they came well equipped—perhaps too much so—since their first official act after reassembling wagons and loading them was to leave grain, tents, ammunition, and hospital supplies behind with the stationmaster and “boarding mistress” at Thompson Springs. This was the first of a number of subsequent caches made before they reached their destination on the southeast side of Blue Mountain, eighty miles away.¹¹

The first day’s march of nineteen miles, an average distance for soldiers, brought the men to Court House Rock, where they enjoyed a large spring of water, plentiful grazing for the animals, and abundant clumps of sagebrush for fuel. After a good night’s rest, the cavalcade started on the road again, this time covering only twelve miles before the real work began. Once they neared Moab, a wheel on the escort wagon broke, they encountered a creek swollen to five feet deep, and they saw that the wide-based wagons would have a difficult time maneuvering the rough, curving road beyond. After wasting a day to see if the creek’s waters would subside, the command decided to transport the supplies across a half load at a time, float the empty wagons, and then move beyond to the ferry that traversed the wider Colorado River.

The roiling waters of the Colorado River ran high from melting snow in the Rockies that time of year. At 6:00 a.m. on June 6, the soldiers began crossing the fast-moving river just north of Moab. By 8:15 a.m. a third trip began with Captain D. H. Murdock, the company commander, and six other men working the ferry attached to a cable that spanned the river. Frightened mules aboard the vessel shuffled about, shifted their weight, and rocked the boat and its pulley system. Murdock, at the bow, attempted to muscle the main rope in order to prevent the ferry from becoming swamped; then, without warning, the rope snapped, sending him into the

¹⁰ William T. Sherman to Commanders of Department of the Platte and of the Missouri, April 7, 1886, Letters Received—AGO.

¹¹ C. G. Morton to Adjutant General, Department of the Platte, June 25, 1886, Letters Received—AGO.



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river still holding the end of the parted rope attached to the cable. The commander desperately tried to pull himself up to the wire, but the current proved too swift, forcing him to let go of the rope. Down the Colorado River he swam, trying to reach the now sinking craft, but 150 yards of struggle proved too much, and the raging brown torrent claimed him and 2,000 pounds of goods as its own. He left behind a wife, who received small comfort from the \$5,000 provided her as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy.¹²

This later version of the Moab ferry on the Colorado River is reminiscent of the ferry where Captain D. H. Murdock lost his life.

Second Lieutenant C. G. Morton, now in command of fifty-eight men, needed guidance. He left immediately for the telegraph key at the Thompson Springs station, arriving at nine in the evening. The next day, after receiving orders at four o'clock p.m. to proceed with the mission, Morton made an all-night ride back to his men as their newly appointed leader. This was hardly an auspicious start for a company ordered to bring peace to a troubled corner of the Colorado Plateau. Morton arrived at the river on June 8, happy to find that his soldiers had taken the initiative to repair the ferry. Wasting no time, he began the transfer of supplies across the high water, limiting loads to no more than three mules at a time, a process that occupied most of the day. Even though Moab lay only a short two miles away, the soldiers pitched camp on the south bank of the river and spent the night. By now it was apparent that the expedition needed to shed more excess weight; accordingly, the group left part of its ten-thousand-

¹² Ibid.

round allocation of ammunition and a broken wagon in Moab before continuing south on the first ten miles of good road. Eventually, however, the “thoroughfare” changed to loose sand, rocks, and sharp sliding curves, which necessitated making another cache of 250 pounds of grain. In flat, open terrain the oversized army wagons with their long wheelbase and six-mule teams worked well, but once steep hills and narrow canyons had to be traversed, manhandling and roping the wagons reduced the rate of travel to a crawl.¹³

On June 11 the party reached Hatch’s Cabin on the floor of Dry Valley. There they encountered a cowboy, in the employ of the Carlisle Cattle Company, who feared that Mancos Jim and his men were in the vicinity. There had been no killing or stealing, but these Indians were “armed to the teeth and very impudent when spoken to.”¹⁴ Signal fires between the La Sal and Blue Mountains provided another indicator of Indian presence, but not until sixteen Southern Utes under their leader “Erny” or “George” visited the encampment did the soldiers see their adversary in the flesh. This band was en route to Blue Mountain on a hunting expedition. The leader, George, “has a good command of the English language; he is friendly, tall and wears a wreath of leaves upon his head,” but he worried what the soldiers’ intent toward his people might be. Morton explained his reason for being there, saying that he did not view the Utes as hostile; the two groups peacefully went their different ways.¹⁵

Not as much could be said for a gang of six to twelve whites who had been on a horse-stealing spree that ranged from Dove Creek, Colorado, to Bluff, Utah. Morton learned that a posse of cowboys and Mormons led by the San Juan County sheriff was pursuing the horse thieves. Earlier, the gang had taken refuge in an Anasazi ruin forty miles northwest of Bluff, fired upon their pursuers, killed one man, and dispersed the rest. The sheriff was now continuing the chase, supplemented by a fresh posse of Carlisle’s cowboys.¹⁶

Meanwhile, for Morton’s soldiers, the next day started with the caching of another 250 pounds of supplies and the shearing off of another wagon wheel a few yards out of camp. Although this expedition was supposed to

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Albert R. Lyman, a local San Juan historian, has twice discussed the murder of Bill Ball, the foreman of the L. C. Cattle Company. Lyman provides some clarification, although he also has some variance. In his *Indians and Outlaws: Settling of the San Juan Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1980), 75–78, he tells of three thieves who killed Ball near what is today’s Dead Bull Flat, fifteen miles northwest of Bluff, while in his unpublished manuscript, “The History of San Juan County, 1879–1917” (Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah), 46–49, he gives more detail and claims there were four desperados. The report by Lieutenant Morton was the prevailing wisdom of the time, based on the current, but perhaps not as accurate, information of what he had been told. Regardless of the number of miscreants or the exact location of where Ball died, the issue of lawlessness was a concern that most people shared at that time.



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have received the best wagons Fort Douglas had to offer, wheel-related problems plagued the group from the beginning. Close inspection showed that most of the wagon axles contained cracks that had previously been repaired. By the time the soldiers reached Peters Hill (eight miles north of current day Monticello), they were carrying 350 pounds of grain per mule. Although the command had discarded food and equipment all along the route, the wagons still had to leave half of their cargo at the base of Peters Hill so that the men could pull the half-filled wagons up with ropes. On June 13, the soldiers reached the North Fork of Montezuma Creek below the southeast face of Blue Mountain, prompting Morton to send retrieval parties back along the trail to secure cached supplies and bring them to camp. The main party established a camp in the vicinity of what would later be named Soldiers Spring, very near the present town of Monticello.

On June 20, 1886, the Blue Mountain force met with Captain Edward Thomas, D Troop, Fifth Cavalry, who had traveled from Fort Riley, Kansas, by rail to Durango, Colorado, and later to the camp in Utah. D Troop's primary assignment was to watch for trouble in southwestern Colorado but also cooperate with Morton should conflict arise, joining forces as necessary.¹⁷ Both officers agreed that the Utes and Navajos were peaceful. Even Mancos Jim—who seemed to be everyone's concern, given his past

Wooden wagons, wheels, and axles meant that freighting in canyon country was fraught with difficulties. The transportation of goods from the railroad station in Thompson, Utah, to Blue Mountain, over eighty miles of crude wagon trails, took a heavy toll on people, animals, and equipment.

¹⁷ Special Orders Number 56, June 3, 1886, Headquarters Department of the Missouri, Letters Received—AGO.

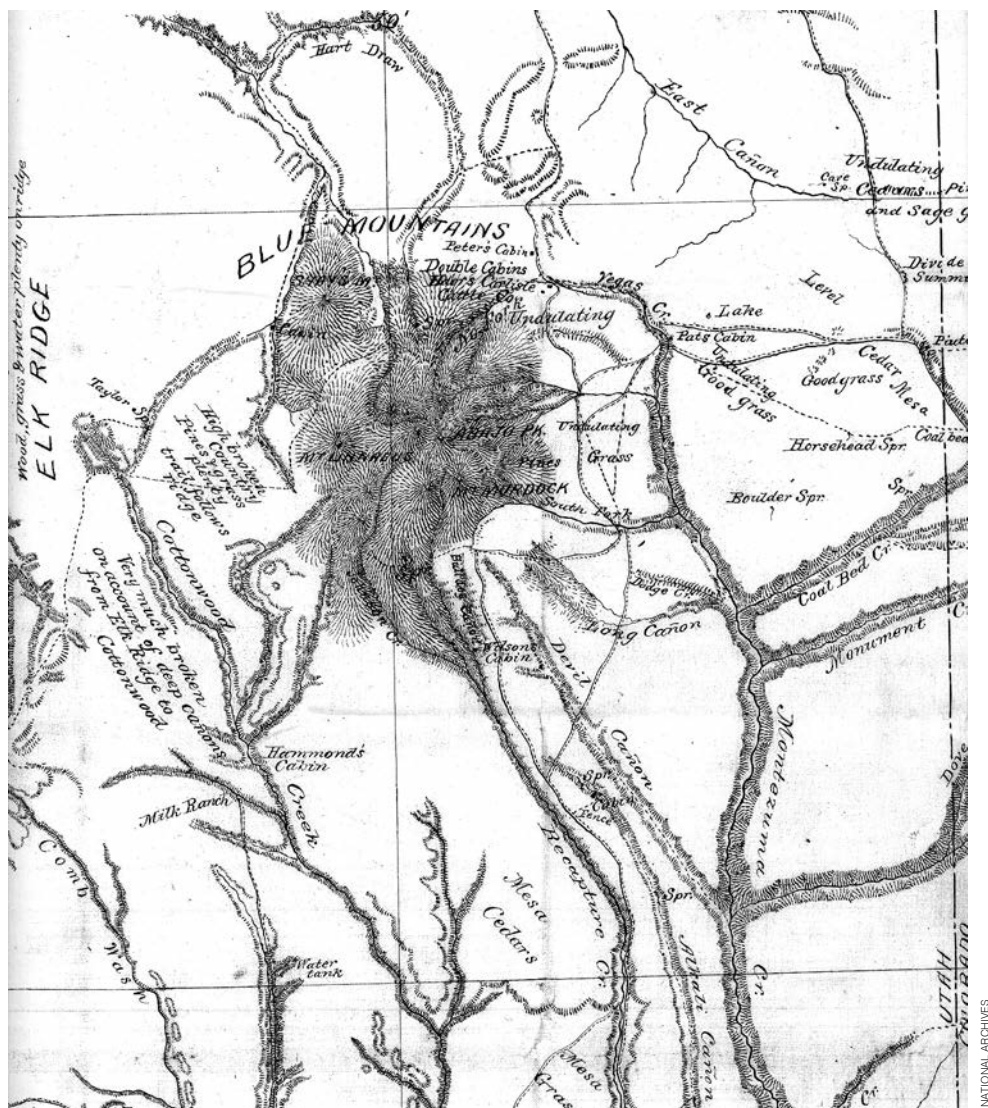
reputation—had moved his band of 120 people away from Blue Mountain when Morton arrived and was now on the San Juan River, amiably trading and making his way east. Captain Thomas reported: “The Indians know that troops are out and will not commit any overt acts unless attacked by cowboys. . . . They will carefully avoid injuring any person unless in retaliation for injuries inflicted upon some one of their number.” Cowboys from various ranching outfits were in the midst of the roundup season, too busy to bother the mobile Indian groups, given that approximately 50,000 head of cattle, 30,000 of which belonged to the Carlisle outfit, were spread from Fort Lewis west to Blue Mountain, south to the San Juan River, and throughout southwestern Colorado. Thomas concluded his report by stating he did not anticipate any trouble for the rest of the summer and that the army’s current position at Blue Mountain provided the optimal location to conduct military operations if necessary.¹⁸

As the potential of Indian problems faded due to the military presence, it was time to begin initial reconnaissance of the area west of the encampment in the terra incognita. Ever since the birth of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1813, the army had an internal organization to assist its efforts in exploration and mapmaking. Army cartographers took into account many considerations that might otherwise be disregarded on civilian maps. The military required a detailed visual representation of the lay of the land to prevent poor planning, mistakes in maneuvers, and errors in logistical support on unfamiliar terrain. Those units that chased Navajos and Utes through canyon country had no doubt about the necessity of this type of accuracy. Mapmakers at the time used an aneroid barometer to measure ascent or descent of a hill and to obtain a reasonable estimate of altitude; they calculated distance through horse paces, which proved fairly accurate. Hachured lines indicated slope and fall line where steep. Proficient mapmakers were often talented artists who made preliminary sketches from the saddle, later adding watercolor washes to represent different terrain features.¹⁹ While no description of the process that Lieutenant Morton used remain extant, his exploratory travel began the collection of necessary information.

On July 3 Morton, accompanied by a sergeant and a private, set out on a journey of two hundred miles. The small party headed southwest, hugging the base of Blue Mountain, to Recapture Creek, reaching the mouth of Cottonwood Canyon, and eventually crossing Elk Mountain (now known as Elk Ridge). The men spent the next two days exploring the terrain to the west and traveling on two different Indian trails. (Two years earlier, Captain Henry P. Perrine had fatefully followed a similar direction along

¹⁸ E. D. Thomas to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, July 13, 1886, Letters Received—AGO.

¹⁹ Earl B. McElfresh, *Maps and Mapmakers of the Civil War* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999), 32–33.



one of these trails.) These two trails, which began near a rock formation on Elk Ridge known as the Bears Ears, were supposed to lead to the Colorado River, but soon faded out. After numerous attempts at navigating through confounding topography, Morton and his men took an alternate route but never reached the river. Glad to be out of the canyons, they now rode atop a mesa but soon realized that traveling through a dense juniper and piñon forest could be just as confusing. The party, blocked and disoriented for part of

This image, which is a small portion of a much larger map drawn by Stevens in 1886, provides good historical information about San Juan County. The Soldiers Spring encampment was located in the canyon projecting north of Abajo Peak, where a stream and two roads converge.

a day, eventually reached Elk Ridge. Morton's group re-crossed Elk Ridge and took what was then called the Settlement Road into Bluff. There, with their mounts fed and rested, the party mingled among Indians and settlers collecting information.²⁰

For Morton, reaching the Colorado River via Elk Mountain had been a major objective; because he did not obtain this goal, the area required further exploration and mapping. However, this trip did yield some important points for future travelers. Chief among these was the crucial knowledge of the location of "tanks," hollow pockets in sandstone that trap valuable rainwater from summer storms. Unless a person was intimately familiar with the land, there was no predicting the tanks' locations; only a sure knowledge would do. The complexity of the canyons and box canyons that run in all directions mired many travelers in a morass of rock that seemed impenetrable. Morton emphasized that the terrain—with its sand, canyon mazes, dead ends with drop-offs, and limited springs—severely hampered normal travel time.²¹

From July to October, more reconnaissance followed, so that by the end of the summer a final report could give a far more complete description.²² Morton and two other lieutenants—R. R. Stevens and William P. Burnham, who were assigned to help with mapping—conducted much of this exploration. Along with six privates, these three officers investigated the areas between the San Juan River and Colorado River confluence and between the White Canyon and the Recapture Creek drainages, as well as north and east of Blue Mountain.²³ Morton, synthesizing the information he and the others found, correctly summarized what numerous fights had proven:

The country between Elk Ridge and the Colorado is a natural Indian stronghold, and in my opinion, is the place to which the Indians would go in case of hostilities. . . . If the Indians were hard pressed in the country I have mentioned, they could go into Arizona, slip back to their reservation or cross the Colorado. The country on the west side of the river is said to be quite as rough as that on the east.²⁴

However, unlike Osborne and Stevens in their 1885 report, Lieutenant Morton felt there was no necessity for a post, only a spring-to-fall encampment, since substantial conflict seemed only to occur during that time of year. He believed that it was the Mormons, not the cowboys, who wanted a post, to which they could sell their products. The cowboys, on the other hand, thought a post would ruin their ranges as it attracted more settlers and would also expose their illicit activities.

²⁰ Morton to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Platte, July 15, 1886, Letters Received—AGO; Robert S. McPherson and Winston B. Hurst, "The Fight at Soldier Crossing, 1884: Military Considerations in Canyon Country," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 258–81.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² C. G. Morton to Assistant Adjutant General, May 2, 1887, Letters Received—AGO.

²³ "Record of Events," Fort Douglas Post Returns, July 3–August 28, 1886, Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²⁴ Morton, "Report: Southeastern Utah," April 30, 1887, Letters Received—AGO.



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But for a summer encampment, the best place was on the North Fork of Montezuma Creek, “near the place where the road from Moab to Bluff City crosses it,” on the outskirts of today’s Monticello. The reason: “Water and grass are plentiful and of good quality, the best of wood is in abundance nearby, either for fuel or building huts; it is as near the Indian strongholds as wagons can easily go; trails start from there to all points not reached by road; it is at the junction of roads from the north, east, and south so that information can be obtained concerning all

parts of the country from Indians and whites passing through.” Morton felt that a company of soldiers stationed there would provide a sufficient force, and at least some food could be obtained locally for men and horses. The area also offered good places to locate a heliograph station—that is, a station where flashes of sunlight reflecting off a mirror could transmit Morse code.

Morton’s primary logistical concerns centered on access to and supplies for the proposed camp.²⁵ The route from Thompson Station to Moab in the 1880s was less than favorable. Quickly falling rain, which the ground could not absorb, created flash floods and turned Courthouse Wash from bone-dry one minute to nine feet deep with water the next. (The wash continued to stymie travelers until 1915, when an eighty-five-ton steel superstructure, supported by eighteen-foot pilings, provided a safer means to negotiate the streambed.)²⁶ Next, there was the crossing of the Colorado River. Morton thought the heavy freight wagons too big for the available craft, posing problems with safety and efficiency; even if there were a bigger ferry, large wagons were not maneuverable enough for the terrain beyond. Smaller

This 1909 view is one of the earliest available images of the Thompson Springs station. The railway was crucial to the development of southeastern Utah; the shady trees and comfortable housing in this photograph hide the fact that Thompson Springs was a desert outpost at the foot of the Book Cliffs.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “The Crossing at Courthouse Wash—A Year Ago and Now,” *Grand Valley Times* (Moab, UT), October 15, 1915.

wagons with a shorter wheel base and four-mule teams were more suited to negotiate the steep slopes and sharp curves encountered south of Moab. The downside to these smaller wagons was their limited carrying capacity.

Another logistical challenge was obtaining enough food for men and feed for horses to support field operations for an infantry company. Hay was not cut locally until August, while wheat, oats, and barley were not available until September. The road from Moab was so rough that in order to transport hay it would have to be baled; in 1886, hay cost twenty dollars per ton, delivered. An easier route of travel did not require baling, saving additional costs and requiring only four to five days to get hay from suppliers in Mancos, Colorado. The same was true of food such as potatoes and vegetables, which commanded high prices but were more readily available from towns to the east. On the other hand, winter snow buried the toll road from Durango, making it inoperable until May, while the road from Moab was accessible year-round. For Morton and his group this year, that would not present a problem. They returned to Thompson Springs to take the train back on October 17 from their garrison duty on the North Fork of Montezuma Creek with “much valuable information obtained regarding this little known region.”²⁷ His frequent reconnaissance during the summer had paid off with information never before obtained. Morton would not return to San Juan; instead, his career would take him to many other successful assignments.²⁸ As for the soldiers from Fort Lewis, they returned to their post in November due to the buildup of ice on the roads, which threatened the packers’ ability to deliver food and supplies.²⁹

Spring and summer 1887 brought a rash of new conflicts. Near Bluff, two Navajos killed Amasa Barton at his trading post along the San Juan River. One of the Indians was also killed, setting in motion a larger confrontation when sixty Navajos entered the town of Bluff and threatened the handful of men who protected a large number of women and children. Fortunately, Bishop Jens Nielson quieted the affair, solidifying the peace with a communal meal shared with the Navajos.³⁰ Mormon stake president Francis A. Hammond requested that troops be stationed nearby. A month later, with Mancos Jim and his band of Utes and Paiutes roaming Blue Mountain and a group of Southern Utes hunting there too, it was not surprising that when Henry Hopkins, a young cook for the George Brooks

²⁷ “Report of Brigadier General Crook,” Headquarters Department of the Platte, August 27, 1887, *Report of the Secretary of War*, 1st Sess., 50th Cong. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 1:133.

²⁸ Charles Morton, a graduate from West Point (1883) went on to have a highly successful military career (1883–1925) and obtained the rank of colonel. He served in such capacities as commander of the 1st Maine Volunteer Regiment (National Guard) during the Spanish-American War and instructor in the Army Staff College.

²⁹ P.T. Swaine to Acting Adjutant General, November 5, 1886, Fort Lewis—Outgoing Correspondence #334, 1878–1891, Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

³⁰ See Robert S. McPherson, *The Northern Navajo Frontier, 1860–1900: Expansion through Adversity* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001), 73–74.

cattle outfit, was found dead with a hole in his back, the Indians took the blame. Some felt Hopkins had been a target for a wandering Indian, others pointed to a Navajo with whom he had argued, and still others suggested that lightning was the culprit. No blame was ever officially affixed, but the Utes still smarted from the Beaver Creek Massacre from two years before and were not friendly to cowboys roaming their territory. Harold Carlisle quickly posted letters to both the Ute agent and the military requesting troops. Colonel P. T. Swaine, Twenty-Second Infantry at Fort Lewis, dispatched a company of infantry on July 20 to the Blue Mountain area; three days later, he sent a second company to the San Juan River.³¹ If they accomplished little else, these troops would quash the rumor that a secret organization of white vigilantes was preparing to either kill or otherwise remove the Indians from the area.

While the Indians drew the most prolonged glance from the military, there was no missing the activities of the ranchers, Edmund and Harold Carlisle in particular. Captain J. B. Irvine, with thirty-eight men of Company A, Twenty-Second Infantry, camped on the North Fork of Montezuma Creek from July to September 5 at a site that received the name Soldiers Spring. Irvine soon reported that the two Carlisle brothers had set out to obtain “range for their cattle to the exclusion of all farmers, settlers, ranchmen or cattlemen” by fencing off large tracts of land to deny others any resources. “He [Edmund] has claimed through his numerous employees, lackeys, and henchmen . . . the best sections of pasture land where the grass is from two to three feet high and other fertile sections of country abounding in springs, timber, facilities for irrigation and other conveniences so attractive to farmers and settlers.”³² To enforce this intent, Carlisle had at his ranch what local historian Albert R. Lyman referred to at different times as a roost for evil birds or a lair for robbers, horse thieves, and other unscrupulous riff-raff.³³ Criminals traveled from as far away as Texas to hide amidst the shadows of Blue Mountain, with its convenient escape hatches to the west that helped criminals melt into oblivion.

So when a group of Bluff Mormons began settling in South Montezuma Creek (now called Verdure, seven miles south of today’s Monticello) in May 1887, their newly established cabins and irrigation ditch were anything but welcomed. The LDS church had called these men to survey the future site of Monticello, a task they completed by July 7, 1887. They also surveyed an irrigation ditch for the anticipated town and started to divert the water from various creeks for their use. Much of this was in the territory claimed by the Carlisles. Since Harold Carlisle had assumed ownership of the area,

³¹ Charles F. Stollsteimer to Swaine, July 14, 1887; Swaine to Assistant Adjutant General, August 5, 1887, Letters Received—AGO.

³² J. B. Irvine to Commanding Officer, Fort Lewis, August 8, 1887, Letters Received—AGO.

³³ Lyman, *Indians and Outlaws*, 100–13.

he gave the settlers ten days to skedaddle or else the cattlemen would “make it hot for them.”³⁴ Seeking help from a Durango attorney and the military at Fort Lewis, the Mormons stood firm with quit-claim deed in hand. After imbibing some whiskey, a large group of cowboys rode to the fledgling settlement on South Montezuma, entering with guns ablaze. The Mormons refused to leave, ignoring the invitation for “You nesters [to] get the hell out of here, back to Bluff City, where you belong or we will move you, and in a rough way in four days.”³⁵ But under the protection of the military camped at Soldiers Spring, the little group of colonizers not only stayed but also successfully returned the next year to found Monticello, eating crops they had stored in one of their cabins.³⁶

Although no description exists of the soldiers’ camp, military practices of the day suggest that an average company had between thirty to forty men in the ranks. Six to eight men would usually share a tent, with separate tents for non-commissioned officers as well as officers. Thus Company A, Twenty-Second Infantry, commanded by Captain J. B. Irvine and stationed at Soldiers Spring, would have spent more than two months camped there in a cluster of approximately ten to twelve tents that also housed mess facilities and storage areas. From this cantonment, the spring received its name. Numerous shell casings reportedly found in the area by collectors suggest regular target practice; on Sunday afternoons, local Mormon families rested from their labors and went to the encampment to sell their produce and to watch the soldiers drill.³⁷ Irvine returned with his unit to Fort Lewis sometime after October 1, 1887, as inclement weather approached.³⁸ The soldiers’ presence had kept the cap on any confrontation between cowboys, Indians, and Mormons to the point that during the next year, 1888, the town of Monticello began its growth out of the sagebrush at the base of Blue Mountain.

The name of Soldiers Spring remained long after the dust settled from the last horse’s hoof. Today the area has a greatly reduced persistent spring with a grassy marsh land surrounding it. Much of the groundwater has either been diverted due to reservoir construction and new homes, or other water systems have lowered the aquifer and reduced its flow. Indeed, finding the spring today is somewhat of a challenge, but it is generally located northwest of today’s Hideout Golf Course on a bench in the sloping point between the North and South Creek forks of North Montezuma Creek. Exactly where the two camps of 1886 and 1887 were located is still

³⁴ Lyman, “History of San Juan County, 1879–1917,” 54–55.

³⁵ Frank Silvey, “How Soldier’s Spring Got Its Name,” *San Juan Record* (Monticello, UT), August 13, 1936.

³⁶ Harold George and Fay Lunceford Muhlestein, *Monticello Journal: A History of Monticello until 1937* (Utah: printed by author, 1988), 11–12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ W. Merritt to Assistant Adjutant General, October 1, 1887, Letters Received—AGO.

debatable, but most likely there was some activity in close proximity to the spring, possibly with a larger encampment on the more level area of the golf course.³⁹ Collectors with metal detectors have long since stripped the area of its scattered military-issue bullet casings, but a few scattered bits of broken nineteenth-century bottles and severely rusted food can fragments remain, some of which may be refuse from the soldiers' camp.

As with many findings in history, more questions are often raised than answered. At the head of a northern tributary of Grand Gulch sits a portion of the old Hole-in-the-Rock Trail, in close proximity to a watering place for livestock called the Cow Tanks. Lightly scratched on a rock in an alcove is the barely perceptible inscription of what appears to be "IW GRIM Co B 6 INF." Hikers, archaeologists, and inscription-seekers have puzzled over the mystery of the epigraph's author and date.⁴⁰ Now that the involvement of the military at Soldiers Spring is better understood, its mission recognized, and its reason for traveling through the area identified, this inscription becomes an important reminder of the soldiers' presence. The map produced from the 1886 summer reconnaissance shows Cow Tanks in direct proximity to the trail followed by Lieutenant Stevens's mapping party when it passed through in late September or early October.

On January 22, 1884, twenty-one-year-old Isaac Grim walked into an army recruiting office in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, enlisted in the United States Army, and soon joined B Company, Sixth Infantry at Fort Douglas, Utah.⁴¹ Five feet, nine inches tall, with brown hair and a light complexion, Grim was a first-rate soldier, skilled horseman, and avid hunter and fisherman. On September 9, 1886, he and two other privates received detached service from their unit and were assigned to company D for field service in southeastern Utah. While no official report exists of Grim accompanying the mapping expedition led by Stevens, that officer did have two non-commissioned officers and six privates who traveled with him from the confluence of the Colorado and San Juan rivers through the Cow Tanks area, then to points north and east between August 28 and October 8.⁴² Grim's inscription is located in the heart of the land under consideration at the time.

While in San Juan, this model soldier did well. In fact, his company commander, Stephen Baker, noted upon his return to Fort Douglas that Private Grim never caused any trouble. A year later, however, his life took a different course. On July 3, 1887, Grim was serving breakfast as part of his

³⁹ Winston Hurst, discussion with authors, May 18, 2012.

⁴⁰ The Wetherill-Grand Gulch Project team, using a method called "reverse archaeology" and led by Fred Blackburn in April 1990, discovered this inscription.

⁴¹ Isaac W. Grim, U.S. Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914, accessed February 7, 2012, Ancestry.com.

⁴² Fort Lewis General Orders #165, September 18, 1886, Fort Lewis Military Correspondence—1878–1891, Center of Southwest Studies; Fort Douglas Post Returns, "Records of Events," October 17, 1886, Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, Utah.

KP duty when a friend stopped by and invited him to go to the post trader's store for a drink. Shortly after they arrived, the proprietor informed them that a corporal was hunting for the pair for shirking their duties. Already in trouble, the two men unwisely decided that a trip to the saloons of Salt Lake City was in order.⁴³ Within twenty-four hours Grim and his associate became deserters. Three and a half months later, the army apprehended Grim in Provo, returned him and locked him in the post guard house, convened court martial proceedings, and sentenced him to two years at Fort Leavenworth.⁴⁴ His mother had passed away when he was a young boy, so it was up to his father, Phillip Grim, who lived in West Virginia, to write letters requesting leniency for his son.⁴⁵ The military denied the requests, but released him a year early for good behavior then dishonorably discharged him.⁴⁶

Grim's inscription on an alcove wall in a tributary of Grand Gulch reminds all of us of the individual accounts of those who have gone before. The story of lowly Private Grim is just one of thousands of personal narratives of people who have come to canyon country and left little or no trace of their visit, but were still part of its history. Grim's small inscription was the only thing that saved him from oblivion, and it now reminds us of events over 135 years ago, as soldiers set out to explore and map a land mostly unknown to them.

The trials of Private Grim, the deaths of Walcott and McNally, the origin of the name Atene, and the forgotten role of Soldiers Spring are all part of a larger history of a place no longer considered the "land of death." Indeed, this land has become a mecca for tourists, backpackers, environmentalists, and others who marvel at the canyon country and scenic vistas as they breeze over the terrain in air-conditioned comfort. Gone are the days of difficult access to Navajo Mountain, with a paved road now leading to its base; the nagging problem of locating water in a high country desert; the animosity of different Native American cultures against outsiders taking their land; and cattlemen staking claims on resources to prevent settlement by farmers. Now only the names upon the land hint at what used to be.

⁴³ Grim to the Members of General Court Martial, February 27, 1888, Letters Received—AGO.

⁴⁴ Court Martial Orders, Headquarters Department of the Platte, Omaha, Nebraska, March 5, 1888, Letters Received—AGO.

⁴⁵ Philip Grim to the Adjutant General, War Department, February 16, 1888, Letters Received—AGO.

⁴⁶ Correspondence from Office of Commandant, U.S. Military Prison, Fort Leavenworth, to Adjutant General's Office, Washington D.C., May 13, 1889, Letters Received—AGO.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dale Morgan on the Mormons: Collected Works Part 1, 1939–1951. Kingdom in the West: The Mormons and the American Frontier, vol. 14. Edited by Richard L. Saunders. (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2012. 511 pp. Cloth, \$45.00.)

THIS IS THE FIRST volume of a proposed two-volume set focused on the collected writings of Dale L. Morgan about the Mormons. Morgan (1914–1971) is perhaps best known for his books *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*; *The West of William H. Ashley*; *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*; *The Great Salt Lake*; and the two-volume set *Overland in 1846: Diaries and Letters of the California-Oregon Trail*. Morgan was also a major contributor to and editor of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, volume nineteen (1951), *West from Fort Bridger*.

Richard Saunders is an insightful editor, and he places Morgan's writings within their context through careful arrangement and analysis. Saunders sets off the ten chapters detailing areas of Morgan's research, writing, and interests with a discussion of editorial procedures and a biographical introduction to Morgan and his interest and involvement with the Latter-day Saints. Saunders studied Morgan and his work for two decades with the intent of writing a biography. The editor acknowledges that, for him, Morgan's work on the Mormons and the doctrine of the restoration "set the boundaries of Morgan's intellectual approach to history. . . . The Mormons had been the magnet which attracted him to history in the first place, it was the realm in which his approach to history and historical method solidified, and Mormonism was a subject to which he tried vainly to return throughout his career" (17). In choosing what the two volumes about Morgan and the Mormons should contain, Saunders perused the seventy-six boxes and twenty-seven cartons of the Dale L. Morgan Papers at the Bancroft Library. Morgan's research and writing is the focus of this book, but of perhaps equal importance are the comments and analysis put forward by Saunders as he looks over Morgan's shoulder and dissects Morgan's careful thinking.

Each of the ten chapters begins with an editor's introduction. Some of Morgan's work has been previously published, as with "Utah: A Guide to the State"; reviews of books by Richard Scowcroft, Maurine Whipple, Fawn Brodie, Virginia Sorenson, Wendell Ashton, and Samuel W. Taylor; and writings by Morgan for contract, including the Oliver Olney papers and James Strang papers. Morgan's review of Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* is of particular interest. Brodie identified Morgan in her acknowledgments as a friend whose "indefatigable scholarship in Mormon history" was of significant help and who "not only shared freely with me his superb library and manuscript files, but also went through the manuscript with

painstaking care”; to Brodie, Morgan was an “exacting historian and a penetrating critic” (Brodie, xiii).

Many chapters both have historical value and demonstrate Morgan’s perspective and careful scholarship: “Mormon Story Tellers,” “The Deseret Alphabet,” the editor’s introduction to *The State of Deseret*, the Danites in Mormon History in Missouri, and *The Mormon Ferry on the North Platte: The Journal of William A. Empey (May 7–August 4, 1847)*.

The longest chapter, at about 150 pages, deals with Mormon bibliographies and shows Morgan’s groundbreaking efforts to begin to gather all of the works dealing with early Mormonism in one bibliography. Morgan was an ambitious and prodigious pioneer in this effort, and Saunders’s volume detailing Morgan’s historical writings identifies Morgan and his work as foundational for all later Utah, western, and Mormon historians.

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LeConte Stewart Masterworks. By Mary Muir, Donna Poulton, Robert Davis, James Poulton, and Vern Swanson. (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2012. 304 pp. Cloth, \$75.00.)

IN THE 1920s AND 1930s, many American artists looked to the “American Scene” for inspiration. Their subject matter was the people and places of the United States beyond cultural hothouses like New York City. Grant Wood, for example, famously painted Iowa. John Steuart Curry looked to Kansas while Thomas Hart Benton turned his attention to Missouri. Today we refer to their work and this inward impulse as “Regionalism”—a blanket term that requires as many variations as America has places.

Arguably the artist who best defined this style in Utah was the painter LeConte Stewart (1891–1990). In his foreword to *LeConte Stewart Masterworks*, publisher Gibbs Smith states that this text will “help further assert LeConte Stewart’s importance in the history of American Regionalist painting” (8). In many ways this book makes a strong argument for an increased visibility for Stewart and an elevated place for him within a broader and ever-expanding canon of American art. No other artist was as invested personally, financially, or spiritually in the Utah landscape as Stewart. From his home in Layton, he roamed the countryside of Davis, Weber, and Morgan counties for eight decades painting scenes that captured his eye. Employing an Impressionistic and tonalist style, Stewart emphasized the everyday over the iconic. According to Wallace Stegner, “the last thing Stewart can be accused of is prettification. The marks of human effort, ugly or otherwise, interest him.”¹ *Masterworks* primarily

focuses on his paintings, drawings, and prints from around 1920 to 1940, when Stewart directed his attention not only on the weathered barns and humble farms of northern Utah, but also on urban scenes with their derelict storefronts, industry, and billboards. This body of work is his best. His 1937 painting of bindle-stiffs riding the rails, ironically titled *Private Car*, has been called the “finest picture ever painted by a Utahn, or in Utah.”² Stewart was also an important teacher who trained generations of artists during his tenure at the University of Utah and through decades of private instruction.

Once again Gibbs Smith deserves praise for publishing a beautiful book. With over three hundred color plates from private and public collections, *Masterworks* extends the life of Stewart’s 2012 retrospective jointly held at the University of Utah Museum of Fine Art and the LDS Church History Museum. The book also features five essays from a variety of scholars, a majority of whom knew Stewart and included personal insight and anecdotes. In all, the essays provide an interesting window into the career and life of the artist. Among the topics explored in the essays are his education and training, his troubled childhood and its losses, his spiritual attachment to the land, and the context of his art on a local and national stage. The challenge with this text, however, is that there is a lot of overlap and little coordination between essays. There are even contradictions. The most glaring and intriguing of these is the question of whether Stewart is or is not a Regionalist. Indeed, Stewart and his work are very different from Wood and Benton, but there were few as tied to a specific place and time as Stewart.

Whether he was a regionalist, realist, or romantic, one thing is certain: Stewart captured the genius of place in Utah better than almost anyone else and that, if nothing else, needs to be recognized and appreciated. Is *Masterworks* enough to solidify his reputation on a broader stage? No, but it can help. Ultimately another text will be needed to more fully and evenly explore the depth of Stewart’s personality and creativity. Only then will we be able to more fully appreciate the Utah master, LeConte Stewart.

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¹ Wallace Stegner, “The Power of Homely Detail,” *American Heritage* 35, no. 5 (1985): 62.

² Ibid.

The Brothers Robidoux and the Opening of the American West. By Robert J.

Willoughby. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012. 252 pp. Cloth, \$45.00.)

WHEN READERS OF WESTERN HISTORY consider significant names of the St. Louis fur trade, the Chouteaus, Manuel Lisa, and William

Ashley come readily to mind. Less well known, but as significant, was the Robidoux family. Joseph Robidoux and a son of the same name arrived in St. Louis from Canada in 1771. In the following years, the younger Joseph fathered six sons (including one named Joseph), all of whom became active in the westward expansion of the first half of the nineteenth century. The six Robidoux brothers are the focus of Robert J. Willoughby's new study. A history of the Robidoux brothers and their contributions to western history has been slow in coming largely because of a lack of documents. The brothers were all literate, yet they left only a few records of their businesses and travels. Most of what can be gleaned of the Robidoux family comes from others' mention of them. Willoughby, however, does an excellent job of piecing a history together from the meager records.

After a good introduction to the fur trade of the late eighteenth century, Willoughby details how three dates were significant to the West and the Robidoux family: in 1763, with the end of the French and Indian War, ownership of the land west of the Mississippi River transferred from the French to the Spanish; in 1783, the end of the American Revolutionary War marked the beginning of an American presence in the region; and in 1803, the Louisiana Purchase resulted in ownership by the young United States. The shifting ownership of St. Louis greatly impacted the French families of the city.

In the years prior to the War of 1812, Joseph Robidoux III and some of his five brothers traded extensively with the Native tribes of the lower Missouri. They went toe-to-toe with the Chouteaus and others, and they used every means possible to enhance and secure trade with Native people, including taking several "frontier wives." In the succeeding years, they went beyond the fur trade, expanding into shipping and mercantile businesses.

Brothers Antoine and Lewis went to New Mexico in 1823. From there, they led trapping expeditions to Utah in 1824 and again in 1825, possibly in partnership with Etienne Provost. Later in the decade, they established Fort Uncompahgre on the Gunnison River in Colorado—the first trade fort west of the continental divide. Later, both Antoine and Lewis became active in politics in New Mexico.

The most famous of the six was Joseph III, the founder of the city of St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph became the most-used jumping-off town for the western trails. Some years later, the brothers capitalized on the Oregon and California trail business by freighting and establishing a trading post at Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. Lewis became a leading citizen in southern California as he built a trading post and ranch on the Santa Ana River, not far from San Bernardino.

This study is well researched and written. Willoughby creates a distinctive biographical approach as he interweaves the business activities of the six

brothers and demonstrates their role in nearly every aspect of the West: participating in the fur trade, opening and operating trading posts, creating significant relationships with Native people, scouting, shipping and trading on overland routes, ranching, founding new towns, and pioneering trails.

The Brothers Robidoux is heartily recommended to all interested in the fur trade and in western history.

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Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport: Intellectual Journeys of a Mormon

Academic. By Armand L. Mauss (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2012.

xvii + 258 pp. Cloth, \$25.00.)

AMONG the Utah State Historical Society manuscript holdings of prominent Utah and Mormon historians are the sixty-one boxes that compose the Armand L. Mauss papers. Mauss was born in Utah but grew up in California. While completing a PhD in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, Mauss taught for two years at Utah State University before moving to Washington State University. There he taught sociology and religious studies for thirty years until his retirement in 1999.

The author of numerous journal articles, Mauss is best known among Utah readers for his two books published by the University of Illinois Press, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (1994) and *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (2003). The latter volume won the Mormon History Association's Best Book Award in 2004. These groundbreaking books take up two fundamental questions that Mauss reintroduces in a much condensed and abbreviated version in this volume, namely, the apparent contradiction in the assimilation struggle for Mormons between "the *external* message . . . 'We're just patriotic Christians like most other Americans,' [with] the *internal* message . . . 'There is only one true church, and ours is it; don't forget that!'" (91). The race question is equally challenging, as Mauss finds, for past Mormon attitudes and practice, while no worse than those of other groups, were grounded neither in written scripture nor in latter-day revelation but "in the political, social, and cultural world in which the LDS Church evolved after the prophet [Joseph Smith's] death" (112). Mauss offers his understanding of the revelatory process as one most often "informed by the research of experts and consultants, both from inside and outside the church itself" (45).

Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport is a most appropriate title for a book that examines a life-long journey back and forth across the borders of

academic intellectualism and Mormon heritage. Picking up an analogy used by Neal A. Maxwell, an LDS leader and intellectual, Mauss explains that Jerusalem represented faith and scholarship while Athens was the center of secular scholarship, and, according to Maxwell, “LDS scholars should have our citizenship in Jerusalem and have a passport to Athens” (1). Indeed, Mauss has made a conscious decision to be a citizen of both realms. Choice, especially in matters of faith, is a universal guiding principle for all who possess a belief. Our choices create our realities and define the borders of our lives. If faith is “*an active personal choice*,” it is much more “than a passive acceptance of a religious tradition” (62).

Mauss recounts his early missionary service in New England, his work with American servicemen in Japan during the Korean conflict, and his subsequent activity in his local congregation as a Sunday school teacher and priesthood leader. At the invitation of LDS church general authorities, Mauss served on committees to help shape policy on such issues as retention, activity, and the evaluation of church programs. From time to time, church leaders checked his passport, and—while neither revoking nor restricting it—gave it close scrutiny. His accommodation with this reality and his own self-described libertarian streak brought him to a recognition “that the church is not a democracy and does not claim to be one. It is a corporate, centralized bureaucracy . . . with local leaders simply doing their best to cope with unpleasant responsibilities sometimes imposed on them by their roles” (189, 193). A lifetime of travel across this landscape took its toll on Mauss, leaving him with a concern that the Kleenex box has replaced the scriptures on the local church podium; a skepticism about the pronouncements of “true believers,” knowing that they may one day lose the faith; and a “disenthralment” with the church and its leaders. But not all: Marlin K. Jensen, LDS Church Historian until 2012, whom Mauss describes as “a man without guile or pretense,” who “has proved to be a loyal and supportive friend” (171).

Other interesting elements of this book include discussions of the struggle to maintain *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* and of the recent trend in the establishment of Mormon Studies programs in higher education.

Armand Mauss will continue to be an important interpreter of Mormon history, and his *Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport* provides an excellent introduction to the man and his ideas—well worth reading before taking on his two seminal monographs, *Angel and the Beehive* and *All Abraham's Children*.

ALLAN KENT POWELL
Salt Lake City

Lost Canyons of the Green River: The Story before Flaming Gorge Dam. By Roy Webb. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2012. xviii + 158 pp. Paper, \$21.95.)

TWENTY YEARS AGO, I stood on the cliffs next to the Dutch John boat ramp on Flaming Gorge Reservoir and peered into its depths. Locked in silence, the quartzite cliffs plunged almost straight down before my eyes, sinking into the depths of the near crystal clear waters until the view gradually faded into the darkness of the deep a hundred or more feet below. I stood looking on, struggling to see more and to conjure up in my mind that same scene but in a former time, thirty years earlier, before Red Canyon was covered by waters impounded by Flaming Gorge Dam. It was a prospect that only memory could summon, and it resides in the core of anyone who ever knew it.

I did see the “lost canyons of the Green,” if only briefly, when our family made several trips into the area just about the time that the keyway for Flaming Gorge Dam was being blasted into the canyon walls. From the time that I caught the first glimpse of this place, framed between pine trees clinging to canyon walls far above the river, its grandeur left me awash with excitement. From Cart Creek Bridge, built by the government to facilitate workers getting across the Green River and the maw of Red Canyon to Dutch John, I looked down on the free-flowing Green. I wondered about floating those waters and taking on the torrent some distance below. I looked upstream and down and questioned where this all began and where it ended. As I ate lunch in the shade of cottonwoods gracing the flat lands of Sheep Creek, my boyish mind turned to thoughts of ancient Indians roaming there; of mountain men, ranchers, and cowboys skirting the hills; and of outlaws hiding from the law. It truly was a magical place.

Roy Webb has written a book that is, in its own right, magical, a book that evokes in the interested reader a sort of visceral sense of the past and the look of the land and the people that once defined the lost canyons of the Green River, now buried under the waters of Flaming Gorge Reservoir. The history that blankets that former time and the legacy of its people will forever be captured and held within this book and its remarkable photographs. Webb’s chapters take the reader through time and space, from the prehistoric era to the present. He created this account of the people and events that left their mark on a nearly forgotten land not just out of legend, but from the words of those who explored, lived, and died there. *Lost Canyons of the Green* is well documented. Additionally, Webb’s writing style is easy to read. Whether one is reading as someone who had the opportunity to experience the lost canyons in their natural state, or as someone learning about them for the first time, Roy Webb offers a realistic, factual, and yet compassionate history of a people and land that could not be given any less.

H. Bert Jenson
Utah State University–Uintah Basin

Dinéji Na`Nitin: Navajo Traditional Teachings and History. By Robert S.

McPherson. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012. x + 287 pp. Paper, \$24.95.)

THIS WORK by Robert McPherson draws on over thirty years of personal experience as a teacher of Navajo students and as a collector of oral histories from elder Navajos who were raised during the traditional times of the first third of the twentieth century. From his careful listening to Native voices, the author has developed a rare in-depth understanding of the Diné worldview and its implications. The book interprets the traditional cultural teachings, including divination, prophecy, the role of witchcraft and evil, and the power of metaphorical thought within the Navajo (Diné) language. The main argument is that Navajo daily life is intertwined with thinking and reasoning influenced by traditional stories and teachings. McPherson also stresses the toll of cultural loss in the neglect of language, ritual, and traditional culture and the need for the reaffirmation of this invaluable legacy by current generations of Diné.

Instead of providing a systematic introduction to Navajo traditional teachings and history, the book explores specific topics through a collection of chapters that shift in focus between ethnographic, historical, and linguistic emphases. For example, the first chapter outlines the traditional practices of divination, and the second chapter follows with a narration of the cross-cultural responses to the 1918 influenza epidemic by various communities, demonstrating how the Navajos encountered the new and devastating disease from their traditional understanding. The third chapter describes witchcraft and the role of sacred evil in Navajo culture, and chapter four relates the story of Ba'alílee (a practitioner of taboo ritual and the reversal of sacred ceremony) whose resistance to the government ended in an armed standoff called the "Brawl of Aneth" in 1907.

The organizational pattern shifts with the fifth chapter, which describes how traditional thought is embedded in the metaphorical aspects of the Navajo language; the eighth chapter shows how keen observation and wit are embedded in contemporary metaphorical descriptions of objects and processes. Sandwiched in between the discussion of metaphor are the stories of how Father H. Baxter Leibler used aspects of Diné language and culture in his conversion of Navajos to Episcopalian Christianity from the 1940s to the 1960s, and how the mystery surrounding the distinctive Pectol shields unearthed by amateur archeologists in 1926 was solved by attention to Navajo oral tradition in 2003. The book ends with a presentation of

prophetic warnings of Navajo elders about signs of the coming of the end of the world and how they relate to creation myths and observations of cultural deterioration.

The strength of the work is McPherson's correlation of material from standard anthropological texts on Diné thought and culture with voices from his many oral interviews gathered over the past thirty years. The result is an accessible record of Navajo beliefs and heritage that updates and illustrates, but does not necessarily extend, our understanding of these select aspects of Navajo traditional culture. The linguistic chapters, likewise, record and preserve various Navajo language metaphors, both old and new. The author should have spent more time, however, in his sections on history by giving context to the underlying contrasts and conflicts between traditional Navajo culture and the worldviews of outsiders, such as a government agent (Sheldon), Episcopalian missionary (Father Baxter), and LDS bishop (Ephraim Pectol). To this reviewer, the actions and motives of the Anglo participants in these sections seem to go largely unquestioned.

This book is highly recommended for readers interested in a knowledgeable and sensitive description of some of the basic aspects of traditional Navajo teachings, thought, and language and how the infringements of the dominant American culture in the past decades has undermined the application of those teachings in the lives of the contemporary Navajo people.

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BOOK NOTICES

LDS in the USA. By Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012. x + 166 pp. Paper, \$24.95.)

Using both nineteenth- and twentieth-century history as background, this book discusses ways that Mormonism and Mormons have contributed to American culture. The introduction states that “Mormons have played a substantial role in the shaping of the social, cultural, political, and religious makeup of the United States.”

In attempting to flesh out what that role has been, the authors present essays on Mormons in media (particularly television and movies), Mormon marriage beliefs and practices, Mormons in politics, the uniqueness of Mormon theology, and Mormonism as the American narrative, concluding that Mormonism is the “most American of religions” and in fact, in a sense, “is the American religion.”

The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy, updated edition. By Terryl L. Givens. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 2013. x + 227 pp. Paper, \$24.95.)

Since this innovative study was published in 1997, critics, creators, and the general public have continued to talk about Mormonism—particularly during the 2012 presidential campaign and through popular culture. Discourse about Mormonism has in fact increased during the last several years, and the author has updated *Viper on the Hearth* to analyze this discourse. New material in the book looks at recent media, politics and pundits, critics’ comments, and stereotypes presented in cultural creations such as *The Book of Mormon Musical*, *Angels in America*, and *Under the Banner of Heaven*. Givens compares contemporary treatment of the LDS church with the treatment it received during the nineteenth century, arguing that some of today’s critics continue to use myths and strategies similar to those used more than one hundred years ago.

Hell on Wheels: Wicked Towns along the Union Pacific Railroad. By Dick Kreck. (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2013. x + 265 pp. Paper, \$16.95.)

Curiously, only nine out of this book’s sixteen chapters and its epilogue actually treat railroad towns. Other chapters provide pleasant narratives on overland travel before the railroad, women’s experience on

the trail, stage companies, “Indians!”, the beginnings of the transcontinental railroad project, building the railroad, and travel by train. The book discusses two Utah towns, Corinne and Promontory, including information on laying track through Echo and Weber canyons and the completion ceremony on May 10, 1869.

The Avenues of Salt Lake City, second edition. By Cevan J. LeSieur.

(Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Utah State Historical Society, 2012.

xii + 378 pp. Paper, \$29.95.)

Originally published by the Utah State Historical Society in 1980, this expanded edition includes new color photos, more buildings, and updated chapters. The book contains information on the history of the Avenues, patterns of ownership and development, institutional buildings, preservation efforts, and architectural styles and types. The “Significant Sites” section is organized street by street so that readers can use it as a guidebook; it also has an index to addresses and an index to names.

The Baron in the Grand Canyon. By Steven Rowan. (Columbia: University of

Missouri Press, 2012. viii + 204 pp. Cloth, \$45.00.)

Cartographer, artist, explorer, and inventor Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Egloffstein joined John C. Frémont on his 1853–54 expedition. After the near-disaster in the mountains above Parowan, he left the Fremont expedition and traveled to Salt Lake City, where he joined the survivors of the Gunnison expedition. He later joined the Ives expedition up the Colorado River. This book tells of his life and journeys and reprints many of the drawings and engravings he created while in the West.

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